



Policy and Performance - Co-ordinating Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 16 February 2016
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS) REGULATIONS 2012, INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or and / or any other relevant interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.

Members are reminded that they should also declare whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

3. **MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Special meeting of the Committee held on 10 December 2015 as a correct record. **(Attached)**
4. **2016/17 BUDGET CONSULTATION FINDINGS - PRESENTATION**

To receive a presentation from the Senior Manager: Marketing and Communications.

5. **2016/17 BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT (Pages 5 - 44)**
Report of the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources.
6. **ANNUAL REPORT: EQUALITY PLAN 2014 - 17 (Pages 45 - 52)**
Report of the Strategic Director Transformation and Resources.
7. **2015/16 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PLAN (Pages 53 - 62)**
Report of the Strategic Director Transformation and Resources.
8. **2015/16 QUARTER 2 CAPITAL AND REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITOR REPORTS (Pages 63 - 96)**
Report of the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources.
9. **POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPERS (Pages 97 - 204)**
Report of the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources.
10. **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - UPDATE REPORT (Pages 205 - 220)**
Report of the Strategic Director of Transformation and Resources.
11. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**
12. **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

RECOMMENDED:

That in accordance with section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.
13. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 2)**

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 December 2015

Present:

Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors	P Doughty	T Anderson
	P Brightmore	D Burgess-Joyce
	B Kenny	W Clements
	C Muspratt	S Williams
	M Sullivan	P Gilchrist
	KJ Williams	J Salter (In place of W Smith)
	J Williamson	L Fraser (In place of A Sykes)

20 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W Smith and A Sykes.

21 **CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELEVANT AUTHORITIES (DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS) REGULATIONS 2012, INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS**

No declarations of interest were received.

22 **MINUTES**

Councillor P Gilchrist referred the Committee to Minute No. 13 – Notice of Motion – 44 Councillors and the third of bottom paragraph on page 3. He informed that the last sentence in this paragraph needed to be corrected for what he had actually pointed out was

‘that the average electors per Councillor in Knowsley consisted of approximately 2,524 people whereas the figure for Wirral was 3670.’

RESOLVED:

That subject to the amendment being made as set out above the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 September 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

The Committee had regard to the Wirral Plan Scrutiny Report and its appendices as follows:

- Appendix 1 – Wirral Plan Scrutiny Report November 2015
- Appendix 2 – People Workshop Slides
- Appendix 3 – Business Workshop Slides
- Appendix 4 – Environment Workshop Slides

The report set out the Scrutiny Response to the Wirral Plan Delivery Plan that had been published in October 2015 as a five year Plan based on twenty key pledges. This followed a series of Wirral Plan workshop sessions for non-executive Members at the beginning of November. The Committee was requested to have regard to the report and agree any recommendations for the Cabinet's consideration.

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance at the workshop sessions and remarked on the very good turnout that there had been. She asked if they had any comments on how the process could be improved in future years. Members noted that the Policy and Performance Committees would use the twenty pledges to inform their Work Programmes in the coming years.

One Member informed the Committee that she had attended all three workshop sessions and had found them very interesting, informative and well run. She agreed that this approach had been a useful exercise.

Another Member informed the Committee that she had attended two of the workshop sessions. She had found them particularly useful and was pleased that the Committees were not going to work in isolation.

A Member was of the view that the workshops had been well chaired and queried what the process was to move this piece of scrutiny work forward.

The Chair reported that over the next weeks and months the Committees would ascertain how the pledges were being delivered and she would be happy to hold similar workshop sessions in future years.

The Team Leader - Performance and Scrutiny informed that the report had been cascaded to those Officers drafting relevant supporting strategies so that all the points made could be taken into consideration.

The Chair informed that the report would be considered by the Cabinet in the current format and then how the pledges translated into action would be monitored over a period of time.

The Team Leader – Performance and Scrutiny circulated three amendments to the report in respect of pages 20, 23 and 26 and the Chair asked the Committee if it was happy for report to go forward into the consultation process once these amendments had been made.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Wirral Plan Scrutiny Report be amended as detailed in the paper circulated at the meeting and be presented to the Cabinet for consideration; and**
- (2) Members, Officers and Partners be thanked for their attendance at the workshop sessions and for their input into the scrutiny process in respect of the Wirral Plan.**

24 SCRUTINY OF 2016/17 BUDGET PROPOSALS

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources set out the timetable for the scrutiny of the 2016/17 budget proposals. The Committee was requested to consider the approach to scrutinising the proposals to ensure there was consistency across all of the Policy and Performance Committees.

The Committee noted that the lead-in time and arrangements for consultation were key drivers for the scrutiny approach to be adopted. The lead-in time set out the time constraints for scrutiny which usually ran concurrent with the timetable for consultation. The timetable for budget setting process for 2016/17 was set out in detail in the report.

Members noted that there were three options that could be considered as follows:

- Time is allocated at the above meetings to review budget proposals (this will be dependent on the size of the existing agendas for the January/February round of meetings).
- Additional committee meetings are scheduled in January as dedicated budget scrutiny sessions.
- A series of workshops are scheduled in January for each of the committees with a report being taken to the Co-ordinating Committee on 16 February 2016 and referred to the Cabinet meeting on 23 February 2016.

The Chair proposed that the workshop approach be adopted and the feedback from the other three Policy and Performance Committees be presented to this Committee. She also proposed that each Committee Chair would work with Group Spokespersons to ensure the workshops went ahead in the timescale laid down.

A Member enquired about the arrangements for public consultation on the 2016/17 budget proposals and what form it would take. The Chair informed that she would ask the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources to respond to all Members of the Committee with the answer on this.

A Member enquired if delivery plans would be available for the workshop sessions and the Chair informed that she was not ruling that possibility out.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the workshop approach be adopted and the feedback from the other three Policy and Performance Committees be presented to this Committee at its meeting on 16 February 2016 and to the Cabinet at its meeting on 22 February 2016; and**
- (2) each Policy and Performance Committee Chair be requested to work with Group Spokespersons to ensure the workshop sessions go ahead in the timescale laid down.**



COORDINATING COMMITTEE

16 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT TITLE	2016/17 BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT
REPORT OF	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report presents the work of the three policy and performance committees with regard to scrutinising the 2016/17 budget options. This follows a series of workshops held in January for Members of each of the committees to explore in more detail the various budget options being put forward. A separate report is provided for each committee and these are included as appendix 1 – 3 of this report. Each of these reports provides a brief summary of the options reviewed with the comments of Members in attendance. Coordinating Committee is requested to acknowledge these reports as the scrutiny response to the 2016/17 budget proposals and refer these on to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- Committee acknowledges the three budget scrutiny reports as the scrutiny response to the 2016/17 budget proposals.
- Committee to refer these reports for consideration by Cabinet.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

For the scrutiny of the 2016/17 budget proposals to be referred for consideration by Cabinet.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At its last meeting on 10 December 2015, Coordinating Committee resolved that:

- *The workshop approach be adopted and the feedback from the other three Policy and Performance Committees be presented to this Committee at its meeting on 16 February 2016 and to the Cabinet at its meeting on 22 February 2016;*
- *Each Policy and Performance Committee Chair be requested to work with Group Spokespersons to ensure the workshop sessions go ahead in the timescale laid down.*

Following that meeting, the Chairs of the three Policy and Performance Committees liaised with the respective party spokespersons to identify the budget proposals they wished to examine in greater detail. Workshops were convened in January with the relevant officers attending to set out the rationale behind proposals and respond to Members' questions. Members comments were collated and are presented in the three reports included as appendix 1 – 3 attached.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

There are none arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

A separate public consultation has been delivered. The findings of this consultation will be reported under a separate item on the agenda for this meeting.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No because there is no relevance to equality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Families & Wellbeing Committee Budget Scrutiny Report

Appendix 2 – Regeneration & Environment Committee Budget Scrutiny Report

Appendix 3 – Transformation & Resources Committee Budget Scrutiny Report

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Coordinating Committee	10 December 2015
Cabinet	17 December 2015

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2016/17 Budget Proposals

**Scrutiny Report of Families and Wellbeing
Policy & Performance Committee**

January 2016

VERSION 1

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1. STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

Councillor Moira McLaughlin

Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee held a very well attended workshop to look in more detail at the officer proposals for savings in the services which fall within the remit of the Committee. This is in line with the approach adopted by the other Policy and Performance Committees and that which was employed last year.

It was undertaken against a backdrop of the requirement to make huge savings as a result of the Council having experienced grant reductions and the need to balance that with the need to do as much as possible to protect those services which support our most vulnerable residents.

The report which has been produced contains a brief outline of each proposal presented by officers. Members sought to look at any positive or negative impact of these proposals, at whether or not they felt they were achievable, and when negative results were identified look at possible ways to reduce them. What is contained in the report is not a recommendation to either proceed with a proposal nor to reject it, as they are decisions for the Executive, rather than the scrutiny committee, but it is a summary of members' considerations.

2. INTRODUCTION

In line with the resolution of the Coordinating Committee meeting held on 10 December 2015, a dedicated 2016/17 budget workshop for the members of the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee was held on the Monday 11th January 2016. This provided the committee with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of budget proposals affecting services that fall under the remit of the committee. The budget proposals selected for further examination were identified by the Chair and spokespersons as those deemed to be of greatest significance in terms of value and the public interest. This report summarise the proposals scrutinised and the comments and suggestions of Members attending the workshop.

3. MANAGING DEMAND

3.1 ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – INFLATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS (£2,800k)

Summary of Proposal

This proposal will result in not allowing growth in the budget to allow for inflation and anticipated demographic changes. The inflation element is forecast to provide a budget reduction of £900k in 2016/17, with a further £1,900k attributable to demographics. It is, therefore, imperative for Wirral's assets to be used more effectively in order to meet the growing demands. There is now a direction of travel, both locally and nationally, towards greater pooling of resources across the health and care economy, although all of the partners face financial pressures. It is anticipated that the Better Care Fund will continue to provide a framework for such funding, while Healthy Wirral (the Vanguard programme) will deliver a strategic plan to which all partners will contribute.

Committee Members' Comments

- It was recognised that integrated commissioning will provide opportunities for parcels of funding to be combined to enable re-commissioning of specific services more efficiently.
- Members welcomed the financial contribution that Wirral receives having been successful in bidding to become a Vanguard site. The funding will assist with the health and care transformation.
- It was recognised that the proposal will aim to reduce growth in demand while also operating in a smarter way.
- Members were reassured that, due to the budget experience from previous years, it is possible to make savings despite more people receiving support. This has been achieved by reducing the unit cost of care.
- Members were reassured that, although it is anticipated that joint commissioning of services will increase, the appropriate oversight of decision-making will remain through bodies such as the Health & Wellbeing Board, the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee and the Health & Care Performance Panel.

3.2 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE – INFLATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS (£600k)

Summary of Proposal

This proposal will seek to prevent growth in the budget relating to inflation and anticipated demographic changes. The inflation element is forecast to provide a budget reduction of £200k in 2016/17, with a further £400k attributable to demographics. There are a proportionately high number of children receiving support through children social care. Wirral has a higher ratio of children looked after than most Local Authorities. Wirral has 99 per 10,000 looked after children compared to a North West average of 82 per 10,000 and an England average of 60. The challenge is to safely reduce the number of children looked after in Wirral by one-third. The aim is to further strengthen, alongside the Council's partners, the ability to intervene earlier in children's lives where appropriate. It is anticipated that the demand can be better managed by intervening earlier, through initiatives such as the Troubled Families Programme (IFIP).

Committee Members' Comments

- Concern was expressed regarding alternative services for victims of domestic violence now that the Zero Centre has closed. Some alternative provision does exist but not in a coordinated delivery framework. The current service provision will be reviewed in preparation for re-commissioning. It is recognised that domestic violence is a priority issue in Wirral and a new approach to how resources were invested may be required.
- There was recognition of the work being done to enable social workers to become more efficient and to improve staff retention. New pay and conditions had been implemented in January 2015. It was noted that more experienced social workers are required in the child protection team with higher priority being given to continual recruitment of social workers. That process should reduce spend as the number of agency workers should decline as a result. Additional priority is also being given to training social work managers in order to improve effectiveness.
- Members expressed concern regarding the proportion of staff who have completed performance appraisals during the previous year. It was noted that the returns for social workers was poor. However, it was also noted that a more appropriate accountability framework for social workers and managers is being developed in order to support improved performance.

3.3 GIRTRELL COURT (£155k)

Summary of Proposal

Girtrell Court is a respite breaks facility, providing short breaks for carers of adults with complex physical and learning disabilities. This is the only directly provided care home for adults owned by the Council. The majority of this type of care, in Wirral and across the country, is now provided by the independent sector.

The site at Girtrell Court has 20 beds and is used by 120 people who have learning and/or physical disabilities. This proposal would see the Adult Social Services Department working with current users to identify alternative ways of offering respite breaks. This would include consideration of community based provision, supported breaks, shared lives and alternative building based services. The services would be provided within Wirral and at a level which is appropriate to the needs of the person and their family. The Council has a duty to ensure that a range of services are available to meet identified need, work is currently underway to ensure that this is available.

The current running costs of the Girtrell Court service are estimated to be £1.5million per annum. The average weekly unit cost is estimated at £1500 per service user which is higher than the average weekly cost of respite in the independent sector which is approximately £850 per week.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members asked about the current use of this facility and were informed that, in addition to use for respite care, there are 6 clients on interim placements. They have come to live at Girtrell Court as a result of other placements breaking down for a variety of reasons.

- Members were reassured that a range of services will be offered as an alternative to Girtrell Court. The key challenge is to match the needs of individuals with what can be provided. Alternative provision could be Shared Lives (family based care), independent sector residential respite, Direct Payments (which could be used to support the person to remain at home whilst family carers take a break), maximising use of existing community support including Mobile Nights services and Assistive Technology and use of a small number of adapted flats which have been made available and where the person could receive their support. In addition, options for holidays in resorts such as Blackpool or Llandudno could be available.
- A concern was expressed that the proposal may lead to a reduction in service. Compared to the current weekly cost of a place at Girtrell Court (£1500), the quoted cost of alternate provision (£850 per week) is perceived as potentially leading to a reduction in quality. It was clarified that the difference in costs is due to higher overhead and staff costs.
- Assurances were sought about availability and quality of the independent sector provision and also how each person would have their needs assessed. It was clarified that all users will have a review with a social worker and the needs of each person will have to be met appropriately. The review process is due to be completed by March.
- Members were reassured that families and carers will be able to visit alternative providers in order to help form judgements.
- The quality of service provision at Girtrell Court was complimented by Members. However, it was pointed out that the authority is no longer in a position to be able to run high-cost services.
- The importance of prompt and accurate information for service users and carers was emphasised. Members were informed that all service users had been written to individually. A meeting for all service users will be held on 22nd January followed by individual meetings with all users.
- Members requested information regarding the timescales for change. All respite will be honoured until March 2016, but provision will be continued until all reviews are complete and all users have alternative provision in place.
- Members raised concerns regarding the staff currently employed at Girtrell Court. The Director agreed that there was a possibility of redundancy for some staff though there may be the option for some re-deployment within the Local Authority.
- Members requested further information regarding the planned usage for the Girtrell Court site. Members were informed that the Local Authority would like to explore the possibility of using the site for Extra Care housing with fully adapted flats for people with disabilities. It is felt that this would be an appropriate fit with the surrounding area.

3.4 SELF ASSESSMENT (£500k)

Summary of Proposal

People want to be more independent and self-sufficient and it is the Council's role to enable and support that to happen wherever possible, as promoted by the Care Act 2014. The process of assessment currently requires a member of Social Care staff to undertake an assessment of a person's care and support needs. Often this requires a person to wait for an assessment to be undertaken, and in many cases this delays the ability of the person to make their own arrangements where they can and where it is appropriate for them to do so. The Department currently receives around 3000 contacts per month with around 2300 of these being requests for support. Many of these contacts are resolved quickly with information and advice, and short term interventions being provided.

In the future, people will be able to self-assess, with support, and have their assessment validated by the Department. This will increase their choice and control. From April 2016, a new interactive system, Liquid Logic, will allow direct online access to advice and information so that people can make their own decisions about their care and support. This includes a self-assessment process for people and their carers. There are still a large number of people that will require a face to face assessment to be completed by a Social Care staff member, due to complexity and risk. This service will continue to be provided by the Department.

The implications of the proposal are being discussed with staff. There is a possibility that some redundancies could occur.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members asked for reassurance that the proposal will not lead to an increase in forms being completed incorrectly. Members were informed that the on-line system will enable more information to be provided in the early stages of the process. This will enable staff to invest a greater priority on the quality process.
- Members queried the number of care navigator posts which are currently unfilled and sought reassurances regarding the future for existing job holders.
- Members were informed that, due to the provisions of the Care Act 2014, the Council has a duty to provide assessments but current arrangements mean that the access to information is difficult.
- A member was concerned that safeguards would be in place for clients in the community who cannot use computers or have cognitive issues. However, Members were reassured that it will not be mandatory for clients to undertake a self-assessment. Staff support will continue to be available for those clients who require it.
- Members were informed that the development of self-assessment will result in power being taken away from professionals and placed more in the hand of service users and family members.

3.5 SINGLE SAFEGUARDING BOARD WITH LCR (£40k)

Summary of Proposal

The proposal is that the Adult Safeguarding Board will be provided on a Liverpool City Region footprint. The saving is based on management and administration support savings. The proposal will result in there no longer being a Wirral Adult Safeguarding Board. An independent Chair will be appointed for the City Region.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were re-assured that contributions from the relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups and the police will need to be pooled for the funding of Serious Case Reviews.

4. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

4.1 BEECHWOOD LEISURE CENTRE (£73k)

Summary of Proposal

Beechwood Recreation Centre was built in the early 1970's, being managed and operated by Wirral Council until 2009, when the Centre was jointly managed by Community Service Section and Beechwood Joint Management Committee. The staff were still employed by Wirral Council. Beechwood Joint Management Committee withdrew their services in 2011 and, as a result, the Centre has been managed and operated as part of the Leisure Services estate since April 2013. Wirral Council has been approached by a number of community groups interested in taking over the management and operation of the Centre, with discussions currently ongoing.

Committee Members' Comments

- Assuming an appropriate agreement can be reached between the parties, Members did not raise any objections, in principle, to the proposal.

4.2 LEISURE CONCESSIONS (£500k)

Summary of Proposal

The Cabinet report of September 2013 first highlighted that the Council's 'free concessions' were 'very generous' in comparison with other local authorities. The value of 'free' concessions is estimated to be £500k, broken down as follows:

- Free swimming for juniors during all school holiday periods - £250k
- Passport for life (available to all ex-Wirral Council employees who have retired with more than 25 year's service for free swimming, use of the fitness suites and golf) - £100k
- Free use of all leisure facilities at all times to children in care, their siblings and carers - £100k
- Free swimming for people aged 65+ - £50k

Committee Members' Comments

- Members expressed the view that they understood this proposal was a result of the need to make such huge savings across the Council and that perhaps in other circumstances it would not be something members would like to see.
- Members also felt that the amount identified (£500k) was somewhat notional as there was no way of knowing how many of those currently using the facilities for free would become paying customers in the future.
- Concerns were expressed about the impact of the proposal particularly on children from the most deprived households. A request was made for some modelling to take place which would identify the cost of continuing to provide free swimming to those who are in receipt of free school meals. Officers are now working on this modelling and will report back to Members.
- Members also raised the concern of the loss of secondary spend, that is, for example, the potential reduction in spending on refreshments if some do not convert to be paying customers.
- Members were reassured that an amount for leisure activity is considered to be included as part of the foster carer's allowance.

- Members were informed that research has found that, with regard to people over 65 years old, price is not a major determinant of whether they swim. Many in that age range benefit from free swimming even though they have the ability to pay.

4.3 MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSES (£68k)

Summary of Proposal

This proposal seeks alternative providers for the current facilities at Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade. There is also an intention to remove the subsidy from Arrowe Park Golf Course by steps which include re-profiling the use of the club house and shop. It is also intended to improve the offer at The Warrens Golf Course.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members queried whether any capital spend was required for the golf courses and were informed that drainage work was required at Arrowe Park golf course.
- Members were reassured that there are alternative providers available with whom the Council could potentially work.

5. SERVICE CHANGES – EDUCATION AND MENTAL HEALTH

5.1 CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH (CAMHS) (£100k)

Summary of Proposal

The previous dedicated Government grant to the local authority to fund CAMHS is now part of children's services base budget which has reduced over time; it is proposed to reduce this funding further. Whilst there continues to be significant need for services to support vulnerable children and young people with emotional and mental health issues, additional CAMHS funding is being received through the "Future in Mind" bid, and new ways of working are being considered; it is in this context that the budget proposals are being progressed. In light of further feedback following the meeting, there is further exploration underway about how these service changes can be safely made.

Committee Members' Comments

Whilst there were no specific comments at the workshop, the following feedback has been subsequently received from a member (with the Chair's agreement):

- The proposal will affect a team which works with approximately 160 (at any one time) of the most complex and vulnerable children who have high level risk. The ability of the team to respond in a timely manner when acute risk situations occur would be affected. Therefore, there is a risk that issues could escalate and reach crisis point.
- For those children who require longer-term therapy, the therapy can often be for up to 6 months duration. It is suggested that there would need to be a lead-in period to any funding changes so that children's therapy can be safely concluded.
- It is suggested that where any change in funding is deemed absolutely necessary, a staged approach is utilised so that funding reductions are staggered over time.

6. SERVICE CHANGES – PUBLIC HEALTH

6.1 FUNDING OF COUNCIL HEALTH SERVICES (£2,271k)

Summary of Proposal

This relates to the reduction or cessation of temporary funding support by Public Health for the following programmes:

- Environmental Health – A reduction in contribution to this service, which is concerned with all aspects of the natural and built environment affecting human health.
- Wellbeing 4 All – A reduction in contribution to this service which helps people, their families and carers develop and maintain connections with friends, family and the wider community. It provides opportunities for individuals, families and carers to support each other and to plan ahead for care.
- Free Swimming - This funding supported the extension of the availability of free swimming for elderly, carers and juniors during holidays, and Military personnel.
- Youth and Play - This funding supported CYPD work with a focus on the provision of the Response service and their outreach working with young people at risk from alcohol or drug abuse. It also supported the existing provision of childhood services and parenting in children's centres.

The original funding was agreed as a two year allocation made available by Public Health.

6.2 HEALTH TRAINERS / PROMOTION (£838k)

Summary of Proposal

This service provides a range of health and well-being activities to engage with those living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wirral. It includes a health promotion service delivering health improvement programmes, frontline staff training and is supported by a library of evidence-based health promotion resources and health trainers to facilitate engagement with those people who are less likely to take up activities that support positive lifestyle / behaviour change. The service is underperforming in key areas and the contract concludes on 31st March 2016. The provision of community health services is currently being reviewed with the intention of commissioning new programmes appropriate to local requirements.

6.3 SCHOOL HUBS (£50k)

Summary of Proposal

This scheme supports pilot primary school hubs working to intervene earlier with children and families to develop resilience and prevent more intensive interventions being required long term. The Hubs sit within their local communities, where integrated locality working is being strengthened for all children aged 0-19 years. The hubs seek to build support for children and families around their local primary school. The projects were initially set up on a time-limited grant basis which expires on 31st March 2016.

6.4 DECOMMISSION CONTRACTS

Summary of Proposals

Recovery through nature programme (£51k): This project involves supporting drug and alcohol users towards recovery by engagement in structured programmes of work within National Trust or local parkland settings. The contract concludes on 31st March 2016 when similar services will be provided from within the core Drug and Alcohol Service Contract.

Data for Drugs and Alcohol Service (£39k): This service was initially commissioned with the intention of providing data activity and analysis relating to Drug and Alcohol Services. The contract concludes on 31st March 2016 when this service will be provided from within the Public Health Commissioning Support Unit.

Workforce training programme (£30k): This service was initially commissioned with the intention of improving the competence and confidence of the local workforce, in order to deliver high quality drug and alcohol treatment services and better outcomes for clients. The contract concludes on 31st March 2016 when this service will be provided from within the core Drug and Alcohol Service Contract.

BME Health Improvement Service (£53k): This service aims to improve engagement with the BME community to address the issue of poor representation within health improvement services. This contract concludes on 31st March 2016. The provision of community health services is currently being reviewed with the intention of commissioning new programmes appropriate to local requirements.

6.5 CONTRACT REDUCTIONS

Summary of Proposals

Get Into Reading (£132k): The aim of the service is to improve the health and wellbeing of people by the provision of weekly reading groups in a range of locations, particularly targeting libraries and community venues in the 20% most deprived areas. The service is underperforming in key areas and the contract concludes on 31st March 2016. The provision of community health services is currently being reviewed with the intention of commissioning new programmes appropriate to local requirements.

Young People's Outreach Service (£46k): This service provides a safeguarded universal and targeted sexual health and well-being outreach, education and training programme to young people in Wirral, prioritising those at greatest need. An efficiency saving of 25% has been negotiated with the current provider whilst maintaining an effective service.

HIV Prevention Service (£27k): This service provides specialist outreach, prevention and promotion to high risk groups to prevent the spread of HIV in Wirral and promote early diagnosis through point of care testing. An efficiency saving of 25% has been negotiated with the current provider whilst maintaining an effective service.

On-Line Counselling for Young People (£25k): This service provides a confidential, preventative on-line support service for young people across Wirral that is tailored to addressing the emotional health and wellbeing needs of those aged 11 to 19 years old. An efficiency saving of 25% has been negotiated with the current provider whilst maintaining an effective service.

6.6 PUBLIC HEALTH BUDGET REDUCTIONS (£239k)

Summary of Proposal

This consists of three vacant posts and reductions based on a reduction in need in Health checks, Social Isolation and Medicines Management provision.

6.7 PUBLIC HEALTH GRANT REDUCTION (£3M)

Summary of Proposal

This is a projected reduction pending formal announcement of the Public Health Grant.

Committee Members' Comments for the Public Health options:

- Members were informed that the provision of free swimming under this saving option is in addition to the item discussed earlier under the Leisure concessions option. This option relates to non- recurrent funding provided in the previous two financial years 14-16.
- Members were reassured that the budget reduction for Youth and Play did not result in a reduction of service. It was confirmed that equivalent activity has been commissioned as part of other contracts and will not result in a loss of service.
- Members expressed concern regarding the potential impact of the proposals on deprived communities. For services such as health trainers and the BME health improvement service, survey work undertaken during the summer has reported that current provision is complicated and hard to navigate for local people. There is an opportunity for the future offer of information and advice services to be streamlined to provide a coherent and consistent offer to local people.

Appendix 1 – Workshop Attendance

Members of Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee:

Moira McLaughlin
Angela Davies
Irene Williamson
Janette Williamson
Treena Johnson
Cherry Povall
David Bruce-Joyce
Alan Brighthouse
Walter Smith
Denise Roberts
Bruce Berry
Tony Norbury
Phillip Brightmore
Mark Harrison (Parent Governor Rep)

Cabinet member:

Chris Jones

Officers:

Clare Fish	Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing
Julie Webster	Head of Public Health
Graham Hodgkinson	Director of Adult Social Services
Julia Hassall	Director of Children's Services
Damian Walsh	Head of Sport and Recreation
Mike Callon	Team Leader – Performance / Scrutiny
Alan Veitch	Scrutiny Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Wendy Clements



2016/17 Budget Proposals

Scrutiny Report of the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee

January 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

The Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee has carried out a review of the budget proposals under its remit and followed the process set out by the Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015.

It was agreed with the Party Spokespersons that all six budget proposals which are out for public consultation would be scrutinised as they were all considered significant in either the savings provided or the value of the service. To ensure there was sufficient time for appropriate scrutiny to take place, the scrutiny of these budget proposals was carried out through two dedicated workshops held on the 11th and 18th January 2016.

This report outlines the proposals that were scrutinised and has captured the relevant comments and suggestions from Members for further consideration. I would like to thank all officers for their time and support in delivering both works shop sessions.

Councillor Mike Sullivan

2. INCOME / RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 GARDEN WASTE SERVICE FEE INCREASE (£196k)

Summary of Proposal

This proposal would implement an increase in the subscription charge for collecting garden waste from residents' homes. The service currently costs £35 per year per household with the proposal for this to increase to £40, with a £5 discount for residents who subscribe online. This increase amounts to around 10p per week. The garden waste service was launched in its current form three years ago, and around 40,000 residents now buy the service from the Council. Since the service was launched there has been no price increase. This service is entirely optional, and people are able to dispose of their garden waste in a number of different ways; including composting and Household Recycling and Waste Centres.

People who are dissatisfied with the increased charges could choose to cancel their subscription or use a different method to dispose of their garden waste. The Council will publish, as part of ongoing communications campaigns about waste and recycling, detailed information related to the options residents can take should they not wish to continue receiving the service.

Committee Members' Comments

- A concern was raised about a potential drop-off in subscribers which may see an increase in the use of household bins for garden waste. This would increase the cost to the Council of disposal through landfill operators. However, Members acknowledged the marketing campaign carried out this year by the Council to promote the garden waste service and inform people about the consequences of putting garden waste in household bins. The promotion campaign had helped increase subscription levels to the highest level in 3 years. Members also noted the promotion campaign emphasised that the cost for each collection by the Council is only £1.67.
- Members commented that the online discount may disadvantage the elderly and most vulnerable who are unable to access the internet. It was suggested that the Council could consider a discount for garden waste subscriptions for residents aged over 65 years. Members did acknowledge, however, that take-up of the online offer was 90% and that people can go online at various Council buildings.
- Members commented that there is a potential risk of an increase in fly tipping across Wirral should the increase in charge be applied and subscription levels drop off as a result.

3. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

3.1 PARKS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP WORKING (£180k)

Summary of Proposal

This option would involve a focus on income generation and increasing pride and community involvement in local areas, resulting in less maintenance, clean up and support being needed from the Council for parks and open spaces. The proposal has a target of £180,000 in 2016/17.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members fully endorsed the proposal and some of the early ideas that have been developed by officers to generate income, including various concessions, general events and garden shows.
- Members agreed that Wirral needs its environment and parks to be attractive as this is crucial to the tourism pledge and people choosing to live in Wirral.
- Members commented that it is important that the service should align itself to the major events that take place across the peninsula and that these events should be promoted more widely to raise resident awareness.
- Members commented that there is an opportunity to become involved in identifying further opportunities for community partnership working and enhancing the offer.

3.2 CHARGING FOR THE PEST CONTROL SERVICE (£30k)

Summary of Proposal

The Council delivers a comprehensive pest control service for residents, businesses and organisations. Parts of the service are provided at a cost, and some other elements are currently provided for free, including treatment services for rats and cockroaches. This proposal would see the Council begin to charge £50 to landlords, business and those residents who take up the service. The budget proposal seeks to generate £30,000 in income to provide a near cost-neutral service by the end of 2016/17.

If this budget option was approved Council customer service staff would be trained to provide general advice on where to go to get advice on home treatments and what alternative private pest control companies operate in Wirral. The Council will also make sure it provides accurate and helpful information to residents on how to mitigate any risk of pest and rat problems.

People who are dissatisfied with the increased charges could choose to self-treat or opt to use the wide range of commercial businesses, large and small, that offer pest control services in Wirral.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were concerned over the Council's response to those residents who may not be able to pay for the pest control service. Members highlighted the need for due consideration to be applied to how these residents would be treated before a charge is applied. It was suggested that Wirral should investigate the approach taken by other local authorities.

- Members were informed that where residents had a rat infestation that was affecting the community and they failed to take any action, Wirral Council has legal powers to serve notice requiring the owner or occupier to carry out a treatment. However, Members were concerned about the recovery arrangements for any pest control charge where the Council did work in default and suggested that consideration be given to these arrangements prior to implementation.
- Members acknowledged that Wirral has an experienced and highly skilled pest control service. Officer concern over the future viability of providing a free service with current staffing levels was noted. Members were concerned that if a charge was not implemented, there may be a risk of losing the valuable resource leading to uncertainty over the Council's compliance with its public health obligations.
- Members noted that Liverpool City Council previously implemented a charge for the removal of rats but residents did not take up the service, resulting in the decision to revert back to providing a free service. Members agreed that consideration to applying a charge could be made on a trial basis to determine the uptake and a report could be provided to Members at an appropriate date.

4. SERVICE CHANGES

4.1 WINTER SERVICE – GRIT BINS (£30K)

Summary of Proposal

The Council maintains 298 roadside grit bins. 100 of these bins are in locations which are appropriate to effectively support the gritting routes, with an additional 198 being installed at the direct request of residents through community grant funding. This budget proposal will see the Council remove the 198 roadside grit bins funded by the Area Forums, or would require communities or constituency committees to fund filling of the 198 bins which are not the Council's priority grit bins. This option looks at a £30,000 saving to the Council, primarily based on labour and transport costs as well as the cost of refilling the salt up to three times each winter.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members had a concern regarding the legal obligation of the Council in relation to accidents occurring through not keeping ice and snow off roads and footpaths. Members were informed that local authorities do have responsibilities but is not an absolute requirement that 100% of all roads and pathways have to be treated. To comply legally, Wirral has to have a policy and as long as the policy is deemed reasonable by the courts, and is adhered to by the Council, liability does not fall to the Council.
- Members were concerned that this proposal considers the use of constituency committee funding to retain the bins not considered a priority, but there was no clarity on what funding would be made available to constituency committees in future years.
- It was suggested by Members that communities could fund the filling of grit bins if they were left in place, but acknowledged that maintenance of the bins would need to be considered. Members were informed that the Council may have some spare bins that could be used as replacements if required.

4.2 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE WORKS (£200K)

Summary of Proposal

This proposal would see the Council use only Government grant – and not council revenue funding – for preventative road maintenance. The proposal would not stop road and pavement maintenance, but would limit the amount of funding invested in it to just the amount required to ensure legal and safety obligations are met from Revenue budgets. Removal of funding for preventative maintenance would realise a saving of £200,000.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were concerned over the Council's ability to ensure that essential safety repairs continued to be carried out. Assurances were given that the remaining funding available would allow the Council to meet its duty under the Highways Act to provide a safe highway.
- Members commented that removing preventative maintenance could increase costs further down the line on repairs that the Council would otherwise have carried out. Members accepted that this is part of the strategy going to Cabinet about improving the Council's highways asset management systems, which could generate further savings or better utilisation of available funds.
- Members acknowledged the good condition of the roads in Wirral and noted that the Council will need to develop systems to manage the life cycle of its highways assets through investment in new software. Members were pleased that new funding arrangements the Government has put in around innovation could result in more funding being made available through demonstrating best practice.
- Street lighting was highlighted as an ongoing issue. In particular, there were comments around some street lights that have been inactive all winter. Members acknowledged that there is an insufficient budget to fix every street light but were assured that surveys are being carried out before prioritising those that needed to be fixed. Communication to Members will be improved to enable constituents to be updated.

4.3 ROAD SAFETY (£90K)

Summary of Proposal

The budget proposal seeks to remove school crossing patrols where there is already a signal – controlled pedestrian, pelican or puffin crossing in place. The Council believes that, due to the crossing facilities which are in place 24 hours a day, the demand and requirement for a school crossing patrol is greatly reduced. Before this option is implemented, a full risk assessment will be completed on every crossing site. The proposal will see the Council working with education and health partners; including schools to explore alternative funding – or stopping – the operation of school crossing patrols in those locations where a pedestrian crossing is also in place.

Committee Members' Comments

- In relation to risk assessments being carried out, Members were assured that the Council does have the resources available to ensure they are all completed. The age of children crossing roads would also be included in the risk assessment which was an initial concern to Members as examples of children as young as four going to school by themselves were cited.
- Due to fewer road safety officers being employed, Members highlighted the importance of additional road safety awareness provision for schools. Members agreed that the Council is going in the right direction by focusing resources more effectively through materials being provided to schools and schools providing additional support.
- Members stated that having a light-controlled crossing and a school crossing patrol at the same location may cause confusion for both pedestrians and motorists.

Appendix 1 - Attendance

Session 1

- Garden Waste Service Fee Increase
- Winter Service – Grit Bins
- Highways Maintenance Works
- Road Safety

Councillors

Michael Sullivan (Chair)

Steve Williams

Dave Mitchell

John Hale

Jerry Williams

Chris Spriggs

Adam Sykes

Tracey Pilgrim

Gerry Ellis

Officers

Rob Clifford Senior Manager (Highways and Transport)

Mike Cockburn Senior Manager Waste and Environment

Mike Lester Scrutiny Support Officer

Patrick Torpey Scrutiny Support Officer

Session 2

- Pest Control
- Parks & Community Partnership Working

Councillors

Michael Sullivan (Chair)

Steve Williams

Dave Mitchell

John Hale

Jean Stapleton

Officers

Colin Clayton Senior Manager Environmental Health

Mary Worrall Senior Manager Parks and Countryside Services

Mike Lester Scrutiny Support Officer

Patrick Torpey Scrutiny Support Officer

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2016/17 Budget Proposals

**Scrutiny Report of the Transformation Resources
Policy & Performance Committee**

January 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

This report sets out the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee's feedback in relation to the 2016/17 budget proposals, reported to Cabinet 17 December 2015.

The committee has followed the budget scrutiny process as set out by Coordinating Committee 10 December 2015 and a dedicated budget workshop was held on the 14th January 2016. This provided the committee with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of budget proposals affecting services that fall under the remit of the committee. The budget proposals selected for further examination were identified by the Chair and spokespersons as those deemed to be of greatest significance in terms of value and the public interest. This report summarises the proposals scrutinised and the comments and suggestions of Members attending the workshop.

Councillor Janette Williamson

2. INCOME / RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

2.1 COUNCIL TAX INCREASE OF 1.99%

Summary of Proposal

The proposals would involve increasing the Wirral element of the Council Tax by 1.99% in 2016/17. This is the maximum amount permitted under the current Government Council Tax Referendum rules which has been set at 2% for all authorities (with the exception of Police and Crime Commissioners and shire district authorities). The proposed increase meets with requirement being implemented through the annual Council Tax billing. The proposal would generate an increase of approximately £2.2 million.

Committee Members' Comments

- There was a query about whether the proposal includes any potential drop-off as a result of non-payment. Clarification was provided that the figure is based on the calculation of the Council Tax Base which includes an assessment of the Collection Rate.
- A question was raised about the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant and whether this was still available for authorities that chose not to increase their Council Tax. It was confirmed that this Grant is not available for 2016/17 and the Government is projecting that all authorities will increase Council Tax.
- It was noted the increase relates just to the Wirral element of Council Tax and there is the potential that Police and Fire precepts will also increase for 2016/17.

2.2 COUNCIL TAX ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT

Summary of Proposal

Under government proposals Adult Social Care authorities will be able to increase their Council Tax by 2% over the existing referendum threshold (see above), with the proviso that the additional 2% 'precept' is spent on adult social care services. This will have to be separately itemised on Council Tax bills. Section 151 Officers of local authorities that increase tax for this purpose will be expected to notify the Secretary of State of the amount intended to be raised through the additional precept and what impact it has on previous plans for adult social care budgets. This will then be verified through various existing financial statutory returns. The proposal would generate an increase of approximately £2.2 million.

Committee Members' Comments

- Concern was raised that the proposal would only go towards meeting the adult social care budget shortfall. It was clarified that the council was still seeking to make efficiencies in how social care funding was invested.
- It was observed that increasing Council Tax has a disproportionate benefit in terms of revenue generation in those authorities with larger numbers of higher banded properties compared to authorities with a larger number of low banded properties. This reflects the potential to generate income rather than the Revenue Support Grant which is targeted to those authorities based on need. This Grant is being reduced and phased out by the Government.
- Whilst concern was noted about costs being passed on to residents, it was acknowledged that most Adult Social Care authorities are planning to increase Council Tax and introduce the Adult Social Care precept for 2016/17.

- Concern was expressed that this precept could potentially signal the beginning of Council Tax rises for other services in future years.

2.3 NEW HOMES BONUS AND TAX

Summary of Proposal

The proposal includes two components. The first is the income that is due from the New Homes Bonus based on the number of new properties that have been built in the year to October 2015. It includes an element for affordable housing. The provisional announcement made in December 2015 indicated that Wirral would receive the sum of £600,000 in 2016/17.

This second component is the income that will be due from more households paying Council Tax in 2016/17. The Council Tax Base 2016/17 report to Cabinet indicated that the Tax Base has increased and will result in new income of £1.4 million. With £0.3 million of this already included in the Council's financial projections, the balance of £1,093,000 will be achieved.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were keen for the Council to promote new housing development generally and specifically properties in band D and above as a means to generating a higher tax return for the authority.
- It was acknowledged that each development is dependent on the locality, the planning applications submitted by developers and a permission being granted. Progress is then reliant upon the developer undertaking the building of the homes which depends upon a number of factors which include whether the properties will be sold. The Council also needs to consider the wider housing needs of the borough such as extra care housing.

2.4 PROCUREMENT CONTRACT

Summary of Proposal

The proposal worth £350,000 represents a saving through the Council's Matrix Contract via a rebate received when agency employees are taken on through Matrix across the Authority.

Committee Members' Comments

- Concern was raised about the size of the Council's agency spend generally and the figure for November 2015 which seems particularly high.
- It was acknowledged there will always be a need to employ some agency staff. However, there has been an on-going issue in relation to the recruitment and retention of social workers due to different terms and conditions in other authorities.
- It was recognised that social worker pay has been reviewed as a means to address this issue. Members were keen to know if there had been a positive impact as a result of this.
- Members suggested that reviewing the causes of agency spend was an area that required greater attention as it could uncover further budget savings opportunities. Committee was advised that the Budget was based upon posts being occupied by permanent members of staff. Agency staff are recruited when essential to fill vacancies and come at a higher price which increases costs resulting in a 'potential overspend'.
- It was also suggested the use of consultants could be reviewed as a means to make potential savings. As with agency staff consultants are engaged for a specific period or on a short-term basis to fulfil specific roles.

3. DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

3.1 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PROVISION

Summary of Proposal

This proposal involves reconfiguring the Council's anti-social behaviour provision. Additional 'Stay Safe' operations have been made available through constituency committees in 2015/16 and this would be reduced back to previous levels. The service would also be reconfigured to target resources in areas of most need.

Committee Members' Comments

- It was noted the residents' survey highlighted community safety is a higher priority for Wirral residents in some parts of the borough.
- It was also acknowledged anti-social behaviour data shows a success in Wirral with levels of reported ASB reducing every year for the last five years.
- Members were supportive of the Stay Safe operations and were keen to ensure that the shift towards a new approach would continue to provide support to those who were most in need of the service.

3.2 COMMUNITY PATROL

Summary of Proposal

This proposal would see a restructure of the Community Patrol service towards a more financially self-sufficient model through increased contracts with partners. The restructure would also involve a reconfiguration of shift patterns. The proposed approach would allow the Council time to conduct a longer term review of the Community Patrol service and its core service offer to explore alternative future delivery options.

Committee Members' Comments

- It was acknowledged there is competition from the private sector which emphasises the need for the Council to review its service offer for Community Patrol.
- The current funding model is complex and this will need to be considered as part of the service review.
- There were concerns around the extent to which the Community Patrol service would continue to offer an estate response service in areas where there was no contract with a Registered Landlord.
- Members recognised the value of this service to local communities.
- Concerns were raised that continued uncertainty around the future of this service would adversely affect staff morale.

3.3 DOG FOULING ENFORCEMENT TEAM

Summary of Proposal

The proposal will involve transferring to an alternative delivery model for dog fouling enforcement throughout the borough. This will involve commissioning a private organisation to deliver enforcement activity, based on the same approach as has been successfully implemented to reduce litter. It will result in dog fouling enforcement being delivered on a no-cost basis to the Council.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members acknowledged that dog fouling remained an issue in the borough and suggested that a private sector partner may be more successful in changing community attitudes towards dog fouling.
- It was acknowledged that the proposal would lead to multi-skilled enforcement officers which would add value to the service.
- It was noted that Wirral does not currently charge the maximum permitted penalty for dog fouling and Members believed that increasing this to the maximum amount would send a strong message to the local community on this issue.
- It was acknowledged that new legislation allows for dog walkers to be fined if they are not carrying litter bags. Officers confirmed that public consultation would be required prior to the introduction of such a policy in Wirral.
- Members stressed the importance of education and improved facilities i.e. bins as additional tools to combat dog fouling. Members were keen to ensure that enforcement did not become the sole focus of the Council's response.

3.4 LIBRARIES

Summary of Proposal

This proposal would see the Council save £203,000 through working with community organisations and volunteers to increase their involvement in delivering community library services.

Many community organisations, groups and volunteers already take an active role in running their local library. Encouraging more of this work will allow the Council to make the savings needed while keeping the facilities available for the communities who want them.

Over the course of the next year up to 12 of the 24 Council library services could transfer to community delivery. Details of specific libraries which may transfer will be dependent on expressions of interest received. Invitations for expressions of interest will be sent out from the end of January.

Committee Members' Comments

- It was acknowledged the response from the residents' survey indicates that people think this should not be one of the Council's higher priorities.
- Members were concerned over the viability of contingency plans in the event that community groups did not come forward in sufficient numbers.

- Members were also concerned about the process for determining which library services the Council would continue to operate and which would transfer to the community.
- It was suggested there may not currently be sufficient capacity within certain communities and community groups to deliver library services autonomously. There is a question mark over the readiness of groups to take on these responsibilities from April 2016.
- It was acknowledged there is no prescribed model for community groups running library facilities. There are a variety of models in operation around the country and the Council will adopt a flexible approach rather than a single model. The level and nature of community involvement will be determined locally following discussions with interested groups.
- Given the financial forecast in the coming years it was suggested that this proposal be viewed as a direction of travel as a means to keep all 24 of Wirral's library facilities open in the long term. Whilst there remain some uncertainties, the proposal should be supported to explore all options and models available in order to achieve this.

4. SERVICE CHANGES

4.1 DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT

Summary of Proposal

The Council receives a grant from Government to pay for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). These are extra payments to people receiving housing benefit who need more help with their housing costs. The grant falls short of the maximum permitted total that an authority can spend up to, with authorities having the option to meet some or all of the difference through a local financial contribution. The demand for support consistently exceeds provision and Wirral has recently 'topped up' the grant to cover these costs. The DWP have not yet advised LA's of their respective grant allocation in respect of 2016/2017.

This proposal would achieve savings of £300,000 by removing the Council 'top-up' and limiting payments to the level of the government grant amount. There would be a review of how the available grant is administered to target the most deserving cases.

Committee Members' Comments

- It was highlighted the DHP grant has been reducing over the last few years. Wirral has taken the decision to 'top up' the grant and manage the fund throughout the year. Other councils only provide additional funds once the government grant is spent and some authorities do not top-up at all. A range of approaches are adopted across the Liverpool City Region.
- It was acknowledged the fund is managed tightly to target those in greatest need. The policy would be further reviewed in the light of this proposal to ensure funding available is allocated most effectively.
- Members expressed their concerns about this proposal and the potential impact on some of Wirral's most vulnerable residents.
- It was suggested that a different option could be considered which would involve not saving the full amount but holding something as a contingency i.e. a percentage of the top-up based on historic spending levels. This could be added to the grant and used if required, with any underspend being carried over into the next year's fund.

4.2 CLOSURE OF WELFARE RIGHTS UNIT

Summary of Proposal

The Council Welfare Rights Service provides advice, case work and advocacy to residents in respect of all Welfare Benefits, working closely both with the DWP and HMRC and achieves increased benefits awards for those residents, in excess of its annual costs.

This option would involve the Council stopping this service on the basis that similar services (funded by the Council) are delivered by independent providers within the voluntary and community sector such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Involve Northwest, Age UK etc.

Committee Members' Comments

- Concern was raised over this proposal and the potential loss of what was viewed by Members as an important service.

- Concerns were also expressed about other agencies' capacity and capability to provide this service particularly in the current climate of continuing welfare reform. It was noted that agencies such as CAB were already stretched.
- Members were keen to point out the Welfare Rights Team are experienced staff providing specialist advice. In contrast many of the voluntary and community sector counterparts provided more general advice services.
- It was noted that the revenue generated by this service through benefit take up, vastly exceeded the cost of the service.
- It was also highlighted that the team is valued as an internal resource providing advice to other service departments, such as Children's and Adult's Social Care Services and the Personal Finance Unit. Therefore its loss would have a wider impact for the Council in terms of accessing advice and expertise.
- It was noted that the welfare rights team provides training to voluntary and community sector welfare rights staff. There was a suggestion that the team could charge for this training to raise income and off-set costs.
- Members requested that officers undertake a cost benefit analysis exercise to better understand the value of this service. It was acknowledged this would be difficult to achieve, although the team has recently started to capture income generation as a result of advice services provided.
- It was suggested the Council conducts a wider review of welfare advice services to highlight any gaps in provision and areas of duplication. This would provide the basis for a review of future service delivery models, with consideration given to partnership working, shared resources and achieving value for money.
- Members were keen for the value of the service to be better understood in terms of income generation (through take-up of benefits) and revenues to the Council in advance of this service being lost. The increasing demand on welfare advice and representation, with the implementation of key changes, such as Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payments, was also seen as a reason for maintaining existing service provision.

Appendix 1 – Workshop Attendance

Councillors

Janette Williamson (Chair)
Tom Anderson
Bruce Berry
Steve Foulkes
Matthew Patrick
Tracey Pilgrim
John Salter
Adam Sykes
Joe Walsh

Officers

Tom Sault	Head of Financial Services
Mark Camborne	Head of Corporate and Community Safety
Peter Aspinall	Strategic Library Manager
Julie Mann	Principal Librarian
Toni Bosworth	Customer Service Development Team Manager
Lisa Jamieson	Transaction Centre Senior Manager
Nicky Dixon	Senior Benefits Manager
Mike Callon	Team Leader – Performance / Scrutiny
Patrick Torpey	Scrutiny Support Officer

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE 16 FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	Annual Report: Equality Plan 2014-2017
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All Wards
REPORT OF:	Joe Blott, Strategic Director for Transformation and Resources
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Ann McLachlan (Governance), Councillor Adrian Jones (Support Services)
KEY DECISION?	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights progress of Council's Equality Plan 2014-2017. The Equality Plan was approved by Cabinet in July 2014, and embracing equality has remained central to the way we have delivered services over the last year, and considered the needs of our employees and customers in the decisions we have made.
- 1.2 This report highlights some of the work we have undertaken to support our priorities. This is an ongoing process and we continue to focus on providing a workplace where employees feel comfortable to be themselves and perform to the best of their ability, and by ensuring we provide services which meet the current and future needs of our diverse residents.
- 1.3 The Co-ordinating Committee is requested to note the progress of the Equality Plan 2014-2017 in its first year of implementation.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Embracing equality and promoting diversity has been a Council value for a number of years now and reflects the approach the organisation takes to consider equality throughout all that we do.
- 2.2 The Equality Plan places a wider focus on equality, bedding this across the Council rather than it being something which stands alone. The 3 aims of the plan are:
 - To eliminate any unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation,

- To advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
- To foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

2.3 The Neighbourhoods Senior Manager is the corporate lead for equality and produces quarterly performance reports on key activities.

2.4 The Workforce Equality Steering Group, Chaired by the Strategic Director for Transformation and Resources, receives quarterly performance reports which ensures that we continue to be monitored and challenged to improve.

2.5 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)

2.5.1 Over the last 12 months there has been significant work involved in preparing the organisation for transformational change. This is an area that is continuously evolving and, as a result, the equality implications of change are considered as part of the process.

2.5.2 During the last 12 months a total of 132 EIA's were completed and published on the Council website. This process is designed to ensure that a policy or project does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people. It also helps us to identify where we can promote equality and diversity more, as well as negative or adverse impacts that can be removed or mitigated against.

2.5.3 We will continue to look for potential impacts of our decisions on our workforce, customers and communities during 2015/2016

2.6 Achievements August 2014 – August 2015

2.6.1 The reasonable adjustments policy has been updated and will be published on the intranet as part of the Attendance Management Policy. £25,000 has also been allocated in a corporate budget code to help staff obtain their reasonable adjustments more quickly. This year, £10,000 of the allocation has funded 'Text Help' software licences so we have a bank ready for when they are needed and staff do not have to wait for a licence to be issued.

2.6.2 The Performance Appraisal and Development form now includes best practice elements of the Equality Framework for Local Government and reasonable adjustments. This means all staff are now asked how they have promoted equality and diversity within their work. Plus, there is an automatic annual review of an employee's reasonable adjustments as part of their appraisal.

2.6.3 The equality profiling form for staff has been updated to include recent changes in the law such as equal marriage and shared parental leave. We have also updated the categories of information we ask for allowing us to meet

the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The information we collect will help to further improve our recruitment and retention practices and lead to a more diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve.

- 2.6.4 An online exit interview has been developed to enable staff to tell us why they are leaving the organisation, without having face to face interviews if they do not want one. This should increase the amount of exit feedback which will help us identify any potential hotspot areas, patterns or trends.
- 2.6.5 An employee engagement panel is being established. We will use this panel to test everything from new policy development, to communication campaigns and e-learning modules. The group will represent all protected groups and all levels of the organisation, leading to a diverse employee network.
- 2.6.6 We have reviewed the last two years' of grievances and now the organisation can clearly identify the nature and type of these issues across directorates. This has led to bi-monthly reports going to each Departmental Management Team with early intervention in any potential hotspot areas and the implementation of the Dignity at Work policy.
- 2.6.7 43 members of staff now volunteer to be Dignity at Work advisors to support other colleagues. This was a key part of the launch of the new Dignity at Work, Grievance and Whistleblowing policies.
- 2.6.8 Wirral Council became one of the first local authorities in the country to ensure staff are paid a Living Wage. The Council also became the first local authority to offer companies discounted business rates if they do the same.
- 2.6.9 The GIRLS project, managed by the Youth Support Service, provides support for the most vulnerable and at risk young women aged between 13-19 years. The project helps them to increase their feelings of confidence and self-esteem. Informal and educational 12 week personal development programmes are implemented aimed at reducing risk-taking behaviour, reducing offending or re-offending, and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.6.10 The Council is supporting Victim Care Merseyside, including a new victims' referral system so people are directed straight to the best placed teams to support them and increase the number of face to face visits. This is to ensure the most vulnerable people get the protection and care they need.
- 2.6.11 More than 1,000 young people benefited from a hard-hitting road safety course, raising awareness of the dangers they face on the road as pedestrians, passengers or young drivers. The overall aim of the course was to reduce the number of young casualties on Wirral's roads.
- 2.6.12 Wirral's Family Intervention Programme achieved remarkable success in turning around the lives of families that have multiple and complex needs. There has been significant decreases in domestic violence, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse turning lives around and reducing the impact on local public services.

- 2.6.13 Award winning 'Takeaway for Change' and 'Eat Well Wirral' campaigns have engaged primary schools, children's centres, and takeaway outlets in the heart of the community. Council officers supported by nutritionists and health care professionals provided educational support sessions for families and children to guide them to make healthy meal choices and opt for healthier options when in the supermarket or eating fast food.
- 2.6.13 Heswall piloted setting up a 'dementia friendly' community as part of moves to reduce social isolation. Public workshops were held where people could learn what it is like to live with dementia, and then turn that understanding into action by becoming a 'dementia friend'.
- 2.6.14 The Wirral West constituency team co-ordinated the 'Stay Safe, Warm and Well' project. 4,000 leaflets and 60 posters, with up to date telephone numbers were produced and distributed to relevant support groups and services. People were referred to additional support groups and services in a co-ordinated way using a single referral form. As a result of the campaign 21 groups were visited and a total of nearly 300 winter warmth packs given out (fleece blankets, flasks, gloves etc.), nearly 200 referrals to additional services were made (42% of referrals were made to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service for services like Home Safety Checks, 24% of referrals were made to Energy Projects Plus for services like fuel debt advice, 20% of referrals were made to existing Council services such as Healthy Homes, Adaptations and POPIN, and 14% of referrals were made to Age UK for services like befriending).
- 2.6.15 The 'Safe in the Town' card was launched in Birkenhead for residents who are uneasy about venturing out into busy places by themselves. If residents get into difficulty or feel anxious in the town centre, they can drop into one of a number of participating businesses or organisations where they will be looked after while the relative, friend or carer named on their card is contacted. The scheme was introduced as a result of partnership between the Birkenhead Constituency Committee, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, the Pyramids Shopping Centre, Merseytravel, Wirral Met College, and the Wirral Chamber of Commerce. All participating venues display the 'Safe in the Town' logo so people can identify where they can feel safe and get help.
- 2.6.16 Wirral's Older People's Parliament continues to work to provide a way for older people to voice their opinions, inform the Council and influence its decisions. The parliament meets 4 times a year much of their work is undertaken through 8 sub-committees; crime and respect, disability and safety, education and lifelong learning, environment, health and social care, housing, standards and constitution, and transport.
- 2.6.17 The Executive Youth Board acts as Wirral's overarching young people's group for consulting and engaging young people in strategic decision making. Activities undertaken are the Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament, shadowing Councillors and advising on matters affecting young people,

shadowing Chairs of Committees, working with Council officers to develop the Youth Offer, advising on the ongoing development of youth participation activities, and consulting with and gaining feedback from young people in Wirral.

2.6.18 The Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. Its work crosses the boundaries between the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors and it is proactive in driving forward the duty of all partner agencies in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The WSCB publishes local safeguarding child protection procedures and practice guidance, to advise agencies and professionals in the borough how the inter-agency arrangements should be carried out in working with children and their families.

2.6.19 The Council recognises that carers need to be supported to enable them to continue to carry out their caring responsibilities. Supporting carers is not just about services, it is about providing support, information and advice and recognising the valuable contribution that carers make. It is also about identifying those people who do provide care for another person, even if the majority of those people do not recognise themselves as a carer. A 'Carers Strategy' has been developed with Carers and statutory and social sector organisations which sets the scene locally to respond to the requirement for the council to work with the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, local partners and carers' organisations to ensure that carers are identified, supported and to agree plans and budgets for identifying and supporting carers.

2.7 Planned Activities September 2015 – August 2016

2.7.1 Further supporting partnership approaches to a) monitor immigration and migration levels, b) anti-hate crime activities, and c) support Gypsies and Travellers visiting and settling in Wirral.

2.7.2 Gathering case studies demonstrating the impact of our equality work on individuals from different protected groups.

2.7.3 Collating the equality profile of Wirral's diverse communities.

2.7.4 Sharing our equality best practice and experience with others.

2.7.5 Developing a best practice models for a) addressing under-representation in the workplace, b) gathering customer equality profiling information, and c) engaging more marginalised communities.

2.7.6 Reviewing the online equality and diversity mandatory training package.

2.7.7 Supporting development of the Council's People Strategy.

2.7.8 Reviewing the Council's approach to accessible information, translation and interpretation, and alternative formats.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 There are no risks contained within this report

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no other options need considering.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so there is no need for consultation.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 None.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no implications for the sector.

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

8.1 All future activities required to further implement the Equality Plan 2014-2017 will be completed within existing budgets.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no legal implications.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no equality impact assessment is required.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no carbon reduction or environmental implications.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This report is a summary of progress made by implementing the Equality Plan 2014-2017, so no planning or community safety implications.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The Co-ordinating Committee note the progress of the Equality Plan 2014-2017, and planned activities for the forthcoming year.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 To note progress of the Equality Plan 2014-2017.

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SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Equality Plan 2014-2017 approval	July 2014

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COORDINATING COMMITTEE

16 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT TITLE	2015/16 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE
REPORT OF	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the Council's Quarter 2 (July to September) performance against the delivery of the 2015/16 Corporate Plan (as approved by Council 8 December 2014). The report is attached as Appendix 1 and sets out progress against a suite of agreed indicators. The indicators relate to a range of pledges under the three Wirral Plan themes of People, Business and Environment.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- Committee Members are requested to note the contents of this report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

[Starting on a separate page]
SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

For the committee to fulfil its role in terms of scrutinising the Council's performance.

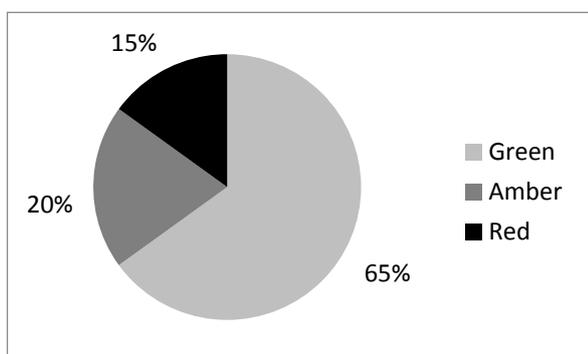
2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

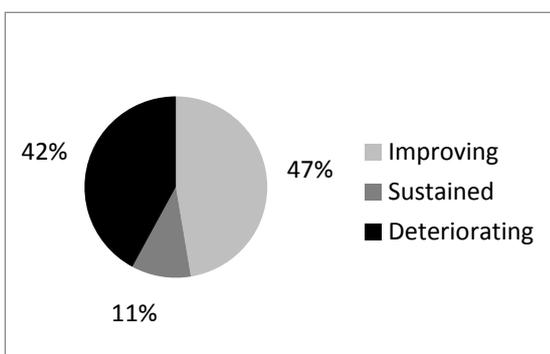
3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Corporate Plan performance is monitored against the targets set at the start of the year. For each measure, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating is assigned depending on the performance level against the target. The report also shows the direction of travel illustrating for each indicator whether performance is improving, deteriorating or sustained.

Of the 20 reportable indicators, 13 are rated Green, 4 are rated Amber and 3 are rated Red. For indicators rated Amber and Red, the responsible officer has indicated the corrective action being put in place to get performance back on track. Of the 19 indicators where it is possible to indicate a Direction of Travel, 9 are improving, 8 are deteriorating and 2 are showing performance sustained. The charts set out below show the breakdown in terms of the RAG and Direction of Travel ratings:



RAG Rating Breakdown



Direction of Travel Breakdown

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

There are none arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

N/A

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No because there is no relevance to equality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – 2015/16 Quarter 2 Corporate Plan Performance

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	17 December 2015

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APPENDIX 1 - 2015/16 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG			
Investing in our future								
RECP02	To maintain local environmental quality (LEQ) of litter, detritus, & graffiti in main gateways and shopping areas	93.5%	93.5%	96.67%	Green	93.5%	↑	
RECP03	Number of new affordable homes	250	100	209	Green	250	↑	
RECP04	Number of adaptations completed	2000	1000	1351	Green	2000	↑	
Page 57 RECP05	Number of interventions to improve private rented sector properties	400	200	471	Green	600	↑	<i>Most of this years activity has been in the first two quarters due to the introduction of the Selective Licensing Scheme, a significant increase in the next two quarters is not anticipated. The year-end forecast will be reconsidered again at Q3.</i>
RECP06	Increase the number of jobs created and safeguarded via Invest Wirral	975	175	190	Green	975	↓	<i>The Direction of Travel (DoT) for Q2 2015/16 has been assessed as a deterioration from this time last year because of the lower number of jobs created and safeguarded. However, last year's figures were due to a spike from the volume of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Grant Applications awarded. Current performance is on track to meet or slightly exceeded the Q2 2015/16 year-end target.</i>
RECP08	Percentage of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits (economic in-activity)	13.6%	14.4%	13.4%	Green	13.6	↑	<i>Q1 (to February 2015) performance is the latest information available, Q2 performance will not be available until late November. Performance remains on track to achieve or exceed the year-end forecast.</i>

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG			
RECP18	Develop and deliver the Wirral Selective Licencing Scheme (WSLS)	100%	50%	50%	Green	100%	↔	
Promoting Independence								
Page 58 C003	Rate of Children in Need (CIN) per 10,000	350.0	388.0	396.2	Green	381.4	↑	<p>The number of Children In Need has increased due to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an increase in the rate of referrals into Children's Social Care. This is both initial referrals and re-referrals. • Within the system there remains a need, both internally and externally, for a better understanding of the thresholds for intervention and levels of need in respect of children and their families. <p>The following actions are being taken to improve this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the Threshold of Need is understood internally and externally and associated correct intervention is applied rigorously. • Review Children In Need cases that have been in place longer than 6 months. • Improve the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub screening process. • Utilise the early help offer and ensure it is consistently applied.

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG			
CSC008	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000	96.2	98.2	101.0	Amber	100.3	↓	<p>The number of children entering care has been relatively stable for the past five years; however, children are remaining in care longer than in other authorities. A decreasing target has been set for this measure to bring Wirral more in line with the North West average and that of our statistical neighbours.</p> <p>The department is maintaining a tight control of the processes around children becoming looked after. There is also a focus on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the use of Child Protection Plans • Progressing plans for Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) • Improving the timeliness of adoptions <p>Additional social work capacity has been agreed as part of the strategy to reduce the numbers of Children in Care, with the additional capacity targeting the areas highlighted above. Increased legal capacity has also been arranged to progress applications through the courts. This is to meet the target timescales set.</p>
ADCP07	Permanent Admissions of older people (65+) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	696.9	724.9	762.5	Amber	696.9	↓	<p>The year to date target has been exceeded by 10 placements. The department is seeing significant additional pressures due to self-funders falling below the support threshold, the total number of people requiring support to date in 2015/16 is 40 compared to a total of 37 across the whole of 2014/15.</p> <p>The additional Intermediate Care / Transitional beds commissioned with effect from 1st September will impact on the use of long term beds. Performance continues to be scrutinised at monthly locality performance surgeries.</p>
ADCP11	Proportion of new requests for support resolved by advice and information	50%	50%	55%	Green	54%	↔	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)	
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG				
ADCP16	Proportion of people who have received short term services to maximise independence requiring no ongoing support	75%	75%	78%	Green	77%	↑		
PHCP01	Rate of attendance at A&E for injury and assault where alcohol was a factor. PHOF 2.18: Alcohol-related admissions to hospital.	820	820	727.02	Green	820	↑	<i>Reporting period Sept 14-Aug 15</i> Performance continues on a positive downward trajectory, one that it has generally sustained for the last two years. This is to be welcomed, and further work is planned to get a better understanding of the factors that may be driving this downward, so that this can be sustained.	
Page 60	PHCP02	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check offered (PHOF 2.22i)	20%	10%	14.7%	Green	20%	↑	<i>Reporting period Apr 15-Sept 15</i> It has recently become apparent that there are problems with the validity of the quarterly uptake figures owing to the incorrect recording/analysis of 'invitations offered'. A review of data validity is currently underway and figures will be updated accordingly. However, variability in practice performance remains a key challenge.
	PHCP03	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check take up (PHOF 2.22ii)	55%	55%	30.6%	Red	55%	↑	Actions to address performance issues include: - Regular practical support to practices via the public health practice nurses - A pilot to test out the potential impact of Point of Care testing - Update training for frontline staff delivering health checks - Re-issuing comparative performance profiles - New publicity materials (posters, flyers, video)

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG			
PHCP04	Proportion of opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	10%	10%	8.9%	Amber	10%	↓	<p>Reporting period Mar 14 - Feb 15 (completions) and Mar 14 - Aug 15 (re-presentations)</p> <p>After a period of sustained improvement, performance against this measure has dipped slightly. However, current performance (8.9%) still remains above the national average (7.3%). The reporting period includes the transition of the contract to a new provider and mobilisation of the new service. This has resulted in a period of substantial change and service disturbance, with a reduction in the number of people completing treatment in February and March being noted. It is likely the reduced number of successful treatment completions is a factor in bringing performance down and performance is likely to dip as transitional factors work their way through the process. It is anticipated this could be the case for a further 3 or 4 months before the new service is able to perform to the expected standard. A more complete picture of the progress of the new service will not emerge until January 2016.</p>
PHCP05	Proportion of non-opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	53%	53%	46.9%	Amber	53%	↓	<p>Reporting period Mar 14 - Feb 15 (completions) and Jan 14 - Aug 15 (re-presentations)</p> <p>The performance of this indicator has shown a reduction since the previous quarter but remains well above the national average of 38.7%. As above, this performance will continue to be affected by transitional factors for several more months.</p>
Transforming the Council								
TRCP02	Projected Delivery of Council budget savings	£38.0m	-	£21.0m	Green	£29.3m	N/A	<p>In July Cabinet agreed to the reprofiling of savings into 2016/17 and funded from reserves in 2015/16.</p>

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	July - Sep (Q2)			Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	RAG			
TRCP03	Performance Appraisals completed by September 2015	80%	80%	51%	Red	51%	↑	This PI has a target completion date of September. As such, the year end forecast figure is the same as the September Q2 figure. The target of 80% was met for managers but not for all staff, despite monthly communications via One Brief and weekly reporting to Strategic Directors. The 51% out turn figure is a significant improvement on the position at the same time last year (29%). However, performance against this measure is being reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team in advance of the 2016 appraisals cycle.
TRCP04	Sickness Absence: The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)	9.75	4.38	5.38	Red	12.06	↓	It is forecast that the year-end sickness absence will be 2.31 days above the 9.75 day target. Management action continues to be taken to reduce the level of sickness absence across the Council. This includes changes to the Council's sickness policy and triggers from October 2015, Strategic Director-led sessions with managers to set expectations and the development of an employee wellbeing plan. On-going performance is being monitored closely on a monthly basis to ensure that these activities are having a positive impact.
Direction of Travel (DoT) Key		↑	Performance Improving		↓	Performance Deteriorating		↔ Performance sustained



COORDINATING COMMITTEE

16 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT TITLE	2015/16 QUARTER 2 CAPITAL & REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITOR REPORTS
REPORT OF	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Coordinating Committee with the Quarter 2 Capital and Revenue Financial Monitoring details, as reported to Cabinet on 5 November 2015. This is to enable Coordinating Committee to scrutinise progress against the 2015/16 revenue and capital budgets and highlight any areas for further clarification. The Revenue and Capital monitoring reports are appended to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- Committee notes the content of these reports and highlights any areas requiring further clarification.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

For the committee to discharge its role in scrutinising the Council's finances.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The review of corporate finance is a standing item for Coordinating Committee. At each regular meeting, committee reviews revenue and capital monitoring reports. This report provides Coordinating Committee with the Quarter 2 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Reports that went to Cabinet on 5 November 2015. These are included as follows:

- Cabinet Report 27/07/15 Revenue Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 2
- Cabinet Report 27/07/15 Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 2

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

There are none arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

N/A

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No because there is no relevance to equality.

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APPENDICES

- Cabinet Report 27/07/15 Revenue Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 2
- Cabinet Report 27/07/15 Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 2

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

5 NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT	CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16 QUARTER 2 (TO SEPTEMBER 2015)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	ACTING SECTION 151 OFFICER
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

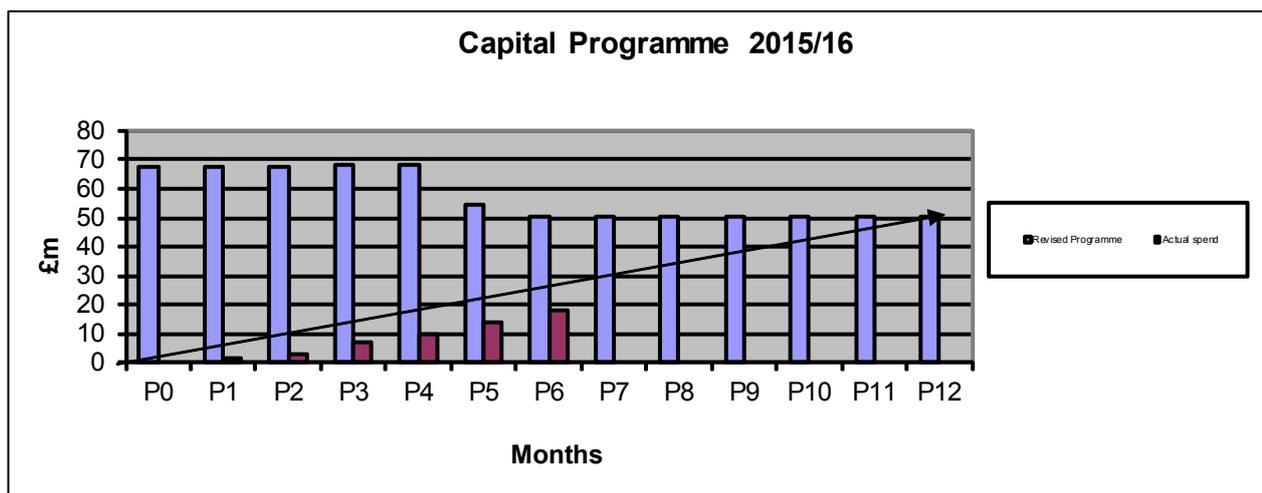
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the progress in delivering the Capital Programme 2015/16 at the end of September 2015. The report recommends that Cabinet agrees the rephasing of the 2015/16 Capital Programme down to £50.2 million and reports expenditure to date of £18.2 million.

2 OVERALL POSITION AT END OF SEPTEMBER 2015

2.1 The actual spend against the Capital Programme is summarised in Table 1.

Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit



3 ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

3.1 The Programme for 2015/16 is subject to change and reflects the Programme agreed by Cabinet on 10 February 2015 together with subsequent amendments. Broadly these reflect any re-profiling identified since the 2015/16 Budget Cabinet and changes regarding external financial support, primarily the latest grant notifications.

3.2 To aid the monitoring process, schemes are categorised against five gate points being Conception, Approval, Start Up, Delivery and Completion.

Table 1: Capital Programme 2015/16 at 30 September 2015

	Capital Strategy	Revisions Since Budget Cabinet	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend September 2015
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Universal & Infrastructure	8,956	-5,032	3,924	1,671
Families – Children	8,517	2,287	10,804	3,083
Families – Adults	8,263	-2,946	5,317	517
Families – Sport & Rec	1,865	810	2,675	1,164
R&E– Env & Regulation	12,633	-147	12,486	4,698
R&E– Hsg & Comm Safety	6,412	-984	5,428	1,308
R& E – Regeneration	1,808	4,736	6,544	5,018
Transformation Resources	1,600	1,404	3,004	735
Total expenditure	50,054	128	50,182	18,194

3.3 As outlined above a number of schemes within the Programme have been reprofiled to reflect updated project delivery forecasts and to take account of changes in available funding and costs. Variances since June are in Table 2.

Table 2: Variations to the 2015/16 Programme

Scheme	£000
Universal & Infrastructure	
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	-519
Cleveland St. Transport Depot	-2,800
Park depot rationalisation	-750
Demolish Bebington Town Hall and Liscard Municipal	-378
Demolish former Rock Ferry High	-395
Families & Wellbeing – Children	
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	-150
Wirral Youth Zone	100
Families & Wellbeing – Adults	
Transformation of day service	-500
Families & Wellbeing – Sport & Recreation	
West Kirby Marine Lake	-590
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	-325
Reg & Env – Environment & Regulation	
Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting)	-1,074
Coast Protection	-134
West Kirby Flood alleviation	-1,400
Highway Maintenance	-30

Scheme	£000
Reg & Env – Housing	
Aids, adaptations and DFGs	-1,235
LIFT	-296
Clearance	-1,324
Home Improvements	-434
Empty Property interventions	-76
Reg & Env – Regeneration	
LEP Regional Growth Fund	985
Overall variation since Quarter 1	-11,325

3.4 Universal and Infrastructure Services

Building refurbishment to increase occupancy. Pending resolution over the future occupation of Old Market House there is an impact on other planned works which include the Wallasey South Annexe and Bebington Town Hall demolition. These form part of the accommodation review and are temporarily on hold.

A further eight schemes are either underway or have been completed (e.g. Wallasey Town Hall, Cheshire Lines) that will lead to significantly improved use of the Council's asset base.

With the Cleveland Street Transport Depot being permanently occupied and operational this has resulted in the works being re-phased.

Parks Rationalisation. The review of Parks and Open Spaces is being completed. There has therefore been a pause whilst we consider the impact this may have on required capital expenditure, ensuring funding gives value for money against assets to be retained and fits with the Wirral Plan.

Former Rock Ferry High School. Application will shortly be submitted to Secretary of State. Demolition will commence assuming the site proposals are approved.

3.5 Families and Wellbeing - Children

Private Finance Initiative (PFI). No schemes are planned for this year and any future schemes will be restricted to the level of reserve funding available (£85,000).

Wirral Youth Zone. Within the revised Children & Young people Capital Programme a sum of £500,000 has been identified as a potential contingency sum to support the delivery of the project.

Practical completion is expected over the next few weeks in respect of the additional classrooms and other works at Elleray Park.

3.6 Families and Wellbeing - Adults

Transformation of Day Services is ongoing. At this stage the scheme has still to be developed so the Programme is based on the level of grant funding available deferring the requirement for Council resources by £0.5 million.

3.7 Families and Wellbeing – Sport and Recreation

Tenders have been invited for the integrated accommodation works at West Kirby Marine Lake and the majority of the expenditure will be incurred in 2016/17.

The re-roofing of the Tennis Centre is currently in the tendering process and a preferred contractor has still to be chosen.

Works at Guinea Gap are now complete and, along with the 3G pitches and fitness suite, have seen an increased usage of the facilities.

3.8 Regeneration and Environment – Environment and Regulation

Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting). The competitive tendering process has resulted in a contract saving of £1.074 million with the scheme being successful in securing an interest-free loan.

Coast Protection. The aids to Navigation scheme will now be completed during the 2016/17 financial year. In respect of West Kirby Flood Alleviation the business case has been submitted to the Environment Agency. Approval to commence the scheme is awaited and anticipated to be primarily in 2016/17.

3.9 Regeneration and Environment – Housing

In order to allow people with disabilities to live more independently, Aids and Adaptations and grants continue to be approved and the spend committed. The incurring of this spend is determined by the grant applicant which means that there will invariably be works approved which remain uncompleted during the year.

The clearance programme involves complex legal processes and with potential Compulsory Purchase Orders, public enquiries and business relocations do impact on the delivery of the programme.

Within home improvements expenditure is driven by the level of grant applications, the very nature of which translates into some unpredictability in the programme.

3.10 Regeneration and Environment – Regeneration

Regional Growth Fund. Additional grant will be received to match the expenditure relating to this particular regeneration activity. Nearly £5 million has been provided from this and other growth funds to provide investment and assist with the regeneration and development of local businesses.

3.11 Transformation and Resources

The main expenditure relates to the progression of the improvements to Information Technology which is continuing.

4 FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

4.1 Table 3 summarises the financing sources for the original and latest programmes.

Table 3: Revised Capital Programme Financing

Capital Programme Financing	Capital Strategy	Revised Programme
	£000s	£000s
Unsupported Borrowing	19,090	15,875
Capital Receipts	12,693	10,363
Revenue and Reserves	537	622
Grants	17,734	23,322
Total Financing	50,054	50,182

4.2 Any reprofiling of the Programme which reduces the borrowing requirement will produce one-off revenue savings. A permanent saving will only occur if schemes are permanently ceased, otherwise the full budget will be required in 2016/17 when the re-profiled expenditure is incurred.

5 PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

5.1 Funding for the forecast 2015/16 to 2017/18 Programme is in Table 4. This reflects the 2015/18 Capital Programme agreed by Cabinet on 10 February 2015 with subsequent amendments for reprofiling and revised grant notifications.

5.2 The latest projected programmes for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are included at Annex 2. These are in the process of being reviewed to ensure that the schemes are compatible with the 20/20 Vision and to try and identify any savings.

Table 4: Capital Programme Financing 2015/16 to 2017/18

Capital Programme Financing	2015/16 Revised Programme	2016/17 Revised Programme	2017/18 Revised Programme	Total Programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Unsupported Borrowing	15,875	10,951	0	26,826
Capital Receipts	10,363	11,869	2,414	24,646
Revenue / Reserves	622	954	66	1,642
Grants	23,322	17,805	9,511	50,638
Total Financing	50,182	41,579	11,991	103,752

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

- 6.1 Based on the current cost, £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of £80,000 per annum in the following year. As part of the Capital Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18 the Council has included an element of prudential borrowing. At Month 6 there is a sum of £27 million new unsupported borrowing included over the three years, which will result in approximately £2.1 million of additional revenue costs detailed at Table 5, if there is no change in the Strategy.

Table 5: Unsupported Borrowing Forecasts & Revenue Costs

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000	£000	£000
New Unsupported Borrowing	15,875	10,951	0	0
Cumulative	15,875	26,826	26,826	26,826
Annual Revenue repayment costs				
Cumulative	317	1,488	2,145	2,145

- 6.2 The re-profiling of the Capital Programme, the use of internal borrowing i.e. using the Councils cash balances rather than taking out external loans and means that the 2015/16 borrowing will be delayed until 2016/17. With cash investments currently yielding low rates of return and the interest rate on external loans being much higher it is financially advantageous to use cash balances to temporarily fund non grant funded capital projects. Savings from these measures and from applying policies for minimising revenue provision (principal) costs on Treasury Management costs are anticipated to total £2.5 million in 2015/16.

7 CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

- 7.1 The Capital Programme is reliant on the Council generating capital receipts to finance future schemes. Available capital receipts at 1 April 2015 were £8.3 million. The table assumes the proposed spend, set out at Table 1 is agreed. Receipts and funding assumptions are based upon the latest estimates available.

Table 6: Projected Capital Receipts position

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000
Capital Receipts Reserve	8,300	337	3,468
In - Receipts Assumption	2,400	15,000	10,500
Out - Funding assumption	-10,363	-11,869	-2,414
Closing Balance	337	3,468	11,554

7.2 In respect of progress on the major site disposals. The Council should soon be entering a 16 week exclusivity period with the preferred purchaser of Acre Lane. Bids have been received for the sale of the Manor Drive site and these are currently being assessed. The former Rock Ferry High School site requires Secretary of State approval and Cabinet on 10 September 2015 agreed that an application be submitted for change of use of the Rock Ferry site to a mixed use basis with an element retained for green space. With the major sites the capital receipts will take the form of a series of phased payments to the Council which are likely to commence in 2016 and the receipts assumptions in the above table reflect the best estimate of these.

8 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 The possibility of failure to deliver the Capital Programme will be mitigated by the monthly review by a senior group of officers, charged with improving performance.

8.2 The generation of capital receipts may be influenced by factors outside the authority's control e.g. ecological issues. Lambert, Smith, Hampton are still providing external support.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 No other options have been considered.

10 CONSULTATION

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

11 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

11.1 There are no outstanding actions.

12 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

13 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The whole report is about significant resource implications.

14 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

15 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

15.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not attached as there are none.

16 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

17 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

17.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

18 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 That Cabinet is asked to note the spend to date at Month 6 of £18.2 million, with 50% of the financial year having elapsed.

18.2 That Cabinet is asked to agree and refer to Council the revised Capital Programme of £50.2 million (Table 1).

19 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16

Annex 2 – Capital Programme 2016/17 and 2017/18

Annex 3 – Capital Receipts 2015/16

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports presented to Cabinet previous report to Cabinet 2015/16 (Quarter 1)	27 July 2015
Capital Programme – Council	25 February 2014
Capital Programme – Council	24 February 2015

Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16

ANNEX 1

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Universal & Infrastructure						
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	1,600	1,201	1,600	-	-	1,600
Fund to assist land assembly and re-sale	587	45	587	-	-	587
Cleveland St. Transport Depot	315	37	315			315
Park depots rationalisation	520	132	520			520
Energy efficiency Initiatives	596	175	596	-	-	596
Demolish Stanley Special & external renovation work	150	81	150	-	-	150
Demolish Foxfield	156	-	156	-	-	156
	3,924	1,671	3,924	-	-	3,924

Families and Wellbeing - CYP	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Elleray Park Special School redevelopment	850	674	850	-	-	850
School remodelling/additional classrooms (Primary Places)	2,050	173	1,800	-	250	2,050
Condition/Modernisation	4,658	1,441	-	-	4,658	4,658
Basic Need allocation	1,897	243	-	-	1,897	1,897
Children's centres	53	-	-	-	53	53
Aiming Higher	24	53	-	-	24	24
Youth Capital	149		98	-	51	149
Birkenhead High Girls Academy	80	157	-	69	11	80
Funding for 2 year olds	18	-	-	-	18	18
Universal Free School Meals	209	32	-	-	209	209
Somerville Mobile Replacement	366	164	366	-	-	366
Family Support Scheme	200	54	200	-	-	200
Youth Zone	100	92	100			100
Stanley Special - additional classrooms, medical/hygiene provision	150	-	150	-	-	150
	10,804	3,083	3,564	69	7,171	10,804

Families and Wellbeing - DASS	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Citizen and Provider Portal for Social and Health Services	617	-	-	-	617	617
Transformation of Day Service	615	173	-	-	615	615
Integrated IT	1,085	344	1,000	-	85	1,085
Community Intermediate Care Services	1,000	-	-	-	1,000	1,000
Integrated Social Care and Health Learning Disability Service - Girtrell Court	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
	5,317	517	3,000	-	2,317	5,317
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation						
West Kirby Concourse Fitness Suite	112	-	112	-	-	112
Guinea Gap 3G Football pitches	99	-	99	-	-	99
West Kirby/Guinea Gap/Europa Pools	2,024	1,164	2,024	-	-	2,024
Refurb of Artificial Turf Pitch & perimeter fence repairs at the Tennis & Sports Centre	240	-	240	-	-	240
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated accommodation and service delivery	100	-	100	-	-	100
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	100	-	100	-	-	425
	2,675	1,164	2,675	-	-	2,675

Regeneration and Environment - Environment & Regulation	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Road Safety	157	45	84	-	73	157
Active Travel	185	30	185	-	-	185
Transportation	104	23	104	-	-	104
Bridges	1,566	482	728	-	838	1,566
Street Lighting	76	28	26	-	50	76
Highway Maintenance	3,935	3,283	1,400	-	2,535	3,935
Transport for Growth	1,698	80	-	-	1,698	1,698
Start Active, Play Active, Stay active	34	12	34	-	-	34
Wirral Way - widening and safety improvements	14	6	14	-	-	14
Cemetery Extensions and Improvements	171	5	171	-	-	171
Coast Protection	117	22	117	-	-	117
Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting)	3,162	255	3,162	-	-	3,162
Allotments	165	-	165	-	-	165
Parks Improvements	38	23	-	13	25	38
Parks vehicles replacement	684	404	684	-	-	684
West Kirby Flood Alleviation	100	-	-	100	-	100
Dock Bridges Replacement	280	-	280	-	-	280
	12,486	4,698	7,154	113	5,219	12,486

Regeneration and Environment - Housing & Community Safety	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	2,000	732	-	-	2,000	2,000
LIFT	2	2	2	-	-	2
Clearance	516	184	215	100	201	516
Home Improvement	420	138	270	150	-	420
Improvement for sale grants	180	-	-	180	-	180
Empty Property Interventions	160	37	150	10	-	160
New House Building Programme	1,500	215	1,500	-	-	1,500
Cluster of Empty Homes Fund	650	-	-	-	650	650
	5,428	1,308	2,137	440	2,851	5,428
Regeneration and Environment - Regeneration						
Other Regional Growth Fund Schemes	3,208	2,883	-	-	3,208	3,208
LEP Regional Growth Fund Schemes Targeted Assistance	2,087	2,087	-	-	2,087	2,087
Business Investment Grants	780	239	780	-	-	780
The Priory	69	12	-	-	69	69
Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements	400	7	-	-	400	400
	6,544	5,018	780	-	5,764	6,544

Transformation & Resources	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
CCTV cameras and other equipment	100	-	100	-	-	100
I.T Development	2,904	735	2,904	-	-	2,904
	3,004	735	3,004	-	-	3,004
Programme Total	50,182	18,194	26,238	622	23,322	50,182

Capital Programme 2016/17 and 2017/18**ANNEX 2**

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Universal & Infrastructure		
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	2,019	250
Cleveland St Transport Depot	2,800	-
Demolish Bebington Town Hall/Liscard Municipal	378	-
Demolish former Rock Ferry High	395	-
Parks depot rationalisation	750	-
	6,342	250
Families and Wellbeing - CYP		
School remodelling and additional classrooms (Primary Places)	1,500	750
Stanley Special School – additional classrooms, medical/hygiene provision	600	-
PFI	85	-
Condition/Modernisation	4,500	-
Youth Zone	1,900	-
Family Support	100	-
	8,785	750
Families and Wellbeing – DASS		
Community Intermediate Care Services	1,000	-
Pensby Wood day service remodelling	1,200	-
Extra Care Housing	2,500	-
LD Extra care Housing	3,000	-
	7,700	-
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation		
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated accommodation and service delivery	740	-
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	325	-
	1,065	-

**Regeneration and Environment
- Environment & Regulation**

West Kirby Flood Alleviation	1,900	-
Highway maintenance	3,060	2,938
Coast Protection	134	-
East Float Access Improvements Tower Road	200	-
Wirral International Business Park Connections	200	-
East Float Access Improvements to Duke Street	400	-
Dock Bridges Replacement	2,530	4,310
Preventative Maintenance to Unclassified and Residential Streets	500	500
Cemetery Extensions and Improvements	150	-
	9,074	7,748

	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000

**Regeneration and Environment
- Housing & Community Safety**

Aids, Adaptations and DFGs	4,308	2,573
LIFT	296	-
Clearance	1,324	-
Home Improvement	434	-
Empty Property Interventions	178	-
Cluster of Empty Homes	603	-
Housing Renewal	570	670
	7,713	3,243

Regeneration and Environment - Regeneration

Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements	700	-
Business Investment Grants	300	-
	1,000	-

Total	41,579	11,991
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Capital Receipts 2015/16**ANNEX 3****Cash Received
£000**

Ex-HRA Magenta Housing Right to Buy	699
Ingleborough Road, Covenant	500
New Hall Farm	295
Empty Homes (various)	209
Plot 9 Tarran Industrial Estate sale of ground lease	30
Land at Belmont Road	92
Ashford Road (Family Support)	26
Total	1,851

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

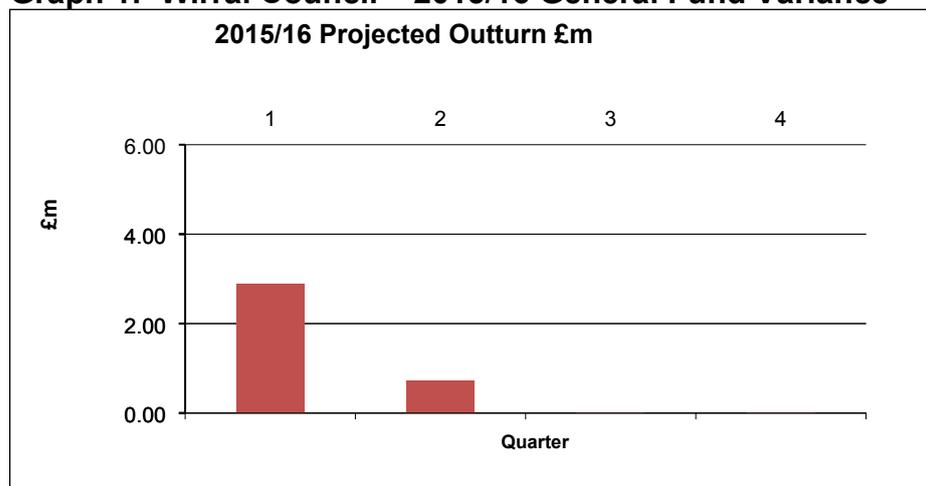
5 NOVEMBER 2015

SUBJECT	REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16 QUARTER 2 (TO SEPTEMBER 2015)
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	ACTING SECTION 151 OFFICER
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
KEY DECISION	YES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the projected revenue position for 2015/16 as at the end of quarter two (September 2015). The projected outturn shows an improvement of £2.2 million compared to the quarter 1 position. Forecast is £0.7 million overspent (previous period £2.9 million). There has been some improvement in the quarter within the Adult Social Care predicted overspend and increases in both Regeneration & Environment and Transformation & Resources predicted underspends. The most significant positive variance relates to treasury management savings from forecast continued use of cash flow balances over the full year to temporarily fund accumulated capital expenditure in lieu of borrowing.
- 1.2 The headline position is shown in the graph below.

Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2015/16 General Fund Variance



2 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

- 2.1 The 2015/16 Budget was agreed by Council on 24 February 2015 and is detailed in Annex 2; any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. Changes to the Budget since it was set are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: 2015/16 Original & Revised Net Budget by Directorate £000's

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Qtrs	Approved Budget Changes Qtr 2	Revised Net Budget
FWB - Adult Social Care	68,305	2934	-	71,239
FWB – Children & Young People,	67,964	4541	275	72,780
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	7,956	831	-	8,787
Regeneration & Environment	90,287	-692	-103	89,492
Transformation & Resources	31,947	-604	-193	31,150
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-7,267	2,590	21	-4,656
Net Cost of Services	259,192	9,600	-	268,792

Note: £9.6 million Quarter 1 change was ratified by Council on 12 October 2015

- 2.2 The main budget movements in quarter two relate to the transfer of the Liquid Logic support team from Transformation & Resources to Children & Young People and an adjustment to the support services budget. Both of these adjustments have no bottom line net effect.

3 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The projected outturn position as at the end of September 2015, key issues emerging and Directorate updates are detailed in the following section.

Table 2: 2015/16 Projected Budget variations by Directorate £000's

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
			Quarter 2		
FWB - Adult Social Care	71,239	73,649	2,410	R	-21
FWB – Children & Young People	72,780	74,580	1,800	R	-200
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	8,787	9,037	250	A	250
Regeneration & Environment	89,492	88,762	-730	Y	-430
Transformation & Resources	31,150	28,150	-3,000	Y	-1,811
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-4,656	-4,656	0	G	-
TOTAL	268,792	269,522	730		-2,212

The report classifies the forecast under/overspends for the above areas using a colour RAGBY rating. The ratings are defined as follows:

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

3.2 Directorate Updates

Families and Wellbeing: Adult Social Care

- 3.2.1 The quarter 2 position remains virtually unchanged from quarter 1. The current forecast remains a £2.4 million overspend from demand pressures within a number of Community care areas. Further work is being undertaken to identify any mitigating actions. Targeted support also requires close monitoring of the savings position.
- 3.2.2 To assist with budget delivery, a number of projects are being supported by the Improvement and Transformation Team. Saving Plans and profiles are being reviewed to identify mitigation and an Implementation Board has been established to review Day Services and challenge financial delivery targets. Further detailed work has been undertaken to further analyse the causes and impact of the demand pressures.
- 3.2.3 With effect from 1 July 2015 Independent Living Fund users transferred to Local Authority support. The Department for Local Communities and Government has awarded Adult Social Care grant of £1.3 million to cover this expenditure for the period 1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016 and reviews are ongoing to ensure this is sufficient to cover the additional costs in Adult Social Care. Any funding for subsequent years will be decided as part of the next Spending Review.

Families and Wellbeing: Children and Young People

- 3.2.4 An improvement of £200,000 has been achieved in the quarter. Reducing the forecast overspend to £1.8 million Reduced spend of £0.4 million has been identified across various areas including childrens centres. There are however increased costs of £0.2 million from mainly from an increase in Special Guardianship numbers. Actions being taken to reduce the overspend:-
- A review of all residential care and independent fostering placements has been undertaken
 - There is a weekly Access to Resources panel approving all new care packages for children.
 - Assessments are being undertaken for entitlement to Primary and secondary transport with notification of any changes to parents by half term
 - A rolling programme of recruitment to Social Work positions. The Social Worker Progression Framework has been implemented. There is a detailed plan for a significant reduction in agency numbers reviewed on a monthly basis.
 - Implementation of new Children's Centres structures
 - Budget progress is reported and reviewed monthly at the Senior Leadership Team Meeting.

3.2.5 In August the Youth Justice Board issued consultation regarding a proposed 5% in year reduction of grants paid to local authorities. The impact on Wirral would be a £70,000 reduction. Objections have been lodged and the outcome will be confirmed later this month. Measures have been put in place to mitigate any in year reduction through the non-filling of vacant posts.

Families and Wellbeing : Other

3.2.6 **Leisure Services:** The forecast overspend is currently £250,000. This figure reflects slippage in budget savings. There are ongoing discussions and plans with regard to savings in 2016/17.

3.2.7 **Public Health.** As previously reported the Chancellor announced proposals to reduce in year the Public Health Budget. This may reduce Public Health Grant allocations by 6.2% (between £2 to £2.4 million for Wirral.) The outcome of this is due shortly.

Regeneration and Environment

3.2.8 There has been a further underspend of £430,000 this quarter. Car parking income is currently being projected to exceed its budgeted income target by £240,000. At the start of the financial year, car parking charges were reduced for an initial 12 month trial period. The impact this trial is being assessed but it should also be noted that car parking income is difficult to predict and that this forecast is only an emerging position.

3.2.9 There also continues to be a high number of vacancies within School Crossing Patrols which is adding to the overall underspend position. However, this is partly offset due to the recent departure of a number of employees with Highways & Transportation meaning there is currently a reduction in the number of engineers working on and charging time (thereby generating income) on capital schemes.

3.2.10 Contract efficiencies within the Supported Housing Programme explained quarter 1's positive variance. There has been some further improvement in this area during quarter 2. Pressures remain within the Floral Pavilion budget (£130k). Income projections will be monitored very carefully but are ultimately dependent on attendance at each show. There is also a forecast income surplus, of at least £50,000, above the budgeted income target within Planning.

Transformation & Resources

3.2.11 There has been an improvement of £1.8 million in the quarter resulting in a year end forecast underspend of £3 million. This is largely from savings (£2.5 million of the overall total) within Treasury Management. This is due to the continued use of internal funds to minimise the need to externally borrow and further projected slippage within the Capital Programme (which delivers one-off in year savings). Further savings have arisen from continued vacancies during the year across a number of service areas.

3.2.12 In respect of Treasury Management the external borrowing to fund capital investment has been delayed through temporary funding the 'borrowing' from cash flows deriving from reserves and other balances. This policy whilst 'losing' investment interest receivable (average 0.5%), saves an average 3.5% on borrowing costs plus delays any principal repayment. External borrowing will need to take place eventually to fund past programmes either at the point when reserves are utilised and/or to lock into lower rates before interest rates rise. Recent economic data and Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee announcements now make interest rate increases in 2015/16 less likely. Thus the timing of borrowing has been delayed to produce increased in year and one-off Treasury Management savings. Some further savings have also accrued from re-profiling the Capital Programme.

4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

4.1 The delivery of the agreed savings is key to the Council's financial health and is tracked at both Council and Directorate level. The Budget for 2015/16 originally included £38 million of efficiency measures and it was recognised that the delivery of the savings, particularly within Adults and Children's Services was challenging being more of a transformational / change nature. Cabinet in July agreed the reprofiling of £9.6 million of savings funded from earmarked reserves (£5.4 million) and General Fund Balances (£4.2 million) which was confirmed by Council 12 October.

Table 3: Budget Implementation Plan 2015/16 (£000's)

BRAG	Number of Options	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at Sep 15	To be Delivered
B - delivered	24	14,258	14,258	0
G – on track	18	3,731	2,379	1,352
A - concerns	18	11,249	4,411	6,838
R - high risk/ not achieved	2	35	0	35
Total at Aug 2015-16	62	29,273	21,048	8,225

4.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2015/16 savings. Cabinet 27 July agreed that £9.6 million of savings be moved into 2016/17 with funding from earmarked reserves and General Fund balances.

5 GROWTH

5.1 An allowance for the impact of demographic changes, inflation and other risks has been incorporated into the 2015/16 budget. Details of these allowances are contained within the Budget Book and Forecasts 2015/18 approved by Budget Council on 24 February 2015.

5.2 In response to the projected overspend reported at Quarter 1 a review was undertaken of the growth allocated for 2015/16. As this primarily covered the impact of the social worker pay review, which had been implemented, and contractual inflation, which had been paid, there was limited opportunity for any

reductions to be identified.

6 INCOME AND DEBT

- 6.1 Revenue and Income falls into four broad areas for reporting purposes. Amounts raised and collected in the year are shown below.

Table 4: Amount to be collected in 2015/16

	2015/16	2015/16	
	Collectable	Collected	%
	£000	£000	
Council Tax	140,145	76,373	54.5%
Business Rates	71,196	40,920	57.5%
Fees and charges – Adults & Children	32,740	17,714	54%
Fees and charges – all other services	32,371	20,508	63%

COUNCIL TAX

- 6.2 Compared with September 2014 the collection performance is down by 0.6% but recovery action is well under way.
- 6.3 The major change this year relates to the full removal of the local Pensioner Discount for 2015/16. This affected 11,482 Band A-D, 70+ households who previously received a 5% discount. In 2014/15 the discount from Band E-H households was removed with a reduction in the discount from 7.76% to 5%.

BUSINESS RATES

- 6.4 The percentage collected at September 2015 of 57.5% compares favourably with the 57.1% at September 2014.
- 6.5 The Government has undertaken a fundamental review of Business Rates including consultation with interested parties. It indicated that any changes would need to raise the same amount as Business Rates does now, some £26 billion and the preference was for a property based tax. The outcome of the review is expected to feature in the Government Budget 2016.
- 6.6 At the Conservative Party Conference it was announced that from 2020 Councils will keep all the Business Rates they collect. The detail is awaited as Wirral currently receives a 'top-up grant' from Government so receives more than is currently collected in Business Rates.

DEBTORS

- 6.7 At the end of September 2015 the arrears stood at £24.7 million which compares to £22.8 million at September 2014. With the date being a moment in time the timing of the sending of bills impacts upon the reported position particularly with month-end and year-end bills. Recovery action continues to be undertaken to minimise arrears and additional temporary staff support this work.

7 RELEVANT RISKS

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

- Senior Leadership Team / Directorate Teams reviewing the financial position.
- Tracking system of savings options to monitor progress.
- Benefits Realisation Group monitors the delivery of key change projects.
- Use of temporary additional support to assist with revenues collection.
- Use of earmarked reserves and General Fund Balance savings risk contingency

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

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

9 CONSULTATION

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

10 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

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

11 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

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

12 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

12.1 On 10 February 2015 Cabinet agreed to the level of General Fund balance for 2015/16 being based upon a risk calculation and a minimum of £17.4 million. The level is kept under review during the year to reflect changing circumstances and in-year developments.

12.2 As reported to Cabinet on 13 July 2015 the 2014/15 financial year saw an underspend of £0.5 million on the revenue budget whilst the release of £0.9 million of Insurance Fund Reserves added a total £1.4 million to balances at 31 March 2015.

12.3 As referred to in this report the delivery of the large savings programme contained significant risks of delay (slippage). The opening balance contained £7.2 million specifically against this risk of which £4.2 million is to be used to meet the in-year shortfall set out in Section 4.

Table 5: Summary of the projected General Fund balances

Details	£m
Balance 31 March 2015 when setting the Budget 2015/16	+17.4
Add; Increase following closure of 2014/15 Accounts	+1.4
Less Transfer to General Fund	-4.2
Less: Potential overspend at August 2015	-0.7
Projected balance 31 March 2016	+13.9

- 12.4 The requirement to replenish the General Fund balances to the minimum level will be addressed through Directorates identifying potential underspends in the current financial year together with a mid-year review of the Earmarked Reserves. The Reserves excluding School balances totalled £71.5 million at 1 April 2015. These include reserves relating to the cost of Council remodelling, mitigation and specific project support and ongoing financial risks.
- 12.5 Cabinet in July agreed to the use of £5.4 million of earmarked reserves to be used in reprofiling the 2015/16 savings programme. This decision was ratified by Council on 12 October, 2015
- 12.6 As referred to in Section 6.6 it was announced at the Conservative Party Conference in October that local authorities would retain 100% of Business Rates collected by 2020. Based on the present arrangements this would result in Wirral being £6 million worse-off. It was also announced that the General Government Grant (the Revenue Support Grant) would be phased out. The Grant to Wirral is £65 million in 2015/16. The details will follow in the Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement in late November / early December.
- 12.7 There are no IT, staffing or asset implications arising directly out of this report.

13 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

14 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report which reports on financial performance.

15 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

16 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

17 RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 That the improvement of £2.2 million in the 2015/16 Revenue Budget position during quarter 2 be noted

17.2 That Officers continue to identify actions and to take measures to reduce the projected overspend of £0.7 million and to mitigate against any in-year funding reductions for Public Health and to replenish General Fund balances.

18 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/16
Annex 2 Income and Debt

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Revenue monitoring reports presented to Cabinet previous report to Cabinet 2015/16 (Quarter 1) Budget Council	27 July 2015 24 February 2015

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16

ORIGINAL BUDGET AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 24 FEBRUARY 2015

Directorate/Service Area	Original Budget	Changes/ Variances	Revised Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure			
Families and Wellbeing			
Adult Social Services	68,305	2,934	71,239
Children and Young People	67,964	4,816	72,780
Further Areas - Public Health, Schools, Sports and Recreation	7,956	831	8,787
Regeneration and Environment	90,287	-795	89,492
Transformation and Resources	31,947	-797	31,150
Net Cost of Services	266,459	6,989	273,448
Corporate Savings/Growth	-3,611	2,611	-1,000
Education Services Grant	-3,656	-	-3,656
Budget Requirement	259,192	9,600	268,792
Income			
Revenue Support Grant	64,281	-	64,281
Business Rates Baseline	33,266	-	32,266
Business Rates Top Up	41,287	-	41,287
Business Rates Section 31 Grants	2,193	-	2,193
Council Tax Requirement	114,210	-	114,210
Council Tax Freeze Grant	1,358	-	1,358
New Homes Bonus	2,597	-	2,597
Contribution from Reserve		5,400	5,400
Contribution from Balances		4,200	4,200
Total Income	259,192	9,600	268,792
Statement of Balances			
As at 1 April 2015	17,400	1,400	18,800
Contributions to/from Balances Cabinet 27 July and confirmed Council 12 October 2015)	0	-4,200	-4,200
Potential Overspend at Quarter 2		-700	-700
Forecast Balances 31 March 2016	17,400	-3,500	13,900

Note:

This table will be updated for agreed variances during the year.

Balances as at 1 April 2015 updated following completion of the Accounts for 2014/15.

INCOME AND DEBT

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

COUNCIL TAX

The following statement compares the amount collected for **Council Tax** in the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015 with the amount collected in the same period in 2014/15:

	Actual 2015/16 £000s	Actual 2014/15 £000s
Cash to Collect	140,145	137,289
Cash Collected	76,373	75,669
% Collected	54.5%	55.1%

Council Tax Support Scheme

Council Tax benefits were abolished at the end of 2012/13 and replaced by Council Tax Support. £26.5 million is currently in payment and the numbers of awards as at 30 September 2015 are as follows:

Number of pensioners	14,970
Number of vulnerable (working age)	9,168
Number of working age	<u>11,226</u>
Number of Council Tax Support recipients	<u>35,364</u>

Council Tax Support claimants have dropped from 36,231 to 35,364 (784) since the beginning of the financial year. There are a number of reasons for this, including the impact of charges in respect of non-dependants in the household removing entitlement to CTS and people moving into low paid employment, claims from people of pensionable age ending.

Council Tax Discretionary Policy as at 30 September 2015

Period 1 April 2015 – 30 September 2015
2 awards (£902), 42 refusals in this period.

BUSINESS RATES

The following statement compares the amount collected for **National Non-Domestic Rates** for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015 with the amount collected for the same period in 2014/15:

	Actual 2015/16 £000	Actual 2014/15 £000
Cash to Collect	71,196	71,210
Cash Collected	40,920	40,691
% Collected	57.5%	57.1%

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

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

Directorate Description	Less than 10 days	1st reminder	2nd reminder	3rd reminder	Total at 30.09.15
Chief Executive	£70,345	£7,485	£9,495	£941,847	£1,029,172
Neighbourhood	£21,008	£0	£0	£17,677	£38,685
Transformation & Resources	£5,600,458	£972,208	£73,536	£1,170,959	£7,817,161
Families & Wellbeing	£3,388,044	£646,510	£177,257	£10,455,645	£14,667,456
Regeneration & Environment	£377,776	£123,945	£184,225	£567,858	£1,253,804
Policy & Performance	£0	£192,100	£0	£44,647	£236,747
Totals	£9,457,631	£1,942,248	£444,513	£13,198,633	£25,043,025

The above figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of September 2015. Payments as well as amendments such as write-offs and debt cancellations continue to be made after this date on all these accounts. There is a further deduction of £355,532 to be made for unallocated payments at month end leaving a balance of **£24,687,493**

BENEFITS

The following statement details the number of claimants in respect of benefit and the expenditure for Tenants (Housing Benefit) and those in receipt of Council Tax Support up to 30 September 2015:

	2015/16	2014/15
Number of Private Tenant recipients	29,912	32,121
Total rent allowance expenditure	£72,329,105	
<i>Number under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme (included in the above)</i>	<i>11,388</i>	<i>12,317</i>
	£28,193,558	

Number of Council Tax Support recipients	35,364	37,226
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	£26,501,494	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	£98,830,599	

The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 30 September 2015 and gives the early year numbers to show the shift in sector by benefit claimants during the year.

	30.09.15	31.3.15
Claimants in the Private Rented Sector	13,375	13,723
Claimants in the Social Rented Sector	16,537	16,271
Owner Occupiers	10,279	10,112
Total claimants by age group		
- under 25 years old	2,025	2,238
- 25 – 60 years old	21,232	20,921
- over 60 years old	16,934	16,947

There are 40,191 benefit recipients in Wirral as at 30 September 2015.

Under Occupancy regulations

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

- By 14% in 2,488 cases and By 25% in 605 cases

The number of claims affected does fluctuate. The numbers above are a snapshot at 30 September 2015.

Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries – 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	957
Successful Prosecution/Administration penalty/caution	86

From 1 November 2015 the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud will transfer to the DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service. Fraud Investigation Officers in scope will transfer at this time with new roles created to ensure ongoing capacity to address other areas at risk of fraud and error within service/systems, including Council Tax Support, Council Tax, Personal Finance and Discretionary areas.

Discretionary Housing Payments

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

The Government contribution for 2015/16 is £736,570 with an overall limit of £1,841,425 which the Authority must not exceed. The difference must come from the Authority's own Expenditure. It was agreed to supplement the Government contribution by a Local Authority contribution of £300,000, giving a total budget in respect of 2015/16 of £1,036,570.

The backlog of work items reported previously is significantly reduced, including applications for Discretionary Housing Payment. The strain on the available budget remains high and is consistent with that in respect of 2014/15. Small awards are being made for shorter periods, essentially to allow the service to support more people through the use of this fund. This does however mean that renewal applications are likely to be received from an increasing number of claimants which will present operational difficulties. As such our projection is that the fund will be fully utilised this year.

date	No. of Weeks	Number of awards	current awards	committed awards up to 31/03/2016	% spent (committed)of Govt cont
08/04/2015	6015		£4,687.23	£40,158.74	4%
05/05/2015	6018	864	£40,421.27	£70,031.94	7%
01/06/2015	6022	934	£47,148.86	£94,694.10	9%
02/07/2015	6027	1041	£103,253.24	£208,173.93	20%
05/08/2015	6032	1272	£158,082.51	£296,029.82	29%
01/09/2015	6035	1387	£218,434.45	£366,839.57	35%
05/10/2015	6040	1495	£294,417.37	£450,614.50	43%

Local Welfare Assistance

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme was until March 2015 directly funded by Government Grant which has now been withdrawn with the recommendation that local authorities should consider funding future schemes from their own resources.

The Council Budget 2015/16 includes the use of the £900,000 held in a reserve for this fund following the Government's decision to withdraw direct funding from 1 April 2015. The original scheme ran until 31 July 2015 and following a Task & Finish Scrutiny Review Panel Cabinet approved a continuing scheme from 1 August 2015. This sees the Council continuing to administer and maintain a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme within the budget available with a number of small amendments to the Scheme. Primarily awards made are in respect of immediate need, such as for food, utilities etc.

No. of Awards - 2015/16		Total Awarded	Cumulative expenditure
April	673	£38,896.60	£38,896.60
May	564	£26,315.11	£65,211.71
June	754	£42,240.12	£107,451.83
July	734	£43,553.30	£151,005.13
Aug	649	£34,923.09	£185,928.22
Sep	741	£40,435.51	£226,363.73

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

16th FEBRUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPERS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report presents Committee Members with the January Policy Inform Briefing papers which outline the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on 25th November 2015. As a continuum the Policy Inform papers include any relevant policy developments that have emerged over the past 3 months.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The policy briefing papers are intended to provide Members with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support each Policy and Performance Committee's work programme and future scrutiny work.

2.2 During the course of the 2015-16 municipal years, the Council's Policy and Strategy team will prepare four policy briefing papers which will be reported to the Policy and Performance Committees for consideration. The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Policy & Performance Committee Briefings	
July 2015	The first policy briefing will focus predominately on the Queen's Speech, which will establish the Government's legislative programme for the parliamentary year ahead.
September 2015	The second policy briefing will be produced in September and will focus on the Chancellor's July 2015 Budget Statement. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

January 2016	The third policy briefing will focus on the local government finance settlement which informs the annual determination of funding to local government. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
March 2016	The fourth policy briefing will focus upon the 2016 Chancellor of Exchequers Budget. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

2.3 The January Policy Inform briefings outline the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on 25th November 2015. The Policy Inform briefing also alludes to any potential implications for Wirral Council, and elaborates on any legislation or policy updates that have been implemented, or developed since the last policy briefing in September. It is expected that the next Briefing Paper will focus on the Chancellor of Exchequer's Budget, which will be published on 16th March 2016. Due to Policy and Performance Committee's taking place in March it will not be possible to take the next Policy Inform papers to Committee meeting's, however these papers will be circulated to Members for reference.

2.4 The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee's work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 No specific risks identified.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

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

8.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(c) No because of another reason which is

The policy briefing is intended to provide Committee Members with an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament, emerging policies and upcoming consultations.

The local implementation of any policy or legislation will require an individual equality impact assessment.

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 Committee Members are requested to note the contents of the Policy Briefing papers and identify any areas of focus for further detailed policy briefings to be provided.

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

14.1 To provide Committee Members with an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation and emerging policy developments.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Policy Inform: Families & Wellbeing
- Appendix 2 – Policy Inform: Regeneration & Environment
- Appendix 3 – Policy Inform: Transformation & Resources

POLICY INFORM: FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

Policy Inform- January 2016

The Directorate Policy briefings will provide an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament, emerging policies and upcoming consultations. The Directorate Policy briefing will be produced specifically to inform Portfolio Holders and Elected Members and will be taken to Policy & Performance Committees for discussion.

Contents

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Childcare Bill	p.9
Education and Adoption Bill	p.12
Welfare Reforms and Work Bill	p.14
Policing and Criminal Justice Bill	p.17
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Policy Developments	p.21
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Introduction

The policy briefing paper is intended to provide Members of the Policy and Performance Committee with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the committees work programme and future scrutiny work.

The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Policy & Performance Committee Briefings	
July 2015	The first policy briefing will focus predominately on the Queen's Speech, which will establish the Government's legislative programme for the parliamentary year ahead.
September 2015	The second policy briefing will be produced in September and will focus on the Chancellor's July 2015 Budget Statement. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
January 2016	The third policy briefing will focus on the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review which sets out how Government money will be allocated. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
March 2016	The fourth policy briefing will focus upon the 2016 Chancellor of Exchequers Budget. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

The January policy briefing outlines the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review which, was announced on the 25th November 2015. The policy briefing also alludes to any potential implications that have been highlighted by relevant Officers for Wirral Council, and elaborates on any legislation or policy updates that have been implemented or developed since the last policy briefing in September.

The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee's work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

Autumn Statement and Spending Review - 25th November 2015

The Spending Review sets out how £4 trillion of government money will be allocated over the next five years. The key announcements outlined in the statement have been divided into themes:

Local Councils

- The main grant to local government will be phased out. Other sources of income such as council tax and business rates are forecast to grow in cash terms by £6.3 billion by 2019-20.
- From 2016/17 local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This is intended to raise £2 billion a year by 2019-20.
- From April 2016, police forces will be able to increase the amount they require from council tax collections by 2%.
- Extension of the doubling of small business rate relief (SBRR) in England for 12 months to April 2017.
- The government will allow local authorities to spend up to 100% of their fixed asset receipts (excluding Right to Buy receipts) on the revenue costs of reform projects.
- The government will deliver its commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

Housing



- The housing budget will be doubled to £2m a year. Stamp duty will be 3pc higher, raising almost £1b by 2020.
- 400,000 new homes by 2020.
- The right-to-buy scheme will be extended to housing association tenants, with a new pilot in five housing associations.
- A series of other schemes, including Help to Buy: Shared Ownership to help people get on the housing ladder.
- From April 2016 people purchasing additional properties will pay an extra 3% in stamp duty. Money raised will be used to help those struggling to buy their first home.
- 300,000 homes will be better protected from flooding by 2021, with £2.3 billion for over 1,500 flood defence schemes.
- A cap on the amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector. The reform will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards.

Planning, Transport and Regeneration



- Further reforms to the planning system, including establishing a new delivery test on local authorities, to ensure delivery against Local Plans.
- Support for the availability of appropriate land for housing, including by releasing public sector land with capacity for 160,000 homes.
- Support for the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites in the green belt by allowing them to be developed in the same way as other brownfield land, providing it contributes to Starter Homes, and subject to local consultation.
- Consultation on updating the Transparency Code to require all local authorities to record details of their land and property assets in a consistent way on the government's e-PIMS.
- The Roads Investment Strategy will see £15 billion of investment.
- HS2 will go ahead.
- Commuters will soon be able to claim compensation if their train is more than 15 minutes late.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future

Digital Government



- £1.8 billion invested in digital technology and transformation projects across the public sector.
- £450 million to support the Government Digital Service's role as the digital, data and technology centre for government.
- DCLG will work closely with the Valuation Office Agency to digitise the collection of local taxes.

Community Cohesion



- Current levels of funding for community integration programmes will be maintained. This funding will be targeted to support the recommendations of Louise Casey's review of opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities.

DCLG

- 20% reduction in the department's paybill, with total savings of £94 million by 2019-20.
- At least £74 million of funding for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.
- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund.
- Continue to oversee delivery of devolution deals.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future



Arts and Sport

- Funding for museums and galleries will be maintained so they remain free to the public.
- The government will fund capital investments in culture across the country through a total of £1.6 billion by 2020-21.
- £5 million of the Northern Powerhouse investment fund will go to Manchester museum to create a new South Asia gallery in partnership with the British Museum, and £150 million to help make oyster style ticketing a reality across the whole of the North.
- The government will support the Rugby League World Cup bid for the UK in 2021 so matches can be held across the North.



Businesses

- The business budget has been slashed by 17 per cent. This is partly achieved by offering £165million of loans to companies, rather than the current grants.
- Universal rates scrapped in favour of devolving powers to local councils who will now collect 100pc of the tax, which brought in £23bn this year.
- The government is creating 26 new Enterprise Zones, including expanding 8 Zones on the current programme. These include 15 Zones in smaller towns and rural areas.
- A £400 million Northern Powerhouse investment fund will be created to help small businesses to grow.

Devolution

- Councils will be allowed to cut business rates to boost growth and elected city-wide mayors allowed to raise them for specific projects.
- There will be further commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, including: investment of £13 billion on transport in the North by 2020, a range of investments in scientific research, and supporting further Northern Powerhouse trade missions to key emerging economies.
- In 2017-18 the government will devolve and reform increased funding for managing temporary accommodation, giving local authorities 'more control and flexibility'.
- In 2016 DCLG will shortly consult on changes to the local government finance system to pave the way for the implementation of 100% business rate retention. As part of these reforms, additional responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities.

Clare Fish- Project Sponsor for Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all

Paula Basnett- Partner pledge led for Thriving Small Businesses



Tax Credit

- The government will borrow £8 billion less than forecast – making faster progress towards eliminating the deficit.
- Because of the improvement in public finances, the £4.4 billion of proposed cuts will no longer happen.
- Tax credits are being phased out as we introduce universal credit.
- The government will propose no further changes to the universal credit taper, or to the work allowances beyond those that passed through Parliament.

Families & Childcare

- Spending levels on homelessness services will be maintained.
- £40 million will be allocated for services for victims of domestic abuse.
- Continued investment into the Troubled Families programme with the aim of better outcomes for 400,000 families by 2020.
- Doubling the free childcare entitlement- 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working families with 3 and 4 year olds from Sept 2017.
- Tax-Free Childcare from early 2017, providing up to £2,000 a year per child.
- From 2017-18 an investment of £300 million to increase the average hourly rate childcare providers receive, and at least £50 million of capital funding to create additional places in nurseries.



Environment

- The current Energy Companies Obligation runs until March 2017. This will be replaced from April 2017 with a new cheaper energy supplier obligation to reduce carbon emissions which will run for five years. The changes will mean that on average 24 million households will save £30 a year on their energy bills from 2017.
- The Warm Home Discount scheme will also be extended to 2020-2021. This currently gives certain low-income households a one-off reduction of £140 on their electricity bill.

John Martin- Partner pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence & Julia Hassall- Project Sponsor for Vulnerable children reach their full potential

Our Partners:



NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals. £750 million of investment and a new national voluntary contract for GPs .
- £300 million per year will be invested in diagnostics by 2020 to fund new equipment and additional staff capacity, including 200 additional staff trained to perform endoscopies by 2018.
- £150 million will be invested in a new Dementia Research Institute .
- £4.8 billion allocated for health every year for the next 5 years. This includes funding for a shift in the way urgent and emergency care services are provided and improving out of hospital services to deliver more care closer to home. New investment of £1 billion in technology will support this transformation and integrate patient records across health and social care by 2020. Over the next 5 years, at least £500 million will be invested in building new hospitals.
- £10 billion extra a year in real terms. £6 billion of which will be delivered in 2016, particularly to mental health services.
- This will fund:
 - 800,000 more operations and treatments
 - 5.5 million more outpatient appointments
 - 2 million more diagnostic tests
 - access to GP services in the evenings and at the weekend
 - 7-day access to hospital services by 2020
- Whilst the NHS is receiving increased funding, there is also a commitment to find a further £22 billion in efficiency savings.

John Develing- Pledge lead for Wirral Residents Live Healthier Lives



Police

- No cuts to the police budget. The government will protect overall police spending in line with inflation – an increase of £900 million by 2019-20. "The police protect us and we are going to protect the police."
- Additional funding will be provided for forces that have strong proposals to support efficiency and reform.
- The National Crime Agency's budget will also be protected in cash terms to help cut organised crime.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence



Schools and Apprenticeships

- Schools funding will be protected in line with inflation. £23 billion will be invested in school buildings, creating 600,000 extra school places and 500 free schools.
- Sixth form colleges will now be able to become academies.
- Savings of £600million will be made from the education services grant that goes to local authorities as more schools become academies. - "We will make local authorities running schools a thing of the past".
- The current 'unfair' school funding system will be phased out and replaced with a new national Funding Formula from 2017.
- Funding for adult education will not be cut.
- The government will spend twice as much on apprentices- 3 million apprentices by 2020.
- A new apprentice levy of 0.5 per cent will be introduced for employers. The levy will raise £3 billion a year to fund three million apprenticeships. Less than 2% of UK employers will pay the levy.
- Maintenance loans will be available to higher education students who study part time from 2018.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence

Further Analysis & Impact on Local Government and Partners

Local Government:

Funding

- There has been a £4.1 billion funding cut over this Spending Review period and this comes on top of almost £10 billion in further demand-led cost pressures facing councils by the end of the decade. Local communities will suffer as a result.
- The general government grant to local councils will be removed completely by 2020.
- Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) warn that the spending review represents a 24% reduction in real terms to the local government grant, including the £1.5bn increase to the Better Care Fund.

Business Rates

- Retaining 100% of business rates will, nationally, add up to an estimated £26 billion. As part of the 'devolution revolution' local authorities will also be able to lower business rates to attract business investment in their area. It is hoped that this will correct the 'geographical imbalance' and encourage local authorities to become more competitive and focus their attentions on attracting private investment into their own areas.
- Changes will hit the poorest parts of the country hardest, where there are fewer businesses and taxpayers to make up for lost Whitehall grants. Rich councils will get richer at the expense of already struggling councils.

Social Care

- From 2016/7, local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This will go some way to allowing a number of councils to raise the money needed to offset some of the cost of social care.
- The new care precept will generate very different levels of revenue across the country, with no equalisation system planned.
- The council tax precept will not be implemented until 2017, leaving a shortfall for local authorities between now and 2017.

Local Growth Fund

- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund, which is more than double the size of equivalent funds in the last Parliament. This will empower local communities to deliver growth by giving them greater control of public spending, allowing them to target their own priorities.
- Secretary of State for DCLG, Greg Clark: "On top of building the homes our country needs across the nation we are devolving powers to local people who know their communities best to drive jobs, nurture businesses and improve local services."

Housing

- Increased investment in schemes to help people to rent or buy has weighted in favour of private developers, at the expense of opportunities to deliver affordable social housing for communities. Tackling local housing need would also help to regenerate local economies and provide jobs and skills. ASPE argue councils are best placed to address specific local housing need.
- Under the new reform, Housing Benefit will no longer fully subsidise families to live in social houses that many working families cannot afford, and will better align the rules in the private and social rented sectors. It will also ensure that Housing Benefit costs are better controlled and will help prevent social landlords from charging inflated rent for their properties
- In areas of Wirral where the Local Housing Allowance rate for the Borough is below the rent charged by housing associations, prospective tenants, particularly those on out-of-work benefits, may be unable to fund the difference between rent and Housing Benefit. The profile of tenants may shift further away from single, younger households on lower incomes or welfare benefits. It may also have implications on the property type and financial appraisals for new-build social housing in the pipeline.

Our Partners:

NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals, this means that by 2021 everyone will be able to access GP services in the evenings and at weekends with an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice.
- An additional £600 million invested in mental health services will mean that significantly more people will have access to talking therapies every year by 2020.
- Investment into the new Dementia Research Institute will accelerate the pace of research and tackle the progression of the disease. This is the government's latest step in a long term strategy to combat dementia.
- Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt: "For doctors and nurses working harder than ever on the frontline this upfront investment means we can implement the NHS's own ambitious plan to transform services for the future." "This new money will help us finish the job."

Police

- Protecting police funding will allow forces to adapt to changing crime threats and train more firearms officers to make sure the country can be protected from terrorist threats.
- £1 billion will be spent on 4G communications for police forces and other emergency services, allowing officers to take mobile fingerprints and electronic witness statements. This will free up officers' time, saving around £1 million a day when fully operational.

Schools and Apprenticeships

- The Education Services Grant helps ensure that children are getting the education they deserve including help to provide speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapies . Last year, £815 million was spent on the ESG. The LGA say urgent clarification is needed on how the £600 million cuts will be achieved, and how quickly, without impacting on welfare and standards.
- Currently a child from a disadvantaged background in one school can receive half as much funding as a child in identical circumstances in another school. The changes to the allocation of school funding will set a national rate for each pupil, with extra funding for those with additional needs.
- Introducing a new system will mean some schools will face relative budget reductions. LGA recommend changes should be introduced in a phased way to protect these schools. Government should also allow for local discretion to be applied to take into account individual local needs.
- 250,000 students will benefit from extra loans. This will include tuition fees for students studying for higher level skills in further education, part-time students and postgraduates.

Queen's Speech 2015- Designation to Policy and Performance Committees

On Wednesday 27th May 2015, the Queen unveiled the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. Below is a list of each individual Bill which will have implications for local government that were announced during the speech. The list identifies the Policy and Performance committee with whose remit the legislation most closely aligns:

Legislative Plans	Policy and Performance Committee
National Insurance Contributions Bill/ Finance Bill	Transformation and Resources
Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill	All Policy and Performance Committees
Trade Unions Bill	Transformation and Resources
Housing Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Buses Bill	Regeneration and Environment
High Speed Rail Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Childcare Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Energy Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Education and Adoption Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Enterprise Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Policing and Criminal Justice Bill	Families and Wellbeing Transformation and Resources
Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill	Transformation and Resources
Psychoactive Substances Bill	Families and Wellbeing

Additional bills that have been announced are outlined below. These will be monitored in relation to any emerging implications for Local Government and reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Committee as appropriate.

Additional Legislative Plans
EU Referendum Bill
Scotland Bill
Immigration Bill
Extremism Bill
Investigatory Powers Bill
Charities Bill
Armed Forces Bill
Bank of England Bill
Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill

Wales Bill
Votes for Life Bill

The bills relevant to the Families and Wellbeing Committee are discussed in further detail below. The information provided has been sourced predominately from the LGiU, as well as SOLACE and the LGC and therefore solely represents a fact-based introduction to the bills.

Queen's Speech 2015- Developments and Implications

Childcare Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The purpose of the Childcare Bill is to help support working people from the start of their family life and help hard-working families with the costs of childcare and support parents in work. The changes aim to help 600,000 children a year from 2017.

Key Points:

- Deliver on the Government's election manifesto commitment of giving families where all parents are working an entitlement to 30 hours a week of free childcare for their three and four-year olds for 38 weeks of the year (equivalent of the school year).
- Require local authorities to publish information about the provision of childcare in the local authority area, and other services or facilities which might be of benefit to parents or prospective parents, or children, or young persons in their area.

Further Developments:

- The Childcare Bill completed its Lords stages on 26 October 2015 and was introduced to the House of Commons with its first reading on the same day.
- The second reading of the Bill in the House of Commons took place on 25 November where the general principles of the bill were debated. The bill has now been committed to a Public Bill Committee, the first meeting of the committee is expected to be on 8 December.

Education and Childcare Minister Sam Gyimah delivered a speech on 11 November 2015, detailing developments of the Bill:

- We have supported parents by commissioning the 'What to expect when' guide. The literacy strategy which the Secretary of State launched in September has a strong focus on the early years.
- 'Our commitment to childcare is made clearer nowhere else than in the Childcare Bill'. The Bill will double the existing entitlement for 3- and 4-year-olds of working parents and represent a huge change in the market, with government becoming a bigger buyer of childcare than ever before.
- I am pleased that when government budgets are being cut across Whitehall, that this government has made a strategic decision to invest in childcare.
- The overall spend on childcare across government will rise from £5 billion to more than £6 billion a year over this Parliament, which through Tax-Free Childcare and tax credits means greater spending power for parents.
- In October a Policy Statement was published detailing progress made with the 30 hours pledge so far. Parents who are self-employed and lone parents get the 30 hours; support will also be available for those who are away from the labour market temporarily. The statement shares the next key steps towards full implementation of the entitlement from 2017 and early implementation in some areas in 2016. Early implementation will test capacity, flexibility and innovation, as well as ensure that all eligible children can access the 30 hours.

Further Developments Continued:

- A review of the costs of delivering the childcare has been undertaken to ensure a sustainable rate of funding to deliver the entitlement; the results will be part of the Autumn Statement.

Wirral Implications:

- Capacity to respond to additional child care places (from 15 to 30 hours a week) based on the current profile of parents of 3 and 4 year olds. The current take-up of 3 and 4 year old places is 80%. At present there appears to be sufficient estimated growth for those 3 and 4 year old places for working parents to extend from 15 to 30 hours. Within the maintained and non-maintained childcare sector (over 450 new places have been registered in the last 12 months).
- However, the precise impact of the measures in the Bill and the additional capacity required to respond to all eligible three year olds, is currently unclear. This is due to further clarity being required on the implications of the proposed changes to the welfare reform and child care capacity, required to meet the demand from parents whose youngest child is three years old or older and who need to make themselves available for work. It is currently unclear if the conditions of grant (from 15 to 30 hours entitlement a week) extends to parents in training and/or education or if parents in training and/or education are exempt from making themselves available for work and if so for how long. There is currently very limited information with regard to implementation of the increased offer which will be piloted in 2016 with roll out planned for 2017.
- Capacity to provide places within schools – the impact on schools is even more unclear, and this has and will continue to be discussed with Head Teachers. Currently schools are being actively encouraged to extend provision to develop provision for disadvantaged 2 year olds. This has been supported by recent changes in legislation; in that schools providing or seeking to provide this facility, where they already provide 3 year old provision (F1), no longer require a separate Ofsted registration. This focus on the 2 year old offer could potentially limit capacity to deliver the extended offer for three and four year olds (from 15 to 30 hours a week), within the school environment. The offer is not a universal offer and is dependent on parents being in employment which is likely to make the administration of the offer of 30 hours for some children and schools more complex.
- Wirral has nearly 50% of its 2 year olds eligible to take up the offer for disadvantaged two year olds (not evenly spread across the Borough). The additional funding (available when a child is 3) may be seen as an incentive for those parents currently eligible for the free 2 year old entitlement, encouraging and enabling them to seek work or to extend hours of paid employment to take the family income above the benefits thresholds. We will work with partners such as Job Centre Plus and employment agencies to support an increase in the take up of the offer and actively seek to support parents to move to a work ready position.
- Identifying families - working together with Job Centre Plus we need to ascertain the current level of worklessness amongst parents with young children across Wirral in order to assess the potential need for additional capacity as parents move into employment. In addition, the wider impact of the Welfare Reforms needs to be better understood for this group of parents.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- Impact on child poverty - for parents who move into work or extend their hours of employment this policy is seen as positively contributing to the targets to reduce child poverty within the Child Poverty Act, 2010. Many parents who intend to go back to work or enter employment do find the costs of childcare unaffordable. Whilst the additional childcare entitlement may make this more affordable, the wider implications of universal credits remain unknown.
- Identifying eligibility for take up – in Wirral, the current 3 and 4 year old funding is managed through the Early Years Business Support Team and the Finance Department. The current process to manage payments is labour intensive and will be made more complex to match eligibility for this new policy requirement.
- The pilot sites are yet to be determined and Wirral will bid to be included in any early delivery cohort, if it was deemed possible through the range of providers – work to ascertain the likelihood of this will be undertaken once the criteria is understood.
- There are implications about how we make information available about this change in eligibility for families, through the family information service and other communication mechanisms, to ensure maximum take up. This is being considered as part of the early years and children’s centre remodelling.
- Wirral’s childcare providers meet as part of local networks, and discussions to understand the impact of the Bill will be planned through children’s centre leads.

Education and Adoption Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The purpose of the Education and Adoption Bill is to strengthen the government's intervention powers in failing maintained schools. Separately the Bill introduces powers to deliver regional adoption agencies.

Key Points:

- The Bill would give Regional Schools Commissioners powers to bring in leadership support from other excellent schools and heads, and would speed up the process of turning schools into academies.
- An inadequate Ofsted judgment would usually lead to a school being converted into an academy, and barriers would be removed to ensure swift progress towards conversion.
- It would make schools that meet a new coasting definition, having shown a prolonged period of mediocre performance and insufficient pupil progress, eligible for academisation.
- A coasting definition will be set out in due course according to a number of factors.

Further Developments:

- The Education and Adoption Bill had its reading at the House of Lords on the 20 October 2015. Line by line examination of the Bill took place during the third day of committee on 17 November. Amendments discussed covered clauses 9-13 and 17 of the Bill. A date for the report stage is yet to be scheduled.

The Education Secretary, Nicky Morgan delivered a speech at Policy Exchange on 3 November 2015, about the government's reforms to promote educational excellence:

- The Education and Adoption Bill will allow us to turn around failing schools much more quickly.
- We'll offer coasting schools the support and challenge they need to improve. Where they rise to that challenge we'll get out of the way, where they don't, we'll bring in new leadership and new sponsors.
- Evidence shows that excellent sponsors are making a real difference in some of our most challenging schools. We need such strong sponsors everywhere. A significant proportion of the underperforming local authorities are located in the north of England.
- To try and tackle this the Chancellor announced last year the creation of a Northern Sponsor fund of £10 million.
- The first recipients of that fund have been announced; they will set up 7 high-performing academy hubs in areas with some of the greatest need.

- The DfE is currently consulting on 'Schools Causing Concern: Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools: Guidance for local authorities and RSCs', a major revision of the 'Schools Causing Concern' guidance. The draft updates the guidance to take account of the Education and Adoption Bill currently and provides non-statutory guidance on related local authority functions.
- The consultation seeks views on the proposed definition of a mainstream school which is coasting as well as the options for developing a coasting definition for special schools and for pupil referral units. Consultation closes on 18 December 2015.

Wirral Implications:

- Wirral has a strong commitment to improving standards in schools, and whilst this Bill is intended to strengthen the governments powers to intervene in “coasting schools”; the Council is continuously developing its approach, using all powers currently enshrined in regulation and guidance, to support and where necessary intervene to raise standards in schools. For example, from September 2015, Wirral is implementing a new approach to providing "school to school support". This will strengthen the approach of schools supporting each other to raise standards. Support will be delivered through three clusters, each with a teaching school and a school improvement officer. An overarching Board involving head teachers from the clusters, chaired by the School Commissioning Manager, will provide the framework to drive this approach and monitor its effectiveness.
- In terms of the Adoption aspect of the Bill; preliminary discussions have taken place across the Liverpool City Region and there is a commitment develop proposals to progress the regionalisation of adoption on a geographical footprint.

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The overriding aim of the Bill is to reduce expenditure and “help to achieve a more sustainable welfare system.” A related aim is to support efforts to increase employment and “support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households.”

Key Points:

- It is essentially a Bill of three parts. First, it will introduce a duty to report to Parliament on:
 - Progress towards achieving full employment.
 - Progress towards achieving 3 million apprenticeships in England.
 - Progress with the Troubled Families programme (England).
- Second, it will repeal almost all of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and introduce a new duty for the Secretary of State to report annually on “life chances”: children living in workless households and educational attainment at age 16, in England.
- Finally, the Bill allows for the introduction of extensive changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing rent levels. These will account for around 70% of the £12-13 billion in welfare savings identified in the Summer Budget 2015. The welfare/housing measures include:
 - Lowering the benefit cap threshold and varying it between London and the rest of the UK.
 - A four year benefits freeze.
 - Limiting support through Child Tax Credits/Universal Credit.
 - The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component.
 - Changes to conditionality for responsible carers under Universal Credit.
 - Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest.
 - Reducing social housing rent levels by 1% in each year for four years from 2016-17.

Further Developments:

- A number of changes were made to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill at report stage. The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 27 October 2015. The Bill was introduced to the House of Lords on 28 October and passed its second reading on 17 November. The committee stage is scheduled to begin on 2 December.

Wirral Implications:

- **Freeze Working Age Benefits** - This will impact on household disposable income, not previously frozen albeit uprating has been nominal 2013/14. This will potentially increase the strain on Wirral’s Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes, as more people apply; more people become entitled to support. With consequential harder to collect charges, key revenue streams such as Council Tax, charges in respect of adult social care, Benefits overpayments will be detrimentally affected. Rent arrears locally are expected to increase as with all cuts and will continue at least whilst (social) landlords maintain rent levels and annual increases in lieu on the 12% target reduction by 2020-21.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- **Freeze Working Age Benefits Continued** - This will increase pressure on LA Housing Benefit services from Social Landlords which is evident already via the rent shortfall in Bedroom Tax and insufficient DHP. The recent judgement at the Upper Tier Tribunal, supporting the DWP position in Social Sector Size Criteria cases confirms that the activity to reduce the impacts of this reform have ultimately had little effect on a case by case basis at local level. In the private sector is may see a freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates which will give Private sector landlords further issue with taking on tenants who rely on HB. This is likely to have a consequential impact on the levels of people being threatened with homelessness in the Borough.
- **Cutting Household Benefit Cap** – This will certainly impact locally, regrettably we cannot identify how many within present caseload will be affected, nor by how much in monetary terms on a weekly basis, as DWP consider circumstances of household benefits in payment that LA are unable to identify from records held. The Percentage reduction to the total maximum in Benefits that can be paid are relatively high, with the maximum for couples reducing from 26k per annum and for a single claimants reducing from 20k to £13,400. The LA's HB service administers the Cap not the DWP who advise us of each situation. There are currently 60 cases live (but cases go on and off and DWP projected our numbers would be 130). The change would bring some case with a consequential impact on resources, both front and back of house. Those affected would have an increased reliance on other means of support, financial, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP – annual cash limited budget) or the Local Welfare Assistance potentially (LW – finite residual budget as scheme no longer nationally funded). Likely impact will see increased problems for those in temporary accommodation with large families and again, for LA, placing the homeless or those at risk etc., then reliance on the limited discretionary schemes (DHP).
- **General Issues for Wirral/Benefits Service** -As a consequence of these changes, as impacts emerge, which will be ongoing, there will be a need to make provision for continued review of local schemes and policies with an increased reliance on any discretion the authority can, within its local policies and resources, exercise (again for example its LWA/DHP fund). The definition of 'vulnerable' will need review given the ratio of those reasonable deemed to be vulnerable which are those financially at risk, including dispossession. This will impact on key grant limited local schemes such as Council Tax Support Scheme which currently awards £27m pa in respect of 35, 230 recipients. This will provide a significant challenge for officers reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 onwards and will see collection issues increase as more people face difficulty paying, coupled with more strain on the scheme impacting on its capacity and ultimately having their national benefits reduced at source to pay Council Tax. Many people will be affected by more than one of the reforms outlined, which will present complexities, uncertainly and increased need for advocacy and advice, particularly if we are to ensure that their income, often translating to the Wirral Pound, is to be maximised. Broadly we can expect from these changes increased contact to service, both front facing public contact and back of house processing (including the Welfare Right Unit) and decision making services with an increased need and reliance on knowledgeable, experience, skilled resources, ensuring accessibility, thereby support where at all possible anti-poverty measures.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- **Remove Housing Benefit from Young People** -18-21 year olds, this will see more remain at home where it may not be appropriate to do so which will see issues for householder with Housing Benefits non dependant charges being applied and more rent to pay (as adult is meant to contribute as resident). These cases which will increase provide issues for the LA with collection of information and provision of evidence of household occupants. There is also a risk of young people going missing from benefit record, with difficulties operationally in determining their primary place of residence which will be key given the increasing drive of the DWP to reduce level of error and fraud within Welfare Benefits.

Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- This legislation is intended to continue the reform of policing with the aim of enhancing protections for vulnerable people

Key Points:

- The Bill would ensure 17 years olds who are detained in police custody are treated as children for all purposes under PACE.
- In particular, the amendments to the provisions of PACE concerning 17 year olds include:
 - Ensuring an appropriate adult is present for drug sample taking;
 - Ensuring appropriate consent is granted by both the 17 year old and parent/legal guardian for a range of interventions, including intimate searches; and
 - The ability to impose conditional bail to ensure the welfare and interests of the 17 year old.
- Reforming legislation in relation to the detention of people under sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 to ensure better outcomes for those experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - Prohibiting the use of police cells as places of safety for those under 18 years of age and further reducing their use in the case of adults;
 - Reducing the current 72 hour maximum period of detention; and
 - Extending the power to detain under section 136 to any place other than a private residence.

Further Developments:

- There are no further developments at this time. The Policing and Criminal Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

Wirral Implications:

- **Appropriate Adult Provision-** The Youth Offending service is in support of this change and we have been anticipating it for over a year. For many years 17 year olds have not been treated as Youths in the Police custody suite / Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) arena, which is inconsistent with other youth justice parameters. Therefore this change supports and recognises 17 years olds as still being youths and not adults during PACE interviews, processing and charging stages of detention.

Our **Appropriate Adult** (AA) services are already in place and will accommodate this wider age group. YOS provides this service by day and EDT by night. This may involve an increase in workload, however some 17 year olds who are detained in custody can be deemed to be Vulnerable Adults and the existing AA service covers youths and vulnerable adults anyway, so the increased workload may not be large.

We will monitor any increase in use of AA in respect of 17 years olds but this extension of age group now represents the same 10-18 year age group YOS and the youth courts accommodate, so this is more in line and consistent with other such youth justice services.

Wirral Implications Continued:

• **Identification of Accommodation for those Young People detained-** The Merseyside Criminal Justice Board **Youth Detention Protocol** may also need to include 17 year olds and this may have an impact on the requirements for Local Authorities to find accommodation for 17 year olds who have been refused Police Bail and the LA has a duty to accommodate them. The compliance of this protocol is monitored by the Police Crime Commissioner and the existing Policy may change to include 17 years olds, and this would then have an impact on CYPS Specialist Services and demands to accommodate 17 year olds at short notice who have been refused Bail. I have attached the existing protocol as this currently only covers 10-16 year olds but maybe amended.

Psychoactive Substances Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Queen's speech on 27 May 2015 included a commitment to bring forward new legislation to ban the new generation of psychoactive drugs. The Psychoactive Substances Bill is intended to protect people from the risks posed by untested, unknown and potential harmful drugs. The Bill will create a blanket ban which is seeking to prohibit and disrupt the production, distribution, sale and supply of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in the UK.
- For the purpose of the Bill, a psychoactive substance is a substance which is capable of producing a psychoactive effect in a person who consumes it and is not an exempted substance.

Key Points:

- The Bill will:
 - make it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances; that is, any substance intended for human consumption that is capable of producing a psychoactive effect. The maximum sentence will be 7 years' imprisonment
 - exclude legitimate substances, such as food, alcohol, tobacco, nicotine, caffeine and medical products, from the scope of the offence, as well as controlled drugs, which will continue to be regulated by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - exempt specific persons from certain offences under the bill, such as healthcare professionals, who may have a legitimate need to use NPS in their work
 - include provision for civil sanctions – prohibition notices, premises notices, prohibition orders and premises orders (breach of the two orders will be a criminal offence) – to enable the police and local authorities to adopt a graded response to the supply of NPS in appropriate cases
 - provide powers to stop and search persons, vehicles and vessels, enter and search premises in accordance with a warrant, and to seize and destroy psychoactive substances

Further Developments:

- The Public Bill Committee on the Bill has now concluded. The Bill will next be considered at report stage. A date for the report stage has not yet been announced.
- In the meantime it has attracted some criticism and with the Government's advisory body for drug misuse, the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) making 8 recommendations for amendment, including a tighter definition of the drugs that the bill covers, greater clarification of the difference between potentially harmful and harmless substances to avoid possible prosecution of suppliers of benign or beneficial substances, a sharper focus on commercial supply rather than users. These recommendations have now been responded to by the Home Secretary.

Wirral Implications:

At this time there are not any apparent major implications for Wirral Local Authority however the following issues will need to be considered;

- The local prevalence of the use of NPS is not known with any confidence so it would be valuable to carry out some sort of study to gain better

Wirral Implications Continued:

knowledge of the nature and extent of the use of these substances by the Wirral population.

- There is some consideration for Trading Standards in terms of investigating the so called “Head Shops” and assessing their compliance with the content of the new bill. The bill is setting out to close down the sources of supply and these retail outlets are targets, so Trading Standards, and the Police, will need to consider looking at what their approach is going to be to these retailers, including possible prosecution of those found to be in contravention with the bill.
- The Trading standards and the Police will also need to consider their approach to pubs and clubs where it is found that NPS are being used on their premises.
- A general review of the harm reduction education information offered locally to those groups in the population likely to be possible consumers of NPS.

Policy Developments

Briefing: Ofsted and good practice examples: further education and skills

Ofsted has published three new good practice examples on further education and skills: ‘Preparing vulnerable young people for employment – Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community’; ‘Helping women from disadvantaged backgrounds make a new start’; ‘Women’s Technology Training Limited’; and Using the power of football to involve, educate and inspire young people and their families: Foundation of Light.

‘Preparing vulnerable people for employment – Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community’

Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community (DISC) provides education and training opportunities for vulnerable young people. Over a 26 week period training, counselling and optional one-to-one support sessions are provided to help develop the skills needed for adulthood.

‘Helping women from disadvantaged backgrounds make a new start: Women’s Technology Training Limited’

Women’s Technology Training provide courses specifically for women to help them progress into further education or employment that meets the identified needs of local communities. A significant proportion of learners are refugees, asylum seekers, long term unemployed or carers, and around 40% are from minority ethnic groups.

Using the power of football to involve, educate and inspire young people and their families: Foundation of Light

Foundation of Light, the registered charity of Sunderland Football Club, runs programmes that use football to encourage children, parents and carers to develop their English, Maths, and parenting skills. Courses are 10 to 12 weeks long and families who complete the course are awarded match tickets.

Source: [Martin Rogers, Briefing: Ofsted good examples: further education and skills, LGiU, 18th September 2015](#)

Briefing: People, places, possibilities: progress on local area coordination in England and Wales

The report by the Centre for Welfare Reform in association with Inclusive Neighborhoods explores the implementation of local area coordination (LAC) in the UK, specifically in Derby City and Thurrock. It suggested that LAC can be a fundamental part of the health and social care system; through helping to build capacity in communities and reducing dependency on expensive statutory

services, LAC is helping to 'bring services back to core functions and principles and closer to the communities they serve.'

The report illustrates a range of benefits for communities where LAC has been implemented, including:

- An overall cost effectiveness
- Increased informal support networks
- Reduced isolation
- Services better integrated

The report recognises the challenges associated with implementing and maintaining LAC with a need for strong ongoing commitment and partnerships between the statutory sector and communities.

Source: [Christine Heron. Briefing: People, places, possibilities: progress on local area coordination in England and Wales, LGiU, 24th September 2015](#)

Briefing: The experiences of parents in the childcare market – Citizens Advice research

This report by the Citizens Advice explores parent's experiences of the childcare market, concluding that the childcare system is not set up in the interests of working parents.

Parents found childcare to be expensive and inflexible, particularly those who require childcare at unusual hours, with some having to change jobs or leave the labour market altogether. For working parents sessions offered under free childcare provision were found to be very restrictive.

The report also outlines the complexity of available funding around childcare provision and the difficulties parents faced in finding the right childcare. It is concluded that parent's needs should be central in childcare policy. To support parents in continuing to work we need more flexible and affordable childcare and equitable access for all.

Citizens Advice provides a range of recommendations to help ensure this. These include:

- Local authorities providing greater support to parents to find childcare
- Local authorities working to ensure that there is truly flexible local provision available
- Employers offering greater flexibility to help parents balance work and childcare
- Central Government working towards a simplified range of provision, to make choosing childcare easier for parents
- Free childcare provision to be fully funded in a way that allows providers to offer childcare at times suitable for working parents, or;
- The "more radical option" of extending free provision to all 2, 3, and 4 year olds regardless of parents working status

Source: [Mark Upton. Briefing: The experiences of parents in the childcare market – Citizens Advice research. LGiU. 2nd October 2015](#)

Commission on Assessments without levels – report of DfE response

The briefing outlines the ‘Final report on the Commission on Assessment without Levels’ and the Government response to this report.

The use of levels in assessment created too much focus on pace and progression onto the next level before ensuring pupils had a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

It is argued that assessment without levels will take away the unnecessary burden of recording and tracking for teachers and allow them to instead use formative assessment methods to identify pupil’s strengths and gaps in knowledge and understanding.

The Commission encourages a move away from a focus on data to demonstrate progress, to schools instead developing their own approach that is effective in assessing pupil’s progress and supporting their achievement.

Guidance for developing clear and effective assessment policies is provided.

It is recognised that schools’ approaches are driven by expectations of what Ofsted inspectors are looking for and recommends that a ‘shared understanding of all aspects of summative and formative educational assessment’ is needed for school leaders and Ofsted.

A number of further recommendations and next steps are proposed by the Commission. The Government’s response to the Commission report is positive: ‘We support the Commission’s view that schools should place a higher value on day-to-day formative assessment’.

Source: [Kathy Baker. Briefing: Commission on Assessment without Levels – report and DfE response. LGiU. 2nd October 2015](#)

Briefing: Private Tuition for school children and its impact

This briefing considers what is currently known about patterns of private tuition within the UK, its impact on educational outcomes and the various policy responses possible.

Private tuition for school-aged children is growing both in the UK and globally. Research found that the most affluent are the most likely to employ private tutors and children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely to receive it.

Parent stated reasons for employing additional tutors were; to improve a child’s performance in an individual subject; to achieve the highest possible examination grade and; to improve a child’s self-confidence.

Much of the research on the impact of private tutoring on education attainment points to limited and mixed outcomes and it is hard to say with any certainty that it will have a positive impact.

The evidence of an impact on attainment at GCSE or A Level is limited in most subjects, although there is measurable impact in mathematics and science. Evidence suggests that tuition is much better if it is part of a long term approach rather than short term cramming for an exam or test.

The briefing concludes that the effective policy responses that should be considered include; considering some form of regulation including minimum standards and training of tutors and; the approach of the Sutton Trust and Educational Endowment Trust of actively engaging to ensure better access to additional study for those without the financial resources to pay.

Source: [Andrew Crompton. Briefing: Private Tuition for school children and its impact. LGiU. 8th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Funding for disadvantaged pupils – PAC report

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee report sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee's inquiry following the Nationalist Audit Office's value for money report and evidence taken from the DoE, the Education Endowment Foundation and two practicing head teachers.

The Permanent Secretary welcomed the NAO report, and 'endorsed everything written in it', pointing out that it was extremely timely 'because the Government has a lot of decision to take in the spending review and beyond about how it wishes to evolve policy'.

The reports provides an overview of progress made on the Department's objective of narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, largely through the use of the Pupil Premium, and raises some key issues of concern for the administration of the Pupil Premium in the period ahead.

It argues that local authorities have an important role to play in a number of issues arising from the PAC inquiry, including; monitoring the effectiveness of Pupil Premium expenditure in schools in their area; making effective efforts to ensure that all parents eligible to claim free school meals do so and; providing support to schools that struggle to recruit high quality teachers.

Source: [Martin Rogers. Report: Funding for disadvantaged pupils – PAC report. LGiU. 15th October 2015](#)

Briefing: The Family Justice Review: The Effect on Local Authorities

The 'Impact of the Family Justice Reforms on Front-line Practice Phase One: The Public Law Outline' research report, published in August 2015, set out to gather the views of frontline practitioners as well as strategic managers on how reforms brought into place by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the resulting Practice Direction 12a are working in practice. This briefing summarises the

background to reform and the key points raised in the research. A phase two report is due to report in 2016.

Challenges to local authorities at this stage include effectively managing social worker workload, and ensuring budget allocations make clear where the funding for early pre assessment work is to come from.

A further key area of improvement for local authorities raised by the report is in supporting social workers to improve the quality of evidence provided to courts. The case manager role seems important and this research indicates that developing social worker confidence and competence in this area is key.

The report also suggests case managers can helpfully work alongside lawyers and local Family Justice Boards in tracking cases through the PLO process thereby improving partnership working.

Source: [Andrew Crompton, Family Justice Review: The Effect on Local Authorities, LGiU, 15th October](#)

Briefing: Ofsted and CQC Consultation: inspection of local area SEND arrangements

The DfE has requested that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission inspect local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling their duties. There will be a new form of inspection (under section 20 of the Children Act) and the present consultation seeks views on proposals for how they will be conducted.

The new proposals have been shaped by discussions over recent months held by Ofsted and CQC with young people, their parents and carers, disability and special educational needs support groups, local authorities and health groups about the most important responsibilities that should be inspected.

The common themes to emerge from all groups were that inspection should evaluate whether disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs are identified properly and whether their needs are met and their outcomes improve.

The consultation includes a questionnaire for children and young people, in line with the intention that their views will be a significant aspect of the inspection themselves.

Source: [Martin Rogers, Ofsted and CQC consultation: inspection of local area SEND arrangements. LGiU. 22nd October.](#)

Briefing: Key stage 3: The Wasted Years? – Ofsted survey

This briefing outlines the Ofsted survey report ‘Key Stage 3: The Wasted Years?’

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) Annual Report 2013-14, reported that primary schools had continued to improve but the performance of secondary schools had stalled.

It was identified that ‘...too often, the transition from primary to secondary school was poorly handled. Consequently, the gains made by pupils at primary school were not embedded and developed at Key Stage 3’.

The Ofsted survey was commissioned to gain a more accurate and detailed picture of this and identify any weaknesses in the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

The report concludes that Key Stage 3 must become a higher priority for secondary school leaders. A number of recommendations as to changes required are proposed for both school leaders and Ofsted.

A number of good practice case study examples are identified and summarised, suggesting ‘pockets of innovative practice that co-exist with other less effective approaches’.

It is argued that a tangible Government commitment to a national strategy on Key Stage 2/3 transition is needed, supported by funding and a clear sense of what is expected of schools.

Source: [Kathy Baker, Briefing: Key stage 3: The Wasted Years? – Ofsted survey, LGiU, 15th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Health and Social Care Devolution: a commentary

Following the Greater Manchester Devolution Agreement, Greater Manchester and NHS England signed up to arrangements for local integration of NHS and social care budgets. At the same time the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill is making its way through parliament, proposing an ‘enabling’ framework within which devolution deals can be negotiated.

This briefing provides a summary of the developments thus far and highlights key issues in the debates in parliament on the Bill. It looks particularly at the compatibility of the Bill with current NHS legislation and issues around governance, accountability and overview.

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill is a framework Bill – it provides an enabling structure to transfer function of many public authorities, including NHS bodies, to local authorities. But it cannot be certain how far the powers will be used which raises questions about how the Bill fits with existing NHS law - the Bill is lacking detail.

So far, it is not clear how overspends will be dealt with and there is unlikely to be additional funding. It is also unclear what will happen about NHS debts and liabilities, including private finance initiatives and clinical negligence claims. Devolution highlights again how the boundary between free healthcare and means-tested social care can be negotiated.

[Janet Sillett, Health and Social Care devolution: a commentary, LGiU, 21st October 2015.](#)

Briefing: Care and Continuity: contingency planning for provider failure

This briefing provides an overview of the business continuity and contingency planning guide to help councils plan and deal with social care provider failure.

The guide is delivered in two parts. Part 1 is an overview of the causes and potential mitigation of social care provider failure. It outlines the statutory and safeguarding obligations have in place in case of provider failure. Part 2 contains step-by-step guidance and checklists for developing continuity and contingency plans. These checklists can also be used to ensure that existing plans are fit for purpose.

The guide includes links to other useful and relevant resources. It has several case studies and materials from councils and a special section on working with insolvency practitioners.

Source: [Ingrid Koehler, Care and Continuity: contingency planning for provider failure, LGiU. 26th October.](#)

Briefing: Post-16 Education and Training Institutions BIS Guidance on Area Reviews

The government is seeking to reform post-16 education through a programme of area reviews, intended to cover all FE and Sixth Form colleges, some of which are likely to face closure or merger as a result. The reform is expected to produce fewer, larger and more specialised providers, including a network of new Institutes of Technology.

The briefing provides an overview of the guidance published by the BIS on performing these area reviews. The reviews will either be proactively initiated by a group of institutions in a local area, or by government where it sees a need to progress rapidly.

Each area review will be led by a local steering group, composed of a range of stakeholders including local authorities, LEPs, chairs of governors, and the FE and Sixth Form College Commissioners. Each review will proceed through a number of phases:

- An analysis of current provision and delivery arrangements in the area
- An options analysis

- Governing body deliberations
- Implementation

Source: [Toby Hill, Briefing: Post-16 Education and Training Institutions: BIS Guidance on Area Reviews, LGiU, 29th October 2015.](#)

DfE consultation - Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools

The DfE is consulting on 'Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools' – a major revision of the May 2014 'Schools Causing Concern' guidance. The draft contains non-statutory guidance on related local authority functions including how LAs should act as champions of excellence and school governance.

The draft consultation documents relate only to LAs maintained schools, though academies will be subject to the same general disciplines through RSCs, and local authorities are advised to alert the relevant RSC 'where they have concerns' about an academy.

RSCs are given considerable powers and discretion to act on behalf of the Secretary of State. The guidance is statutory for LAs, so that they have to 'have regard' to guidance.

The draft guidance describes three groups of school which will be eligible for intervention:

- Schools that have been judged inadequate by Ofsted
- Schools that are 'coasting' as defined by regulations
- Schools that have failed to comply with a warning notice satisfactorily

Source: [John Freeman, Briefing: DfE consultation - Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools, LGiU, 4th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Tackling social and educational inequality - Cambridge Primary Review Trust

The Cambridge Primary Review Trust has published a review of UK international evidence 'Mind the Gap: tackling social and educational inequality' to establish whether unequal educational outcomes are related to social inequality.

The study found that the most important influence on educational attainment is family background including parental outcomes, educational background, and homes which provide an environment for study.

The review finds that educational attainment is better in more equal societies and that unequal educational outcomes are more profound in unequal countries not just for poorer children but across the social spectrum.

However, spending on education, including more targeted spending like the pupil premium can make a difference, but is most likely to do so in already successful schools. The authors conclude that reducing inequality will ultimately depend on reducing socio-economic inequality rather than educationally focused policies and interventions.

Source: [Mark Upton, Briefing: Tackling social and educational inequality – Cambridge Primary Review Trust, LGiU, 5th November 2015.](#)

Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England was released on 30 September 2015.

The IMD is a huge dataset, ranging across the domains of employment, income, health, crime, environment, education, and skills, and housing and access to services; these various domains are combined to create various composite indicators. The IMD can be used at neighbourhood level or for a local authority area as a whole.

This briefing sets out the background and methodology of the IMD and presents a selection of results.

A preliminary analysis indicates a persistence of deprivation in parts of the north and midlands and parts of London, although London appears to be improving in relative terms; there appears to have been some deterioration in the position of some coastal areas.

Data produced from the IMD is of crucial importance for planning, targeting resources, and preparing funding bids.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015, LGiU, 12th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Apprenticeships: Delivering Skills for Future Prosperity – Ofsted Survey

This briefing outlines the Ofsted report ‘Apprenticeships: Delivering Skills for Future Prosperity’. This report finds that a third of apprenticeships surveyed were failing to provide sufficiently high-quality training, suggesting that the drive to create more apprenticeships has diluted their quality.

Growth in apprenticeships has been concentrated in service sectors, where there are too many low-skilled roles being classified as apprenticeships.

Trailblazer apprenticeships, which are formulating the standards and assessment procedures of the government’s reformed apprenticeships, are delivering substantial and high-quality training. But they tend to be dominated by large employers.

Most new apprenticeships are going to the over-25s, the number of 16 to 18 year olds being taken on is as low today as it was a decade ago.

The report concludes that, as well as stifling the career opportunities of learners, low-quality apprenticeships devalue the brand at a time when the government is seeking to put vocational education on an equal footing with academic education.

A number of recommendations are provided for government, schools and providers of apprenticeships to ensure sufficient information and training opportunities are available.

Source: [Toby Hill, Briefing: Apprenticeships: Delivering Skills for Future Prosperity – Ofsted Survey, LGiU, 13th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Building the right support: a national plan to develop community services for people with a learning disability and/or autism with behaviour that challenges

Building the right support is the national plan to develop community services and close inpatient facilities for people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition.

The national plan is a renewed push on the Transforming Care programme which has been seeking to drastically reduce the numbers of people who are inappropriately placed in NHS funded units.

Some progress has been made over the last four years of the programme. However, the problem remains that although discharges are taking place, people are also being admitted at a similar level, and some discharges are being delayed through lack of community options.

There is also significant variation in performance both of local areas and in regions; for example the regional variation in inpatient levels ranges from about 6 to 61 per million population.

The national plan will build on the progress so far, but with a greater focus on nationally supported implementation. The plan, which should be fully implemented by 2019, includes:

- The closure of between 35 to 50 percent of inpatient capacity across England
- Financial arrangements for shifting money from inpatient beds to community services – £75 million to aid transition over three years within the existing financial envelope
- Establishing 49 transforming care partnerships to drive local change
- A new national service model.

Source: [Christine Heron, Briefing: Building the right support: a national plan to develop community services for people with a learning disability and/or autism with behaviour that challenges, LGiU, 18th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Joining the Dots: Have recent reforms worked for those with SEND? – policy research

The Driver Youth Trust (DYT) is a charity dedicated to improving the life chances of children and young people who struggle with literacy, particularly children with dyslexia. This briefing outlines ‘Joining the Dots: Have recent reforms worked for those with SEND?’ published by DYT.

It is argued that wider changes to the way schools are organised and managed are having an impact on the provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and may be holding back the potential positive impact of changes brought in through the Children and Families Act of 2014.

The report suggests that changes to LA’s role, changes to funding, (structural school reforms through academisation, and the gradual emergence of a new ‘middle tier’ with cross-school responsibility have all contributed to increased fragmentation in approaches to pupils with SEND.

The report raises fundamental challenges to many elements of current school system reform, saying in its conclusions that “reform cannot come at the price of equity ... the next phase of reform must focus on ensuring all learners have the educational opportunities currently experienced by those lucky enough to be at the best schools and in the strongest parts of the system”.

Practical and realistic recommendations are made for policy-makers and regulators, local authorities, schools, sector organisations and Ofsted which will help to improve delivery of the SEND reforms. The report calls for immediate action to ensure that outcomes will be improved for a large group of young people who have been consistently let down by the system.

Source: [Andrew Crompton, Briefing: Joining the Dots: Have recent reforms worked for those with SEND? – policy research, LGiU, 19th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts

This report, by the Work and Pensions Committee (WPC), is the result of an inquiry into the changes to Tax Credits proposed in the July 2015 budget.

In particular, the WPC investigated the likely impacts on household incomes of proposals to reduce the earnings threshold for Tax Credits and raise the rate at which Tax Credits are withdrawn as income rises; these proposals are examined alongside any compensatory effects of a higher National Living Wage, a higher personal income tax threshold, and an extension of free child care.

The WPC argue that the proposed changes to Tax Credits will result in very substantial cuts to the incomes of working families which will not be fully compensated for by the other measures announced in the July Budget.

The report also considers possible ways of mitigating the impacts of the cuts to Tax Credits; it concludes that altering the income threshold or the rate at which income is withdrawn cannot simultaneously meet the objectives of protecting the incomes of low income households, maintaining work incentives, or reducing expenditure.

The report concludes by suggesting that a limit has been reached to cuts in working age benefits and states an intention to investigate the generational balance of welfare expenditure over the course of this Parliament.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts, LGiU, 19th November 2015](#)

Briefing: School improvement: effective school partnerships – DfE research review

This briefing outlines the research review of evidence commissioned by the DfE from Dr Paul Armstrong, 'Effective school partnerships and collaboration for school improvement: a review of the evidence'.

A key shift within the English school system, particularly since 2000, has been an increase in the number of schools working together in both formal and informal arrangements.

The report provides a comprehensive review of inter-school collaboration research and how and why schools go into a variety of partnerships, their different formations as well as challenges to the effectiveness and sustainability of these arrangements.

It is concluded that there is 'a paucity of independent empirical evidence relating to inter-school collaboration, across a number of areas', with the majority of evidence emanating from evaluations of central government initiatives.

The report highlights a number of gaps in the knowledge base. Two key areas are recommended for further exploration:

- a coherent and comprehensive mapping of the system in relation to the volume, diversity and key characteristics of inter-school collaboration;
- the impact of inter-school collaboration on the attainment and broader educational experience of students.

Source: [Kathy Baker, Briefing: School improvement: effective school partnerships – DfE research review, LGiU, 25th November 2015](#)

Briefing: The costs and benefits of paying all the lowest-paid care home workers in the UK the Living Wage

‘The costs and benefits of paying all the lowest-paid care home workers in the UK the Living Wage’ by Joseph Rowntree investigates the incidence of earnings below the Living Wage (LW) in care homes for older people, and the costs and benefits of increasing pay to this level.

The report also investigates some of the implications of the new National Living Wage (NLW) ahead of its introduction in April 2016.

After this report was published there was growing concern over the rising costs of adult social care which would be worsened by the introduction of the NLW.

It is estimated that if the LW were extended to all employees in the sector earning below the LW in 2014, the total annual cost to employers would rise by £996.2m. Total wage costs of the NLW would be £387m for the UK, which is considerably less than the transition to the LW.

It is concluded that government funding required would be relatively small and the gross cost of funding a LW settlement for England for would be offset by increases in NI and tax and benefit reductions. Funding the LW would bring significant benefits in the form of improved staff retention and motivation, and a reduction in in-work poverty.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The costs and benefits of paying all the lowest-paid care home workers in the UK the Living Wage, LGiU, 26th November 2015](#)

Briefing: English Baccalaureate implementation – DfE consultation

This briefing is on the DfE Consultation on implementing the English Baccalaureate launched on 3 November 2015. In support of this, the DfE has published Statistical release: EBacc and non-EBacc subject entries and achievement 2010/11 to 2014/15, a Press Release, Nicky Morgan: no tolerance of areas where majority of pupils fail and a speech, Nicky Morgan: one nation education made by the Secretary of State at a Policy Exchange event also on 3 November.

The DfE press release described the consultation as ‘the next phase of the Government’s education reform package designed to tackle underperformance and deliver on the Government’s commitment to give every child an excellent education’.

In June 2015, the Government announced its intention that all pupils starting year 7 in September 2015 take the EBacc subjects when they reach their GCSEs in 2020. This current consultation is about implementing this commitment. The Government’s goal is that over time at least 90% of pupils in mainstream secondary schools will enter the EBacc.

The Government recognise that the current proposals have implications for increased numbers of teachers of EBacc subjects, particularly for numbers of teachers of languages.

The consultation invites responses to cover the challenges and issues for consideration by schools, their experiences of teacher recruitment and retention in EBacc subjects and the central strategies that schools would like to see in place for recruitment and training in this area.

The briefing warns that changes overall will bring a host of practical problems to schools. The Government does need to listen very carefully to the practical experience that schools bring to this consultation and be prepared to adapt the detail of its proposals accordingly.

The deadline for the DfE consultation on implementing the EBacc is 29 January 2016.

Source: [Kathy Baker, Briefing: English Baccalaureate implementation – DfE consultation, LGiU, 1st December 2015](#)

Briefing: Bullying of young people: Recent Research in England and Scotland

The Department for Education (DfE) published *Bullying: evidence from the second longitudinal study of young people in England* in November 2015. The study provides up to date data on prevalence, types of bullying and characteristics of those bullied in England.

This report is considered in the context of wider international work on bullying and its impact, including an increasingly public health focus in the United States of America and asks whether such a policy focus would also be helpful in England.

The research study which started in 2013, builds on the first longitudinal study of young people in England (LSYPE) which ran from 2004 to 2010. It fills a gap in reporting on this topic since the demise of the national indicator set, and comes to the general conclusion that bullying is declining in schools in England, as well as providing some interesting and more up to date detail of the experiences of children and young people.

Source: [Andrew Crompton, Briefing: Bullying of young people: Recent Research in England and Scotland, LGiU, 2nd December 2015](#)

Useful Sources

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

Key Announcements:

[Chancellor George Osborne's Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015, Government website, speech, 25th November 2015](#) – *Full speech*

[Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015: key announcements, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key announcements emerging from the statement*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[Department for Education's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department for Education*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

[Lauren Lucas, Briefing: The Spending Review and Autumn Statement, LGiU, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key points emerging from the statement*

Further Analysis and Impact on Local Government and Partners:

[LGA Responds to 2015 Spending Review, Lord Porter, Chairman of the Local Government Association, 25th November 2015](#) – *LGA response to the spending review*

[Home Office's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Home Office*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

[LGA responds to Education Services Grant announcement, Cllr Roy Perry, Chairman of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, 26th November 2015](#) – *Outlines the Education Services Grant announcement and highlights concerns*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[LGA responds to national schools funding announcement in Spending Review, LGA, 26th November 2015](#) – *Brief outline of the impact of the new national funding formula*

[Laura Sharman, Spending Review: Warning that councils at financial tipping point, LocalGov, 26th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for council budgets and services*

[William Eichler, Spending Review: Local authorities to retain 100% of business rates, LocalGov, 25th November 2015](#) – *Outlines Business Rates Retention for councils*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

Childcare Bill

[Childcare Bill 2015-16, Parliamentary website](#) – *Previous debates on all stages of the Childcare Bill and any latest updates*

[John Fowler, Childcare Bill, LGiU, 4th June 2015](#) – *Brief analysis of the Childcare Bill*

[Government Press Release: Government brings forward plans to double free childcare for working families, 1st June 2015](#) – *Details current childcare entitlement and changes*

[Government Speech: Sam Gyimah: we are in a golden age of childcare, 11th November 2015](#) – *Details developments of the childcare entitlement and achievements so far*

Education and Adoption Bill

[Education and Adoption Bill, Parliamentary website](#) – *Previous debates on all stages of the Education and Adoption Bill and any latest updates*

[Government Press Release: Hundreds of 'coasting' schools to be transformed, 30th June 2015](#) – *Outlines draft regulations to be implemented by 2016 and defines the term 'coasting schools'*

[Andrew Crompton, Coasting Schools: Draft Regulations, LGiU, 8th July 2015](#) – *Brief analysis of coasting schools and draft regulations*

[Government Speech: Nicky Morgan: one nation education, 3rd November 2015](#) – *Brief detail of the Bill and the Northern Sponsor Fund*

[John Freeman, DfE consultation - Intervening in failing, underperforming and coasting schools, 4th November 2015](#) – *Brief outline of draft guidance*

[Government Press Release: Have your say on measures to transform failing schools, 21st October 2015](#) – *Details of consultation launched*

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

[House of Commons, Briefing Paper- Welfare Reform and Work Bill, 16th July 2015](#) – *Brief analysis of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill*

[Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Childcare Bill and any latest updates*

[Andrew Jones, The Welfare Reform and Work Bill: Welfare Reform Update, 20th August 2015](#) – *Brief overview of the Bill and any latest updates*

Psychoactive Substances Bill

[Psychoactive Substances Bill, Parliamentary website](#)- *Previous debates on all stages of the Psychoactive Substances Bill*

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POLICY INFORM: REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Policy Inform- January 2016

The Directorate Policy briefings will provide an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament, emerging policies and upcoming consultations. The Directorate Policy briefing will be produced specifically to inform Portfolio Holders and Elected Members and will be taken to Policy & Performance Committees for discussion.

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Introduction

The policy briefing paper is intended to provide Members of the Policy and Performance Committee with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the committees work programme and future scrutiny work.

The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Policy & Performance Committee Briefings	
July 2015	The first policy briefing will focus predominately on the Queen's Speech, which will establish the Government's legislative programme for the parliamentary year ahead.
September 2015	The second policy briefing will be produced in September and will focus on the Chancellor's July 2015 Budget Statement. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
January 2016	The third policy briefing will focus on the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review which sets out how Government money will be allocated. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
March 2016	The fourth policy briefing will focus upon the 2016 Chancellor of Exchequers Budget. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

The January policy briefing outlines the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on the 25th November 2015. The policy briefing also alludes to any potential implications that have been highlighted by relevant Officers for Wirral Council, and elaborates on any legislation or policy updates that have been implemented or developed since the last policy briefing in September.

The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee's work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

Autumn Statement and Spending Review - 25th November 2015

The Spending Review sets out how £4 trillion of government money will be allocated over the next five years. The key announcements outlined in the statement have been divided into themes:

Local Councils

- The main grant to local government will be phased out. Other sources of income such as council tax and business rates are forecast to grow in cash terms by £6.3 billion by 2019-20.
- From 2016/17 local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This is intended to raise £2 billion a year by 2019-20.
- From April 2016, police forces will be able to increase the amount they require from council tax collections by 2%.
- Extension of the doubling of small business rate relief (SBRR) in England for 12 months to April 2017.
- The government will allow local authorities to spend up to 100% of their fixed asset receipts (excluding Right to Buy receipts) on the revenue costs of reform projects.
- The government will deliver its commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

Housing



- The housing budget will be doubled to £2m a year. Stamp duty will be 3pc higher, raising almost £1b by 2020.
- 400,000 new homes by 2020.
- The right-to-buy scheme will be extended to housing association tenants, with a new pilot in five housing associations.
- A series of other schemes, including Help to Buy: Shared Ownership to help people get on the housing ladder.
- From April 2016 people purchasing additional properties will pay an extra 3% in stamp duty. Money raised will be used to help those struggling to buy their first home.
- 300,000 homes will be better protected from flooding by 2021, with £2.3 billion for over 1,500 flood defence schemes.
- A cap on the amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector. The reform will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards.

Planning, Transport and Regeneration

- Further reforms to the planning system, including establishing a new delivery test on local authorities, to ensure delivery against Local Plans.
- Support for the availability of appropriate land for housing, including by releasing public sector land with capacity for 160,000 homes.
- Support for the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites in the green belt by allowing them to be developed in the same way as other brownfield land, providing it contributes to Starter Homes, and subject to local consultation.
- Consultation on updating the Transparency Code to require all local authorities to record details of their land and property assets in a consistent way on the government's e-PIMS.
- The Roads Investment Strategy will see £15 billion of investment.
- HS2 will go ahead.
- Commuters will soon be able to claim compensation if their train is more than 15 minutes late.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor

for Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor

for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future

Digital Government



- £1.8 billion invested in digital technology and transformation projects across the public sector.
- £450 million to support the Government Digital Service's role as the digital, data and technology centre for government.
- DCLG will work closely with the Valuation Office Agency to digitise the collection of local taxes.

Community Cohesion



- Current levels of funding for community integration programmes will be maintained. This funding will be targeted to support the recommendations of Louise Casey's review of opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities.

DCLG

- 20% reduction in the department's paybill, with total savings of £94 million by 2019-20.
- At least £74 million of funding for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.
- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund.
- Continue to oversee delivery of devolution deals.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future



Arts and Sport

- Funding for museums and galleries will be maintained so they remain free to the public.
- The government will fund capital investments in culture across the country through a total of £1.6 billion by 2020-21.
- £5 million of the Northern Powerhouse investment fund will go to Manchester museum to create a new South Asia gallery in partnership with the British Museum, and £150 million to help make oyster style ticketing a reality across the whole of the North.
- The government will support the Rugby League World Cup bid for the UK in 2021 so matches can be held across the North.

Clare Fish- Project Sponsor for Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all



Businesses

- The business budget has been slashed by 17 per cent. This is partly achieved by offering £165million of loans to companies, rather than the current grants.
- Universal rates scrapped in favour of devolving powers to local councils who will now collect 100pc of the tax, which brought in £23bn this year.
- The government is creating 26 new Enterprise Zones, including expanding 8 Zones on the current programme. These include 15 Zones in smaller towns and rural areas.
- A £400 million Northern Powerhouse investment fund will be created to help small businesses to grow.

Paula Basnett- Partner pledge led for Thriving Small Businesses

Devolution

- Councils will be allowed to cut business rates to boost growth and elected city-wide mayors allowed to raise them for specific projects.
- There will be further commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, including: investment of £13 billion on transport in the North by 2020, a range of investments in scientific research, and supporting further Northern Powerhouse trade missions to key emerging economies.
- In 2017-18 the government will devolve and reform increased funding for managing temporary accommodation, giving local authorities 'more control and flexibility'.
- In 2016 DCLG will shortly consult on changes to the local government finance system to pave the way for the implementation of 100% business rate retention. As part of these reforms, additional responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities.

Tax Credit

- The government will borrow £8 billion less than forecast – making faster progress towards eliminating the deficit.
- Because of the improvement in public finances, the £4.4 billion of proposed cuts will no longer happen.
- Tax credits are being phased out as we introduce universal credit.
- The government will propose no further changes to the universal credit taper, or to the work allowances beyond those that passed through Parliament.

Families & Childcare

- Spending levels on homelessness services will be maintained.
- £40 million will be allocated for services for victims of domestic abuse.
- Continued investment into the Troubled Families programme with the aim of better outcomes for 400,000 families by 2020.
- Doubling the free childcare entitlement- 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working families with 3 and 4 year olds from Sept 2017.
- Tax-Free Childcare from early 2017, providing up to £2,000 a year per child.
- From 2017-18 an investment of £300 million to increase the average hourly rate childcare providers receive, and at least £50 million of capital funding to create additional places in nurseries.

John Martin- Partner pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence & Julia Hassall- Project Sponsor for Vulnerable children reach their full potential

Environment

- The current Energy Companies Obligation runs until March 2017. This will be replaced from April 2017 with a new cheaper energy supplier obligation to reduce carbon emissions which will run for five years. The changes will mean that on average 24 million households will save £30 a year on their energy bills from 2017.
- The Warm Home Discount scheme will also be extended to 2020-2021. This currently gives certain low-income households a one-off reduction of £140 on their electricity bill.

Our Partners:



NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals. £750 million of investment and a new national voluntary contract for GPs .
- £300 million per year will be invested in diagnostics by 2020 to fund new equipment and additional staff capacity, including 200 additional staff trained to perform endoscopies by 2018.
- £150 million will be invested in a new Dementia Research Institute .
- £4.8 billion allocated for health every year for the next 5 years. This includes funding for a shift in the way urgent and emergency care services are provided and improving out of hospital services to deliver more care closer to home. New investment of £1 billion in technology will support this transformation and integrate patient records across health and social care by 2020. Over the next 5 years, at least £500 million will be invested in building new hospitals.
- £10 billion extra a year in real terms. £6 billion of which will be delivered in 2016, particularly to mental health services.
- This will fund:
 - 800,000 more operations and treatments
 - 5.5 million more outpatient appointments
 - 2 million more diagnostic tests
 - access to GP services in the evenings and at the weekend
 - 7-day access to hospital services by 2020
 - Whilst the NHS is receiving increased funding, there is also a commitment to find a further £22 billion in efficiency savings.

**John Develing- Pledge lead
for Wirral Residents Live
Healthier Lives**



Police

- No cuts to the police budget. The government will protect overall police spending in line with inflation – an increase of £900 million by 2019-20. "The police protect us and we are going to protect the police."
- Additional funding will be provided for forces that have strong proposals to support efficiency and reform.
- The National Crime Agency's budget will also be protected in cash terms to help cut organised crime.

**John Martin- Pledge lead
for Zero Tolerance to
Domestic Violence**



Schools and Apprenticeships

- Schools funding will be protected in line with inflation. £23 billion will be invested in school buildings, creating 600,000 extra school places and 500 free schools.
- Sixth form colleges will now be able to become academies.
- Savings of £600million will be made from the education services grant that goes to local authorities as more schools become academies. - "We will make local authorities running schools a thing of the past".
- The current 'unfair' school funding system will be phased out and replaced with a new national Funding Formula from 2017.
- Funding for adult education will not be cut.
- The government will spend twice as much on apprentices- 3 million apprentices by 2020.
- A new apprentice levy of 0.5 per cent will be introduced for employers. The levy will raise £3 billion a year to fund three million apprenticeships. Less than 2% of UK employers will pay the levy.
- Maintenance loans will be available to higher education students who study part time from 2018.

**John Martin- Pledge lead
for Zero Tolerance to
Domestic Violence**

Further Analysis & Impact on Local Government and Partners

Local Government:

Funding

- There has been a £4.1 billion funding cut over this Spending Review period and this comes on top of almost £10 billion in further demand-led cost pressures facing councils by the end of the decade. Local communities will suffer as a result.
- The general government grant to local councils will be removed completely by 2020.
- Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) warn that the spending review represents a 24% reduction in real terms to the local government grant, including the £1.5bn increase to the Better Care Fund.

Business Rates

- Retaining 100% of business rates will, nationally, add up to an estimated £26 billion. As part of the 'devolution revolution' local authorities will also be able to lower business rates to attract business investment in their area. It is hoped that this will correct the 'geographical imbalance' and encourage local authorities to become more competitive and focus their attentions on attracting private investment into their own areas.
- Changes will hit the poorest parts of the country hardest, where there are fewer businesses and taxpayers to make up for lost Whitehall grants. Rich councils will get richer at the expense of already struggling councils.

Social Care

- From 2016/17, local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This will go some way to allowing a number of councils to raise the money needed to offset some of the cost of social care.
- The new care precept will generate very different levels of revenue across the country, with no equalisation system planned.
- The council tax precept will not be implemented until 2017, leaving a shortfall for local authorities between now and 2017.

Local Growth Fund

- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund, which is more than double the size of equivalent funds in the last Parliament. This will empower local communities to deliver growth by giving them greater control of public spending, allowing them to target their own priorities.
- Secretary of State for DCLG, Greg Clark: "On top of building the homes our country needs across the nation we are devolving powers to local people who know their communities best to drive jobs, nurture businesses and improve local services."

Housing

- Increased investment in schemes to help people to rent or buy has weighted in favour of private developers, at the expense of opportunities to deliver affordable social housing for communities. Tackling local housing need would also help to regenerate local economies and provide jobs and skills. ASPE argue councils are best placed to address specific local housing need.
- Under the new reform, Housing Benefit will no longer fully subsidise families to live in social houses that many working families cannot afford, and will better align the rules in the private and social rented sectors. It will also ensure that Housing Benefit costs are better controlled and will help prevent social landlords from charging inflated rent for their properties
- In areas of Wirral where the Local Housing Allowance rate for the Borough is below the rent charged by housing associations, prospective tenants, particularly those on out-of-work benefits, may be unable to fund the difference between rent and Housing Benefit. The profile of tenants may shift further away from single, younger households on lower incomes or welfare benefits. It may also have implications on the property type and financial appraisals for new-build social housing in the pipeline.

Our Partners:

NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals, this means that by 2021 everyone will be able to access GP services in the evenings and at weekends with an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice.
- An additional £600 million invested in mental health services will mean that significantly more people will have access to talking therapies every year by 2020.
- Investment into the new Dementia Research Institute will accelerate the pace of research and tackle the progression of the disease. This is the government's latest step in a long term strategy to combat dementia.
- Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt: "For doctors and nurses working harder than ever on the frontline this upfront investment means we can implement the NHS's own ambitious plan to transform services for the future." "This new money will help us finish the job."

Police

- Protecting police funding will allow forces to adapt to changing crime threats and train more firearms officers to make sure the country can be protected from terrorist threats.
- £1 billion will be spent on 4G communications for police forces and other emergency services, allowing officers to take mobile fingerprints and electronic witness statements. This will free up officers' time, saving around £1 million a day when fully operational.

Schools and Apprenticeships

- The Education Services Grant helps ensure that children are getting the education they deserve including help to provide speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapies . Last year, £815 million was spent on the ESG. The LGA say urgent clarification is needed on how the £600 million cuts will be achieved, and how quickly, without impacting on welfare and standards.
- Currently a child from a disadvantaged background in one school can receive half as much funding as a child in identical circumstances in another school. The changes to the allocation of school funding will set a national rate for each pupil, with extra funding for those with additional needs.
- Introducing a new system will mean some schools will face relative budget reductions. LGA recommend changes should be introduced in a phased way to protect these schools. Government should also allow for local discretion to be applied to take into account individual local needs.
- 250,000 students will benefit from extra loans. This will include tuition fees for students studying for higher level skills in further education, part-time students and postgraduates.

Queen's Speech 2015- Designation to Policy and Performance Committees

On Wednesday 27th May 2015, the Queen unveiled the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. Below is a list of each individual Bill which will have implications for local government that were announced during the speech. The list identifies the Policy and Performance committee with whose remit the legislation most closely aligns:

Legislative Plans	Policy and Performance Committee
National Insurance Contributions Bill/ Finance Bill	Transformation and Resources
Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill	All Policy and Performance Committees
Trade Unions Bill	Transformation and Resources
Housing Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Buses Bill	Regeneration and Environment
High Speed Rail Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Childcare Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Energy Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Education and Adoption Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Enterprise Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Policing and Criminal Justice Bill	Families and Wellbeing Transformation and Resources
Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill	Transformation and Resources
Psychoactive Substances Bill	Families and Wellbeing

Additional bills that have been announced are outlined below. These will be monitored in relation to any emerging implications for Local Government and reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Committee as appropriate.

Additional Legislative Plans
EU Referendum Bill
Scotland Bill
Immigration Bill
Extremism Bill
Investigatory Powers Bill
Charities Bill
Armed Forces Bill
Bank of England Bill
Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill

Wales Bill
Votes for Life Bill

The bills relevant to the Families and Wellbeing Committee are discussed in further detail below. The information provided has been sourced predominately from the LGiU, as well as SOLACE and the LGC and therefore solely represents a fact-based introduction to the bills.

Queen's Speech 2015- Developments and Implications

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Bill will provide for the devolution of powers to cities with elected metro mayor, continuing the government's commitment to building a 'northern powerhouse'.

Key Points:

- To provide new primary legislative powers to fulfill the Government's manifesto commitments.
- Together with existing powers under the Localism Act 2011, the Bill would also enable the Government to empower towns and counties, building on the programme of Growth Deals which the Government implemented in the last Parliament.

The provisions in the Bill would be generic (to be applied by order to specified combined authorities and their areas) and would enable:

- An elected mayor for the combined authority's area who would exercise specified functions and chair the authority.
- The mayor to undertake the functions of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the area.
- Where a mayor is to have PCC functions, allow the current PCC term of office to be extended until the mayor is in place.
- Remove the current statutory limitation on its functions (currently these are limited to those on economic development, regeneration, and transport).
- Enable local authority governance to be streamlined as agreed by councils.

Further Developments:

- The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill was considered in a Committee of the whole house on 21 October and 17 November 2015. The report and third reading stages are expected to take place on Monday, 7 December.
- In response to the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, and to its reinforcement in the July 2015 Budget, Government invited other areas to make proposals for enhanced local governance and 'devo-deals'. 38 areas responded to the government deadline in September 2015.

Wirral Implications:

- Wirral continues to play a key role with LCR partners in working up the our devolution asks.
- Since we submitted our devolution proposals to Government on 4th September City Region partners have continued to negotiate the detail of our asks with Central Government.
- This has culminated in the successful agreement of a deal, which was signed off on 17th November by the Leaders of the 6 constituent Council meetings which will take place in each of the authorities on 19th November. This is then followed by a meeting of the Combined Authority on Friday 20th November to determine if the devolution deal can, and will, be accepted.
- The deal will see almost £1 billion of its additional funding for the City Region over the next 30 years, together with an increase in local decision-making and funding control over the key priority areas of economic development, transport and skills.
- As part of the deal, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will adopt a model of a directly elected city region Mayor over the Combined Authority's area with the first election in May 2017.

Housing and Planning Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- This legislation will give housing association tenants the chance to own their own home. It also aims to increase housing supply and access to home ownership.

Key Points:

- The main elements of the Bill can be separated into two sections:

Home Ownership-

- To enable the extension of Right to Buy levels of discount to housing association tenants.
- To require local authorities to dispose of high-value vacant council houses, to help fund the Right to Buy extension discounts and the building of more affordable homes in the area.
- To provide the necessary statutory framework to support the delivery of Starter Homes.
- To take forward the Right to Build, requiring local planning authorities to support custom and self-builders registered in their area in identifying suitable plots of land to build or commission their own home.

Housing Supply-

- To introduce a statutory register for brownfield land, to help achieve the target of getting Local Development Orders in place on 90% of suitable brownfield sites by 2020.
- To simplify and speed up the neighbourhood planning system, to support communities that seek to meet local housing and other development needs through neighbourhood planning.
- To give effect to other changes to housing and planning legislation that would support housing growth.

Further Developments:

- The Planning and Housing Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 2 November 2015. The committee is expected to report by 10 December 2015.

- The Chancellor's Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 announced a pilot of the extension of Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants. The pilot includes five housing associations. One of the pilot Housing Associations is Riverside, with their Liverpool City Region stock being included.

On 13th October 2015, as the bill was introduced into Parliament, Housing Minister Brandon Lewis said:

- "More than 230,000 households have been helped into homeownership through government-backed schemes since 2010, while our extension to the Right to Buy will see a further 1.3
- "The Housing Bill will allow us go even further by kick-starting a national crusade to get 1 million homes built by 2020. It truly is an historic moment that will help deliver the homes hard-working people rightly deserve, transforming generation rent into generation buy."

Further Developments Continued:

- There has been widespread anger amongst affected local councils with regards to the provision to force local housing authorities to sell or consider selling high value stock in order to fund the discounts to housing association tenants.
- There is no prospect of rent control being introduced to the rapidly growing private rented sector; this remains one of the most worrying aspects of renting for tenants in high cost areas.

Wirral Implications:

- **Extend Right to Buy**- There is still further detail to be announced as to how the actual scheme will work, discounts to be offered, the level of high value assets, however the extension of right to buy to housing association tenants and the Councils tenants (the council owns 23 houses where tenants have the preserved RTB) will reduce the availability of social housing stock generally to meet housing needs in the borough. It is likely this would be seen more so in the more attractive residential areas thereby reducing provision in these. The extent of the take up is difficult to forecast as levels of discounts, individual's financial circumstances and the ability of people to secure mortgages would need to be taken into account.
- The impacts of this would need to be mitigated in part by increased provision of even further new build social housing stock. However whilst the aim of the Government is for income received from sales to be reinvested into new affordable housing provision, it is unlikely that the sale of higher value local authority housing assets will fund this and it is anticipated that any future provision will have to be subsidised. The Institute for Fiscal Studies have identified that under the existing Right to Buy initiative only one in ten homes have been replaced, this is likely to cause an increased pressure on the supply available to meet housing needs via the Allocations System.
- There could also be issues around the charitable status of RPs and their standing as being outside of the public sector borrowing and the use of assets to cover loans which RPs have to enable development and investment. Any shortfall to be covered by RPs will result in less being able to be invested back into replacement affordable housing and also services.
- **Brownfield Land**- The Government has pledged to encourage the provision of housing on previously developed (brownfield) sites. The Council could be required to maintain a register of all brownfield sites available and ensure that 90 per cent of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020 through local development orders. The provision of local development orders on such a scale could represent a significant use of limited Council resources, particularly when planning permission can still be granted on sites, irrespective of whether a local development order is in place. This initiative has previously been subject to public consultation to which the Council submitted an officer-level response, which forms the basis of these comments.

Wirral Implications Continued

- **Starter Homes-** The detail on how this will be achieved in a balanced way to ensure the Borough is able to at least take a pro-rata share (which would be equivalent to 1,300 homes) is unknown at present. The pledge to build 200,000 Starter Homes is supported by an exception site policy which directs Starter Homes to under-used or nonviable industrial and commercial land that has not been currently identified for housing. This could put pressure on employment sites in Wirral that have been identified for employment use to support sustainable communities. It could have the unintended consequence of site owners resisting future employment uses and removing existing employment uses where higher land values could be accrued for Starter Homes sites. The Starter Homes policy could also undermine the provision of alternative forms of affordable housing, in areas where it is needed. In stronger market areas, a 20 per cent discount on open market value may still price out many first time buyers. Furthermore, the CIH (Chartered Institute of Housing) have indicated that these developments would be exempt from section 106 agreements, meaning no new affordable housing could be sought within these developments.
- **Right to Build-** The new Right to Build (once enacted) will require the Council to establish a local register of custom builders who wish to acquire a suitable land to build their own home and to have regard to the demand on their local register when developing its Local Plan and determining planning applications. The Right could require the Council to offer registered custom builders suitable plots of land (with some form of planning permission and servicing), which would have resource implications for planning and housing. The Right could have an impact on the future capital receipts from the sale of Council-owned land for self-build plots, if plots are to be provided at a discounted rate. This form of development is also driven by the demand and capability and ability of individuals to be able to build or commission new build. There have been very few expressions of interest from community organisations on this in the Wirral area as part of the approach to looking at Custom Build when this has been promoted as part of the HCA programme.

Energy Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to improve energy security. It gives new powers to the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) to maximise the economic recovery of oil and gas from UK waters and changes the law to give local communities a greater say in planning applications for wind farms.

Key Points:

- Ensuring local planning authorities have consenting powers for all onshore wind farms.
- The Bill would make legislative changes to remove the need for the Secretary of State's consent for any large onshore wind farms (over 50MW)
- This, in effect, would devolve powers out of Whitehall by transferring the existing consenting powers, in relation to onshore wind, to local planning authorities.
- This will mean that in future the primary decision maker for onshore wind consents in England and Wales will be the local planning authority. These changes will be supported by changes to the national planning policy framework to give effect to the manifesto commitment that local communities should have the final say on planning applications for wind farms.
- These changes would not impact on the planning regime in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The commitment to end new subsidy for onshore wind farms will be delivered separately, and DECC will be announcing measures to deliver this soon.

Further Developments:

- The Energy Bill completed its House of Lords stages on the 4 November 2015 and had its first reading in the House of Commons on 5 November without any debate. The date for the second reading debate has not yet been announced.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no recorded implications at this time. This policy will be kept under review by the relevant officers with any future implications reported in future policy papers to Elected Members.

High Speed Rail Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to provide the Government with the legal powers to construct and operate phase 1 of the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway.

Key Points:

- Give the Government deemed planning permission for the railway between London and the West Midlands.
- Give the Government compulsory purchase powers and the power to temporarily take possession of land required to construct and operate the railway.
- Help rebalance the UK economy and free up space on the UK rail network, improving connections between London, the Midlands, the North and Scotland

Further Developments:

- Further updates on plans to bring forward the timescales for High Speed (HS) 2 were recently announced by the Chancellor, George Osborne, in his Spending Review and Autumn Statement on the 25th November. Construction of HS2 will now begin in the current parliament, with the route expected to open from London to Birmingham in 2026 and to Leeds and Manchester by 2033.
- Shortly before the summer recess, the Committee rejected calls for the line to be placed in a tunnel across the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. HS2 Ltd wrote to the Committee in October, setting out a package of measures which they believe provides substantial noise mitigation for Wendover. If supported by the Committee, these changes are likely to be brought forward as part of amendments to the Bill in December.
- The Committee has also rejected calls from the London Borough of Hillingdon for a tunnel in the Colne Valley in place of the viaduct which is currently proposed.
- In September, the Government published amendments to the Hybrid Bill, Additional Provision no.3 (AP3), which remove the HS2-HS1 link from the Bill and set out revised proposals for Euston. These include the construction of 11 new high-speed platforms on the western side of the station.
- These plans were heavily criticised by Camden Council, they argue that the plan gives no guarantees on timescales or funding for a full development of the station in the future.
- It has subsequently been reported that the work at Euston would require a six year closure of one lane in either direction on the A400 Euston Road. In its most recent petition, Camden calls for HS2 to temporarily terminate at Old Oak Common to allow more time to get the design of Euston Station right. HS2 Ltd has responded by stating that it is their intention to maximise the full benefits of the new railway from the outset and that the AP3 proposals for Euston should be supported as they are the result of over several years of detailed work.

Further Developments Continued:

- Euston Action Group have proposed locating the main HS2 terminus at Old Oak Common with a link to Euston for a few HS2 trains using a link to the West Coast mainline in the vicinity of Queens Park. The petition argues that this route would be cheaper and less disruptive than the Hybrid Bill scheme. HS2 Ltd argue that this would not be viable. The Committee will start hearing evidence relating to Euston at the end of November.

Wirral Implications:

- The confirmation of the HS2 project budget, and the Chancellor's stated commitment to the Transport for the North programme appear to have positive implications for Wirral, as part of the wider Liverpool City Region, and it aims to achieve full high speed rail connectivity. Investment in HS2 could help Wirral - and the wider City Region - to accelerate economic growth.

The Enterprise Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- This bill will include measures to reduce regulation on small businesses in a bid to boost job creation.

Key Points:

- Seek to cut red tape for British business by at least £10bn and, for the first time, require independent regulators to contribute to that target.
- Proposes to create a new Small Business Conciliation Service, to help settle disputes between small and large businesses, especially over late payment practices.
- To improve the business rates system ahead of the 2017 revaluation, including by modernising the appeals system
- To introduce a cap on public sector redundancy payments to six figures for the highest earners

Further Developments:

- Line by line examination of the Bill took place during the final day of the committee stage on 4 November 2015. Amendments discussed covered clauses 26, 27 and 29 of the Bill. The report stage of the Bill is scheduled for 25 November.

Wirral Implications:

- 'There are no recorded implications at this time. This policy will be kept under review by the relevant officers with any future implications reported in future policy papers to Elected Members.'

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The overriding aim of the Bill is to reduce expenditure and “help to achieve a more sustainable welfare system.” A related aim is to support efforts to increase employment and “support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households.”

Key Points:

- It is essentially a Bill of three parts. First, it will introduce a duty to report to Parliament on:
 - Progress towards achieving full employment.
 - Progress towards achieving 3 million apprenticeships in England.
 - Progress with the Troubled Families programme (England).
- Second, it will repeal almost all of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and introduce a new duty for the Secretary of State to report annually on “life chances”: children living in workless households and educational attainment at age 16, in England.
- Finally, the Bill allows for the introduction of extensive changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing rent levels. These will account for around 70% of the £12-13 billion in welfare savings identified in the Summer Budget 2015. The welfare/housing measures include:
 - Lowering the benefit cap threshold and varying it between London and the rest of the UK.
 - A four year benefits freeze.
 - Limiting support through Child Tax Credits/Universal Credit.
 - The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component.
 - Changes to conditionality for responsible carers under Universal Credit.
 - Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest.
 - Reducing social housing rent levels by 1% in each year for four years from 2016-17.

Further Developments:

- A number of changes were made to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill at report stage. The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on 27 October 2015. The Bill was introduced to the House of Lords on 28 October and passed its second reading on 17 November. Committee stage is scheduled to begin on 2 December.

Wirral Implications:

- **Freeze Working Age Benefits** - This will impact on household disposable income, not previously frozen albeit uprating has been nominal 2013/14. This will potentially increase the strain on Wirral's Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes, as more people apply; more people become entitled to support. With consequential harder to collect charges, key revenue streams such as Council Tax, charges in respect of adult social care, Benefits overpayments will be detrimentally affected. Rent arrears locally are expected to increase as with all cuts and will continue at least whilst (social) landlords maintain rent levels and annual increases in lieu on the 12% target reduction by 2020-21. This will increase pressure on LA Housing Benefit services from Social Landlords which is evident already via the rent shortfall in Bedroom Tax and insufficient DHP. The recent judgement at the Upper Tier Tribunal, supporting the DWP position in Social Sector Size Criteria cases confirms that the activity to reduce the impacts of this reform have ultimately had little effect on a case by case basis at local level. In the private sector is may see a freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates which will give Private sector landlords further issue with taking on tenants who rely on HB. This is likely to have a consequential impact on the levels of people being threatened with homelessness in the Borough.
- **Cutting Household Benefit Cap** – This will certainly impact locally, regrettably we cannot identify how many within present caseload will be affected, nor by how much in monetary terms on a weekly basis, as DWP consider circumstances of household benefits in payment that LA are unable to identify from records held. The Percentage reduction to the total maximum in Benefits that can be paid are relatively high, with the maximum for couples reducing from 26k per annum and for a single claimants reducing from 20k to £13,400. The LA's HB service administers the Cap not the DWP who advise us of each situation. There are currently 60 cases live (but cases go on and off and DWP projected our numbers would be 130). The change would bring some case with a consequential impact on resources, both front and back of house. Those affected would have an increased reliance on other means of support, financial, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP – annual cash limited budget) or the Local Welfare Assistance potentially (LW – finite residual budget as scheme no longer nationally funded). Likely impact will see increased problems for those in temporary accommodation with large families and again, for LA, placing the homeless or those at risk etc., then reliance on the limited discretionary schemes (DHP).
- **General Issues for Wirral/Benefits Service** -As a consequence of these changes, as impacts emerge, which will be ongoing, there will be a need to make provision for continued review of local schemes and policies with an increased reliance on any discretion the authority can, within its local policies and resources, exercise (again for example its LWA/DHP fund). The definition of 'vulnerable' will need review given the ratio of those reasonable deemed to be vulnerable which are those financially at risk, including dispossession. This will impact on key grant limited local schemes such as Council Tax Support Scheme which currently awards £27m pa in respect of 35, 230 recipients. This will provide a significant challenge for officers reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 onwards and will see collection issues increase as more people face difficulty paying, coupled with more strain on the scheme impacting on its capacity and ultimately having their national benefits reduced at source to pay Council Tax.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- **General Issues for Wirral/Benefits Service (continued)** - Many people will be affected by more than one of the reforms outlined, which will present complexities, uncertainly and increased need for advocacy and advice, particularly if we are to ensure that their income, often translating to the Wirral Pound, is to be maximised. Broadly we can expect from these changes increased contact to service, both front facing public contact and back of house processing (including the Welfare Right Unit) and decision making services with an increased need and reliance on knowledgeable, experience, skilled resources, ensuring accessibility, thereby support where at all possible anti-poverty measures.
- **Remove Hosuing Benefit from Young People-** 18-21 year olds, this will see more remain at home where it may not be appropriate to do so which will see issues for householder with Housing Benefits non dependant charges being applied and more rent to pay (as adult is meant to contribute as resident). These cases which will increase provide issues for the LA with collection of information and provision of evidence of household occupants. There is also a risk of young people going missing from benefit record, with difficulties operationally in determining their primary place of residence which will be key given the increasing drive of the DWP to reduce level of error and fraud within Welfare Benefits.
- **Reduce Social Rents-** The Government are legislating for a 1% reduction for social tenants per annum for the next four years. Although this will reduce housing costs for those tenants, its main impact will be upon the ability of Registered Providers (RPs) to finance new-build housing along with other work such as ongoing improvements to housing stock. RPs with stock in Wirral are currently revisiting their growth plans and it is likely their new-build commitments, especially for affordable rented housing, will be scaled-back and refocused to align with the Government's shift towards home ownership and increasing the private rented sector.

Policy Developments

Briefing: Rethinking planning obligations: can they deliver the affordable housing we need?

This briefing outlines the JRF-funded report 'Rethinking Planning Obligations: balancing housing numbers and affordability'. Affordable housing provided through Section 106 planning obligations is on the decline; in some parts of England it accounts for a tiny two per cent of total provision.

The report looks at the shortcomings of the existing systems and processes and highlights changes in the planning systems that have impacted negatively on the delivery of affordable housing.

Ways in which S106 can be combined with other policies and interventions to increase the amount of housing that is genuinely affordable for people on low incomes are explored.

It is suggested that S106 was never intended to be a major provider of affordable housing on its own. Examples of how local authorities are working with the existing system to try and provide more affordable homes are highlighted.

The report proposes that increasing the number of affordable homes will need a dual-pronged approach. This will involve strengthening the operation of S106 and empowering local authorities and their partners to supplement affordable housing provided through S106.

Source: [Andrew Ross, Briefing: Rethinking planning obligations: can they deliver the affordable housing we need?, LGiU, 17th September 2015](#)

Briefing: Travel To Work Areas (TTWAs) and local labour market statistics

The briefing explores the changing trends of TTWAs and the importance of labour market intelligence for local authorities.

TTWAs are areas where the bulk of the resident population also work within the area. It is identified that over time the number of TTWAs has reduced and their size increased; suggesting increased commuting distances and increased employment concentration in specific, often city, locations. Such changes bring about important considerations for local authorities in local policy and strategy across a range of areas.

The relevance and timeliness of labour market intelligence currently produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is criticised. It is suggested that local authorities could work collectively and

with their partners to produce more timely, relevant and accurate datasets for both labour and housing market analyses.

Source: [David Marlow, Briefing: Travel To Work Areas \(TTWAs\) and local labour market statistics, LGiU, 29th September 2015](#)

Briefing: Total Transport Authorities: IPPR report

This briefing explores the think tank, IPPR's report on public bus services and its recommendations for a new settlement for buses including the setting up of cross-boundary Total Transport Authorities (TTAs) outside England's metropolitan areas.

The report also explores the current decline in bus services outside London and looks at successful initiatives around the country that are seeking to address this.

It is proposed that local authorities public transport services and budgets should be pooled and transferred to TTAs. Following this responsibility for all public funding for bus services in the area should be transferred. This would allow TTAs to franchise bus routes and support greater innovation.

The Department for Transport has published initial ideas on how devolved franchises may work, though it is not clear whether the Buses Bill will allow TTAs to be introduced.

Source: [Ruth Bradshaw, Briefing: Total Transport Authorities: IPPR report, LGiU, 30th September 2015](#)

Briefing: Housing and Planning Bill

The first reading of the Housing and Planning Bill, took place on 13th October 2015. The Bill sets out the legislative implications of delivering the government's manifesto commitment to increasing the overall supply of homes in order to improve affordable housing, improve housing management and implement planning reforms.

The Bill, which is one of the most significant proposed set of planning reforms in the last decade, will take around 18 months to become legislation. The date of the second reading has not yet been announced.

There are eight parts set out in the Bill:

- Part 1: New Homes in England
- Part 2: Rogue landlords and letting agents in England
- Part 3: Recovering abandoned premises in England
- Part 4: Social housing in England

- Part 5: Housing, estate agents and rent charges: other changes
- Part 6: Planning in England
- Part 7: Compulsory purchase etc.
- Part 8: General

The Bill's housing provisions clearly reflect the government's manifesto commitments and there are strong reflections of the shift to affordable housing.

There has been widespread anger amongst some local councils with regards to the provision to force local housing authorities to sell or consider selling high value stock in order to fund the discounts to housing association tenants.

Other concerns were in relation to the lack of rent control being introduced to the rapidly growing private rented sector which could have a severe impact on renting in high cost areas.

Source: [Sheila Camp and Andrew Ross, Briefing: Housing and Planning Bill, LGiU, 21st October 2015](#)

Briefing: Housing and Poverty: the role of landlords – JRF research report

This briefing comment on the July budget's effect on two reports which look at the links between housing and poverty; 'Housing and Poverty' published in June by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and; 'How do landlords address poverty' published in September.

Housing and Poverty

This report is essentially a literature review of JRF's published research into poverty where it touches on the housing implications. The aim of the research programme is to develop 'an evidence-based UK anti-poverty strategy for all ages. This includes the role of housing in the lives of people experience poverty, and practical ways to ease the housing crisis for people in or at risk of poverty'.

How Do Landlords Address Poverty

This report is a review of landlord's strategies and action in the social and private sectors examine whether and how landlords addressed poverty and deprivation.

Source: [Sheila Camp, Briefing: Housing and Poverty – the role of landlords, October 28, 2015](#)

Briefing: The impact of budget cuts on local road maintenance and road safety

This briefing covers two recent reports which both highlight growing concern about the lack of funding available for important aspects of local transport.

'A bumpy ride: The funding and economics of Highways Maintenance in the English City Regions' by PTEG and 'Road Safety since 2010' by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety set out the impact of the significant budget cuts in recent years.

Both reports identify the discrepancy between the limited funding available for the local road network – which carries the majority of traffic – and the budget now available to Highway England for the Strategic Road Network. They also highlight the longer term implications of the current lack of investment in the local road network and call for urgent action.

Source: [Ruth Bradshaw, Briefing: The impact of budget cuts on local road maintenance and road safety, LGiU, November 10 2015](#)

Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England was released on 30 September 2015.

The IMD is a huge dataset, ranging across the domains of employment, income, health, crime, environment, education, and skills, and housing and access to services; these various domains are combined to create various composite indicators. The IMD can be used at neighbourhood level or for a local authority area as a whole.

This briefing sets out the background and methodology of the IMD and presents a selection of results.

A preliminary analysis indicates a persistence of deprivation in parts of the north and midlands and parts of London, although London appears to be improving in relative terms; there appears to have been some deterioration in the position of some coastal areas.

Data produced from the IMD is of crucial importance for planning, targeting resources, and preparing funding bids.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015, LGiU, 12th November 2015](#)

Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015

This briefing reports on recent key developments on the HS2 project and other related activities. It includes details of the interim evaluation report for HS1, published in October 2015, focusing particularly on the section of the report which deals with the local economic impacts.

The briefing also reports on progress on the HS2 Hybrid Bill. This includes recent developments relating to the route in Chilterns and proposals for Euston Station. A brief overview of other recent developments relating to HS2 and HS3, the proposed east-west high-speed rail link, is provided.

Opponents of the scheme continue to highlight concerns about the project, focusing particularly on reports of the spiralling costs. However, it is pointed out that with the Government having recently begun the process of appointing companies to construct HS2, they are clearly determined to press ahead with the project.

Source: [Ruth Bradshaw, Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#)

Briefing: The impact of the existing right to buy and the implications for the proposed extension to housing associations

The briefing summarises the findings of ‘the Impact of the Existing Right to Buy and the Implications for the Proposed Extension of Right to Buy to Housing Associations’ report. The report was conducted to undertake a review of literature and data on the operation of the existing RTB and then to compare the characteristics of the stock sold and the tenants who bought with the profiles of stock tenants to whom the extension of RTB would apply.

The LGiU argues that whilst the report warns against underestimating initial “pent up demand” from tenants and a possible willingness to take a financial risk, it points out that a comparison of tenant profiles suggest that a smaller proportion of housing association tenants would be able to buy than was the case with council tenants. Who buys what and where will depend on individual circumstances, property types and location, detailed RTB regulations and the overall economic situation.

Source: [Sheila Camps, Briefing: The Impact of the existing right to buy and the implications for the proposed extension to housing associations, LGiU, November 26, 2015](#)

Useful Sources

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

Key Announcements:

[Chancellor George Osborne's Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015, Government website, speech, 25th November 2015](#) – *Full speech*

[Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015: key announcements, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key announcements emerging from the statement*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[Department for Education's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department for Education*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

[Lauren Lucas, Briefing: The Spending Review and Autumn Statement, LGiU, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key points emerging from the statement*

Further Analysis and Impact on Local Government and Partners:

[LGA Responds to 2015 Spending Review, Lord Porter, Chairman of the Local Government Association, 25th November 2015](#) – *LGA response to the spending review*

[Home Office's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Home Office*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

[LGA responds to Education Services Grant announcement, Cllr Roy Perry, Chairman of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, 26th November 2015](#) – *Outlines the Education Services Grant announcement and highlights concerns*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[LGA responds to national schools funding announcement in Spending Review, LGA, 26th November 2015](#) – *Brief outline of the impact of the new national funding formula*

[Laura Sharman, Spending Review: Warning that councils at financial tipping point, LocalGov, 26th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for council budgets and services*

[William Eichler, Spending Review: Local authorities to retain 100% of business rates, LocalGov, 25th November 2015](#) – *Outlines Business Rates Retention for councils*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

[Hilary Kitchen, Devolution Bill: Important changes in the Lords, LGiU, 28th July 2015](#) – *Outlines some of the key changes to the Devolution Bill*

[Hilary Kitchen, Devolution: 2nd Reading of Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, LGiU, 15th June 2015](#) – *Outlines the main topics discussed at the House of Lords on 8th June 2015*

[Dr Jonathan Carr-West and Dr Patrick Diamond, Devolution: A Road Map, LGiU, 5th June 2015](#) - *Outlines the practical ways in which devolution can happen at scale and at speed to avoid a bureaucratic log jam in Whitehall.*

[Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill and any latest updates*

[Mark Upton, Wave 1 City Deals – NAO report, 29th July 2015](#) – *Examines the progress of Wave 1 City deals*

[House of Commons – Briefing Paper - Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill 2015-16, 8th October 2015](#) – *Sets the context for the bill*

Housing and Planning Bill

[Housing and Planning Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Housing and Planning Bill and any latest updates*

[Government Press release: Historic Housing and Planning Bill will transform generation rent into generation buy, 13th October 2015](#) – *Outline of the bill and the changes it will bring*

[Sheila Camp and Andrew Ross, Housing and Planning Bill, LGiU, 21st October 2015](#) – *Outlines the key provisions in the bill and initial concerns*

Energy Bill

[Energy Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - Previous debates on all stages of the Energy Bill and any latest updates

High Speed Rail Bill

[High Speed Rail Bill, Parliamentary Website](#) - Brief analysis of the High Speed Rail Bill

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Summer 2015, LGiU, 23rd July 2015](#) – Update on key developments and other related proposals since April 2015.

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#) – Update on key developments and other related activities since July 2015

Enterprise Bill

[Enterprise Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - Previous debates on all stages of the Enterprise Bill and any latest updates

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

[House of Commons, Briefing Paper- Welfare Reform and Work Bill, 16th July 2015](#) – Brief analysis of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill

[Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - Previous debates on all stages of the Childcare Bill and any latest updates

[Andrew Jones, The Welfare Reform and Work Bill: Welfare Reform Update, 20th August 2015](#) – Brief overview of the Bill and any latest updates

POLICY INFORM: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Policy Inform- January 2016

The Directorate Policy briefings will provide an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament, emerging policies and upcoming consultations. The Directorate Policy briefing will be produced specifically to inform Portfolio Holders and Elected Members and will be taken to Policy & Performance Committees for discussion.

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Introduction

The policy briefing paper is intended to provide Members of the Policy and Performance Committee with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the Committee's work programme and future scrutiny work.

The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Policy & Performance Committee Briefings	
July 2015	The first policy briefing will focus predominately on the Queen's Speech, which will establish the Government's legislative programme for the parliamentary year ahead.
September 2015	The second policy briefing will be produced in September and will focus on the Chancellor's July 2015 Budget Statement. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
January 2016	The third policy briefing will focus on the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review which sets out how Government money will be allocated. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.
March 2016	The fourth policy briefing will focus upon the 2016 Chancellor of Exchequers Budget. The policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant implications for Wirral.

The January policy briefing outlines the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on the 25th November 2015. The policy briefing also alludes to any potential implications that have been highlighted by relevant Officers for Wirral Council, and elaborates on any legislation or policy updates that have been implemented or developed since the last policy briefing in September.

The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee's work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

25th November 2015

The Spending Review sets out how £4 trillion of government money will be allocated over the next five years. The key announcements outlined in the statement have been divided into themes:

Local Councils

- The main grant to local government will be phased out. Other sources of income such as council tax and business rates are forecast to grow in cash terms by £6.3 billion by 2019-20.
- From 2016/17 local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This is intended to raise £2 billion a year by 2019-20.
- From April 2016, police forces will be able to increase the amount they require from council tax collections by 2%.
- Extension of the doubling of small business rate relief (SBRR) in England for 12 months to April 2017.
- The government will allow local authorities to spend up to 100% of their fixed asset receipts (excluding Right to Buy receipts) on the revenue costs of reform projects.
- The government will deliver its commitment to a £12 billion Local Growth Fund between 2015-16 and 2020-21.

Housing

- The housing budget will be doubled to £2m a year. Stamp duty will be 3pc higher, raising almost £1b by 2020.
- 400,000 new homes by 2020.
- The right-to-buy scheme will be extended to housing association tenants, with a new pilot in five housing associations.
- A series of other schemes, including Help to Buy: Shared Ownership to help people get on the housing ladder.
- From April 2016 people purchasing additional properties will pay an extra 3% in stamp duty. Money raised will be used to help those struggling to buy their first home.
- 300,000 homes will be better protected from flooding by 2021, with £2.3 billion for over 1,500 flood defence schemes.
- A cap on the amount of rent that Housing Benefit will cover in the social sector. The reform will apply to tenancies signed after 1 April 2016, with Housing Benefit entitlement changing from 1 April 2018 onwards.

Planning, Transport and Regeneration

- Further reforms to the planning system, including establishing a new delivery test on local authorities, to ensure delivery against Local Plans.
- Support for the availability of appropriate land for housing, including by releasing public sector land with capacity for 160,000 homes.
- Support for the regeneration of previously developed brownfield sites in the green belt by allowing them to be developed in the same way as other brownfield land, providing it contributes to Starter Homes, and subject to local consultation.
- Consultation on updating the Transparency Code to require all local authorities to record details of their land and property assets in a consistent way on the government's e-PIMS.
- The Roads Investment Strategy will see £15 billion of investment.
- HS2 will go ahead.
- Commuters will soon be able to claim compensation if their train is more than 15 minutes late.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor
for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future

Digital Government

- £1.8 billion invested in digital technology and transformation projects across the public sector.
- £450 million to support the Government Digital Service's role as the digital, data and technology centre for government.
- DCLG will work closely with the Valuation Office Agency to digitise the collection of local taxes.

Community Cohesion

- Current levels of funding for community integration programmes will be maintained. This funding will be targeted to support the recommendations of Louise Casey's review of opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities.

DCLG

- 20% reduction in the department's paybill, with total savings of £94 million by 2019-20.
- At least £74 million of funding for the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.
- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund.
- Continue to oversee delivery of devolution deals.

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future



Arts and Sport

- Funding for museums and galleries will be maintained so they remain free to the public.
- The government will fund capital investments in culture across the country through a total of £1.6 billion by 2020-21.
- £5 million of the Northern Powerhouse investment fund will go to Manchester museum to create a new South Asia gallery in partnership with the British Museum, and £150 million to help make oyster style ticketing a reality across the whole of the North.
- The government will support the Rugby League World Cup bid for the UK in 2021 so matches can be held across the North.

Clare Fish- Project Sponsor for Leisure and Cultural Opportunities for all



Businesses

- The business budget has been slashed by 17 per cent. This is partly achieved by offering £165million of loans to companies, rather than the current grants.
- Universal rates scrapped in favour of devolving powers to local councils who will now collect 100pc of the tax, which brought in £23bn this year.
- The government is creating 26 new Enterprise Zones, including expanding 8 Zones on the current programme. These include 15 Zones in smaller towns and rural areas.
- A £400 million Northern Powerhouse investment fund will be created to help small businesses to grow.

Paula Basnett- Partner pledge led for Thriving Small Businesses

Devolution

- Councils will be allowed to cut business rates to boost growth and elected city-wide mayors allowed to raise them for specific projects.
- There will be further commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, including: investment of £13 billion on transport in the North by 2020, a range of investments in scientific research, and supporting further Northern Powerhouse trade missions to key emerging economies.
- In 2017-18 the government will devolve and reform increased funding for managing temporary accommodation, giving local authorities 'more control and flexibility'.
- In 2016 DCLG will shortly consult on changes to the local government finance system to pave the way for the implementation of 100% business rate retention. As part of these reforms, additional responsibilities will be devolved to local authorities.

Tax Credit

- The government will borrow £8 billion less than forecast – making faster progress towards eliminating the deficit.
- Because of the improvement in public finances, the £4.4 billion of proposed cuts will no longer happen.
- Tax credits are being phased out as we introduce universal credit.
- The government will propose no further changes to the universal credit taper, or to the work allowances beyond those that passed through Parliament.



Families & Childcare

- Spending levels on homelessness services will be maintained.
- £40 million will be allocated for services for victims of domestic abuse.
- Continued investment into the Troubled Families programme with the aim of better outcomes for 400,000 families by 2020.
- Doubling the free childcare entitlement- 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working families with 3 and 4 year olds from Sept 2017.
- Tax-Free Childcare from early 2017, providing up to £2,000 a year per child.
- From 2017-18 an investment of £300 million to increase the average hourly rate childcare providers receive, and at least £50 million of capital funding to create additional places in nurseries.

John Martin- Partner pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence & Julia Hassall- Project Sponsor for Vulnerable children reach their full potential



Environment

- The current Energy Companies Obligation runs until March 2017. This will be replaced from April 2017 with a new cheaper energy supplier obligation to reduce carbon emissions which will run for five years. The changes will mean that on average 24 million households will save £30 a year on their energy bills from 2017.
- The Warm Home Discount scheme will also be extended to 2020-2021. This currently gives certain low-income households a one-off reduction of £140 on their electricity bill.

Our Partners:



NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals. £750 million of investment and a new national voluntary contract for GPs .
- £300 million per year will be invested in diagnostics by 2020 to fund new equipment and additional staff capacity, including 200 additional staff trained to perform endoscopies by 2018.
- £150 million will be invested in a new Dementia Research Institute .
- £4.8 billion allocated for health every year for the next 5 years. This includes funding for a shift in the way urgent and emergency care services are provided and improving out of hospital services to deliver more care closer to home. New investment of £1 billion in technology will support this transformation and integrate patient records across health and social care by 2020. Over the next 5 years, at least £500 million will be invested in building new hospitals.
- £10 billion extra a year in real terms. £6 billion of which will be delivered in 2016, particularly to mental health services.
- This will fund:
 - 800,000 more operations and treatments
 - 5.5 million more outpatient appointments
 - 2 million more diagnostic tests
 - access to GP services in the evenings and at the weekend
 - 7-day access to hospital services by 2020
- Whilst the NHS is receiving increased funding, there is also a commitment to find a further £22 billion in efficiency savings.

John Develing- Pledge lead for Wirral Residents Live Healthier Lives



Police

- No cuts to the police budget. The government will protect overall police spending in line with inflation – an increase of £900 million by 2019-20. "The police protect us and we are going to protect the police."
- Additional funding will be provided for forces that have strong proposals to support efficiency and reform.
- The National Crime Agency's budget will also be protected in cash terms to help cut organised crime.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence



Schools and Apprenticeships

- Schools funding will be protected in line with inflation. £23 billion will be invested in school buildings, creating 600,000 extra school places and 500 free schools.
- Sixth form colleges will now be able to become academies.
- Savings of £600million will be made from the education services grant that goes to local authorities as more schools become academies. - "We will make local authorities running schools a thing of the past".
- The current 'unfair' school funding system will be phased out and replaced with a new national Funding Formula from 2017.
- Funding for adult education will not be cut.
- The government will spend twice as much on apprentices- 3 million apprentices by 2020.
- A new apprentice levy of 0.5 per cent will be introduced for employers. The levy will raise £3 billion a year to fund three million apprenticeships. Less than 2% of UK employers will pay the levy.
- Maintenance loans will be available to higher education students who study part time from 2018.

John Martin- Pledge lead for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence

Further Analysis & Impact on Local Government and Partners

Local Government:

Funding

- There has been a £4.1 billion funding cut over this Spending Review period and this comes on top of almost £10 billion in further demand-led cost pressures facing councils by the end of the decade. Local communities will suffer as a result.
- The general government grant to local councils will be removed completely by 2020.
- Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) warn that the spending review represents a 24% reduction in real terms to the local government grant, including the £1.5bn increase to the Better Care Fund.

Business Rates

- Retaining 100% of business rates will, nationally, add up to an estimated £26 billion. As part of the 'devolution revolution' local authorities will also be able to lower business rates to attract business investment in their area. It is hoped that this will correct the 'geographical imbalance' and encourage local authorities to become more competitive and focus their attentions on attracting private investment into their own areas.
- Changes will hit the poorest parts of the country hardest, where there are fewer businesses and taxpayers to make up for lost Whitehall grants. Rich councils will get richer at the expense of already struggling councils.

Social Care

- From 2016/17, local councils will be able to add 2% to council tax bills that can be spent exclusively on adult social care in their areas. This will go some way to allowing a number of councils to raise the money needed to offset some of the cost of social care.
- The new care precept will generate very different levels of revenue across the country, with no equalisation system planned.
- The council tax precept will not be implemented until 2017, leaving a shortfall for local authorities between now and 2017.

Local Growth Fund

- DCLG will operate the £12 billion Local Growth Fund, which is more than double the size of equivalent funds in the last Parliament. This will empower local communities to deliver growth by giving them greater control of public spending, allowing them to target their own priorities.
- Secretary of State for DCLG, Greg Clark: "On top of building the homes our country needs across the nation we are devolving powers to local people who know their communities best to drive jobs, nurture businesses and improve local services."

Housing

- Increased investment in schemes to help people to rent or buy has weighted in favour of private developers, at the expense of opportunities to deliver affordable social housing for communities. Tackling local housing need would also help to regenerate local economies and provide jobs and skills. ASPE argue councils are best placed to address specific local housing need.
- Under the new reform, Housing Benefit will no longer fully subsidise families to live in social houses that many working families cannot afford, and will better align the rules in the private and social rented sectors. It will also ensure that Housing Benefit costs are better controlled and will help prevent social landlords from charging inflated rent for their properties
- In areas of Wirral where the Local Housing Allowance rate for the Borough is below the rent charged by housing associations, prospective tenants, particularly those on out-of-work benefits, may be unable to fund the difference between rent and Housing Benefit. The profile of tenants may shift further away from single, younger households on lower incomes or welfare benefits. It may also have implications on the property type and financial appraisals for new-build social housing in the pipeline.

Our Partners:

NHS

- The NHS will become a 7-day service in primary care and in hospitals, this means that by 2021 everyone will be able to access GP services in the evenings and at weekends with an extra 5,000 doctors in general practice.
- An additional £600 million invested in mental health services will mean that significantly more people will have access to talking therapies every year by 2020.
- Investment into the new Dementia Research Institute will accelerate the pace of research and tackle the progression of the disease. This is the government's latest step in a long term strategy to combat dementia.
- Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt: "For doctors and nurses working harder than ever on the frontline this upfront investment means we can implement the NHS's own ambitious plan to transform services for the future." "This new money will help us finish the job."

Police

- Protecting police funding will allow forces to adapt to changing crime threats and train more firearms officers to make sure the country can be protected from terrorist threats.
- £1 billion will be spent on 4G communications for police forces and other emergency services, allowing officers to take mobile fingerprints and electronic witness statements. This will free up officers' time, saving around £1 million a day when fully operational.

Schools and Apprenticeships

- The Education Services Grant helps ensure that children are getting the education they deserve including help to provide speech, physiotherapy and occupational therapies. Last year, £815 million was spent on the ESG. The LGA say urgent clarification is needed on how the £600 million cuts will be achieved, and how quickly, without impacting on welfare and standards.
- Currently a child from a disadvantaged background in one school can receive half as much funding as a child in identical circumstances in another school. The changes to the allocation of school funding will set a national rate for each pupil, with extra funding for those with additional needs.
- Introducing a new system will mean some schools will face relative budget reductions. LGA recommend changes should be introduced in a phased way to protect these schools. Government should also allow for local discretion to be applied to take into account individual local needs.
- 250,000 students will benefit from extra loans. This will include tuition fees for students studying for higher level skills in further education, part-time students and postgraduates.

Queen's Speech 2015- Designation to Policy and Performance Committees

On Wednesday 27th May 2015, the Queen unveiled the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. Below is a list of each individual Bill which will have implications for local government that were announced during the speech. The list identifies the Policy and Performance committee with whose remit the legislation most closely aligns:

Legislative Plans	Policy and Performance Committee
National Insurance Contributions Bill/ Finance Bill	Transformation and Resources
Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill	All Policy and Performance Committees
Trade Unions Bill	Transformation and Resources
Housing Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Buses Bill	Regeneration and Environment
High Speed Rail Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Childcare Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Energy Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Education and Adoption Bill	Families and Wellbeing
Enterprise Bill	Regeneration and Environment
Policing and Criminal Justice Bill	Families and Wellbeing Transformation and Resources
Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill	Transformation and Resources
Psychoactive Substances Bill	Families and Wellbeing

Additional bills that have been announced are outlined below. These will be monitored in relation to any emerging implications for Local Government and reported to the relevant Policy and Performance Committee as appropriate.

Additional Legislative Plans
EU Referendum Bill
Scotland Bill
Immigration Bill
Extremism Bill
Investigatory Powers Bill
Charities Bill
Armed Forces Bill
Bank of England Bill
Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill

Wales Bill
Votes for Life Bill

The bills relevant to the Families and Wellbeing Committee are discussed in further detail below. The information provided has been sourced predominately from the LGiU, as well as SOLACE and the LGC and therefore solely represents a fact-based introduction to the bills.

Queen's Speech 2015- Developments and Implications

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to reform and modernise the Public Service Ombudsman sector to provide "a more effective and accessible final tier of complaints redress within the public sector". It would absorb the functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman, and the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially the Housing Ombudsman.

Key Points:

- Allow the Public Service Ombudsman to absorb the functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially The Housing Ombudsman.
- Ensure a robust process for accountability and reporting. The new Ombudsman will be independent of Government and directly accountable to Parliament.
- Establish the relevant powers for a modern ombudsman organisation.

Further Developments:

- There are no further developments at this time. The Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no immediate issues arising. The impact of the Bill will be procedural rather than financial or increasing duties and responsibilities on the Council.

National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Bill is designed to set a ceiling on the main and additional percentages, the secondary percentage and the upper earnings limit in relation to Class 1 national insurance contributions.

Further Developments:

- The Bill's Second Reading at the House of Lords took place on 10 November 2015. The Committee Stage of the Bill is scheduled to take place on 30 November 2015.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no direct implications for Wirral arising from this bill. This bill is mainly concerned with Income and Corporate taxation which does not apply to local authorities. There are changes to Employer's National Insurance contributions, coming into effect in April 2016, which will have a significant effect upon Wirral as an employer. These changes have already been legislated for and built into budget forecasts.

Finance Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The Bill is design to grant certain duties, to alert other duties, and to amend the law relating to the National Debt and the Public Revenue, and to make further provisions in connection with finance.

Further Developments:

- Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the Bill it received Royal Assent on 18 November 2015. The Bill is now an Act of Parliament.

Wirral Implications:

- There are no direct implications for Wirral arising from this bill.

Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- This legislation is intended to continue the reform of policing with the aim of enhancing protections for vulnerable people

Key Points:

- The Bill would ensure 17 years olds who are detained in police custody are treated as children for all purposes under PACE.
- In particular, the amendments to the provisions of PACE concerning 17 year olds include:
 - Ensuring an appropriate adult is present for drug sample taking;
 - Ensuring appropriate consent is granted by both the 17 year old and parent/ legal guardian for a range of interventions, including intimate searches; and
 - The ability to impose conditional bail to ensure the welfare and interests of the 17 year old.
- Reforming legislation in relation to the detention of people under sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 to ensure better outcomes for those experiencing a mental health crisis.
 - Prohibiting the use of police cells as places of safety for those under 18 years of age and further reducing their use in the case of adults;
 - Reducing the current 72 hour maximum period of detention; and
 - Extending the power to detain under section 136 to any place other than a private residence.

Further Developments:

- There are no further developments at this time. The Policing and Criminal Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

Wirral Implications:

- **Appropriate Adult Provision-** The Youth Offending service is in support of this change and we have been anticipating it for over a year. For many years 17 year olds have not been treated as Youths in the Police custody suite / Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) arena, which is inconsistent with other youth justice parameters. Therefore this change supports and recognises 17 years olds as still being youths and not adults during PACE interviews, processing and charging stages of detention.

Our **Appropriate Adult** (AA) services are already in place and will accommodate this wider age group. YOS provides this service by day and EDT by night. This may involve an increase in workload, however some 17 year olds who are detained in custody can be deemed to be Vulnerable Adults and the existing AA service covers youths and vulnerable adults anyway, so the increased workload may not be large.

We will monitor any increase in use of AA in respect of 17 years olds but this extension of age group now represents the same 10-18 year age group YOS and the youth courts accommodate, so this is more in line and consistent with other such youth justice services.

Wirral Implications Continued:

•**Identification of Accommodation for those Young People detained-** The Merseyside Criminal Justice Board **Youth Detention Protocol** may also need to include 17 year olds and this may have an impact on the requirements for Local Authorities to find accommodation for 17 year olds who have been refused Police Bail and the LA has a duty to accommodate them. The compliance of this protocol is monitored by the Police Crime Commissioner and the existing Policy may change to include 17 years olds, and this would then have an impact on CYPS Specialist Services and demands to accommodate 17 year olds at short notice who have been refused Bail. I have attached the existing protocol as this currently only covers 10-16 year olds but maybe amended.

High Speed Rail Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this Bill is to provide the Government with the legal powers to construct and operate phase 1 of the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway.

Key Points:

- Give the Government deemed planning permission for the railway between London and the West Midlands.
- Give the Government compulsory purchase powers and the power to temporarily take possession of land required to construct and operate the railway.
- Help rebalance the UK economy and free up space on the UK rail network, improving connections between London, the Midlands, the North and Scotland.

Further Developments:

- Further updates on plans to bring forward the timescales for High Speed (HS) 2 were recently announced by the Chancellor, George Osborne, in his Spending Review and Autumn Statement on the 25th November. Construction of HS2 will now begin in the current parliament, with the route expected to open from London to Birmingham in 2026 and to Leeds and Manchester by 2033.
- Shortly before the summer recess, the Committee rejected calls for the line to be placed in a tunnel across the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. HS2 Ltd wrote to the Committee in October, setting out a package of measures which they believe provides substantial noise mitigation for Wendover. If supported by the Committee, these changes are likely to be brought forward as part of amendments to the Bill in December.
- The Committee has also rejected calls from the London Borough of Hillingdon for a tunnel in the Colne Valley in place of the viaduct which is currently proposed.
- In September, the Government published amendments to the Hybrid Bill, Additional Provision no.3 (AP3), which remove the HS2-HS1 link from the Bill and set out revised proposals for Euston. These include the construction of 11 new high-speed platforms on the western side of the station.
- These plans were heavily criticised by Camden Council, they argue that the plan gives no guarantees on timescales or funding for a full development of the station in the future.
- It has subsequently been reported that the work at Euston would require a six year closure of one lane in either direction on the A400 Euston Road. In its most recent petition, Camden calls for HS2 to temporarily terminate at Old Oak Common to allow more time to get the design of Euston Station right. HS2 Ltd has responded by stating that it is their intention to maximise the full benefits of the new railway from the outset and that the AP3 proposals for Euston should be supported as they are the result of over several years of detailed work.

Further Developments Continued:

- Euston Action Group have proposed locating the main HS2 terminus at Old Oak Common with a link to Euston for a few HS2 trains using a link to the West Coast mainline in the vicinity of Queens Park. The petition argues that this route would be cheaper and less disruptive than the Hybrid Bill scheme. HS2 Ltd argue that this would not be viable. The Committee will start hearing evidence relating to Euston at the end of November.

Wirral Implications:

- The passing of this Bill confirms the start of the construction of Phase 1 of HS2. The significant investment in infrastructure should unlock growth but ensuring that these benefits are fully realised within the city region will require the progression of HS3 linking the key cities across the north including Liverpool.

Trade Union Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The aim of this bill is to bring forward legislation to reform trade unions to ensure hardworking people are not disrupted by little-supported strike action and to pursue the Governments ambition to become the most prosperous major economy in the world by 2030.

Key Points:

- Introduction of a 50% voting threshold for union ballots turnouts (and retain the requirement for there to be a simple majority of votes in favour).
- In addition to the 50% minimum voting turnout threshold, introduction of a requirement that 40% of those entitled to vote must vote in favour of industrial action in certain essential public services (health, education, fire, transport).
- Tackling intimidation of non-striking workers during a strike.
- Introduction of a transparent opt-in process for the political fund element of trade unions subscriptions. This will reflect the existing practice in Northern Ireland.
- Introduction of time limits on a mandate following a ballot for industrial action.
- Making changes to the role of the Certification Officer

Further Developments:

- The Trade Union Bill had its first reading in the House of Lords on 11 November 2015. The second reading is yet to be scheduled.

Wirral Implications:

- The main implication for the Council is the ceasing of employer 'check off' facilities. We expect this means that we will no longer be able to offer the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from Payroll. However, it is not yet clear what the specific requirement of the bill will be in relation to this. The legislation also places requirements on trade unions to meet certain conditions before industrial action is taken. There are no implications for the Council as an employer directly from those aspects'

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

- The overriding aim of the Bill is to reduce expenditure and “help to achieve a more sustainable welfare system.” A related aim is to support efforts to increase employment and “support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households.”

Key Points:

- It is essentially a Bill of three parts. First, it will introduce a duty to report to Parliament on:
 - Progress towards achieving full employment.
 - Progress towards achieving 3 million apprenticeships in England.
 - Progress with the Troubled Families programme (England).
- Second, it will repeal almost all of the Child Poverty Act 2010 and introduce a new duty for the Secretary of State to report annually on “life chances”: children living in workless households and educational attainment at age 16, in England.
- Finally, the Bill allows for the introduction of extensive changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing rent levels. These will account for around 70% of the £12-13 billion in welfare savings identified in the Summer Budget 2015. The welfare/housing measures include:
 - Lowering the benefit cap threshold and varying it between London and the rest of the UK.
 - A four year benefits freeze.
 - Limiting support through Child Tax Credits/Universal Credit.
 - The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component.
 - Changes to conditionality for responsible carers under Universal Credit.
 - Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest.
 - Reducing social housing rent levels by 1% in each year for four years from 2016-17.

Further Developments:

- A number of changes were made to the Welfare Reform and Work Bill at report stage. The Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 27 October 2015. The Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords on 17 November. The committee stage is scheduled to begin on 2 December.

Wirral Implications:

- **Freeze Working Age Benefits** - This will impact on household disposable income, not previously frozen albeit uprating has been nominal 2013/14. This will potentially increase the strain on Wirral’s Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP), Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) schemes, as more people apply; more people become entitled to support. With consequential harder to collect charges, key revenue streams such as Council Tax, charges in respect of adult social care, Benefits overpayments will be detrimentally affected. Rent arrears locally are expected to increase as with all cuts and will continue at least whilst (social) landlords maintain rent levels and annual increases in lieu on the 12% target reduction by 2020-21.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- This will increase pressure on LA Housing Benefit services from Social Landlords which is evident already via the rent shortfall in Bedroom Tax and insufficient DHP. The recent judgement at the Upper Tier Tribunal, supporting the DWP position in Social Sector Size Criteria cases confirms that the activity to reduce the impacts of this reform have ultimately had little effect on a case by case basis at local level. In the private sector is may see a freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates which will give Private sector landlords further issue with taking on tenants who rely on HB. This is likely to have a consequential impact on the levels of people being threatened with homelessness in the Borough.

- **Cutting Household Benefit Cap-** This will certainly impact locally, regrettably we cannot identify how many within present caseload will be affected, nor by how much in monetary terms on a weekly basis, as DWP consider circumstances of household benefits in payment that LA are unable to identify from records held. The Percentage reduction to the total maximum in Benefits that can be paid are relatively high, with the maximum for couples reducing from 26k per annum and for a single claimants reducing from 20k to £13,400. The LA's HB service administers the Cap not the DWP who advise us of each situation. There are currently 60 cases live (but cases go on and off and DWP projected our numbers would be 130). The change would bring some case with a consequential impact on resources, both front and back of house. Those affected would have an increased reliance on other means of support, financial, Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP – annual cash limited budget) or the Local Welfare Assistance potentially (LW – finite residual budget as scheme no longer nationally funded). Likely impact will see increased problems for those in temporary accommodation with large families and again, for LA, placing the homeless or those at risk etc., then reliance on the limited discretionary schemes (DHP).

- **General Issues for Wirral/Benefits Service-** As a consequence of these changes, as impacts emerge, which will be ongoing, there will be a need to make provision for continued review of local schemes and policies with an increased reliance on any discretion the authority can, within its local policies and resources, exercise (again for example its LWA/DHP fund). The definition of 'vulnerable' will need review given the ratio of those reasonable deemed to be vulnerable which are those financially at risk, including dispossession. This will impact on key grant limited local schemes such as Council Tax Support Scheme which currently awards £27m pa in respect of 35, 230 recipients. This will provide a significant challenge for officers reviewing the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 onwards and will see collection issues increase as more people face difficulty paying, coupled with more strain on the scheme impacting on its capacity and ultimately having their national benefits reduced at source to pay Council Tax. Many people will be affected by more than one of the reforms outlined, which will present complexities, uncertainly and increased need for advocacy and advice, particularly if we are to ensure that their income, often translating to the Wirral Pound, is to be maximised. Broadly we can expect from these changes increased contact to service, both front facing public contact and back of house processing (including the Welfare Right Unit) and decision making services with an increased need and reliance on knowledgeable, experience, skilled resources, ensuring accessibility, thereby support where at all possible anti-poverty measures.

Wirral Implications Continued:

- **Remove Housing Benefit from Young People-** 18-21 year olds, this will see more remain at home where it may not be appropriate to do so which will see issues for householder with Housing Benefits non dependant charges being applied and more rent to pay (as adult is meant to contribute as resident). These cases which will increase provide issues for the LA with collection of information and provision of evidence of household occupants. There is also a risk of young people going missing from benefit record, with difficulties operationally in determining their primary place of residence which will be key given the increasing drive of the DWP to reduce level of error and fraud within Welfare Benefits.

The Draft Investigatory Powers Bill, 2015

Synopsis and Key Points

- The Bill seeks to collate all new rules concerning government surveillance powers under a single law. This includes:
 - The ability to retrain and acquire communications data to be used as evidence in court and to advance investigations;
 - The ability to intercept the contents of communications in order to acquire sensitive intelligence to tackle terrorist's plots and serious and organised crimes;
 - The use of equipment interference powers to obtain data covertly from computers;
 - And the use of these powers by the security and intelligence agencies in bulk to identify the most serious threats to the UK from overseas and to rapidly establish links between suspects in the UK

Further Developments

- The Draft Bill was introduced to Parliament by Home Secretary Theresa May on 4 November. The bill will be subject to scrutiny by a Joint Committee of Parliament before proceeding further. The Committee will seek views and submission from the public. Current proposals include:
 - Oversight**
 - The work of the Interception of Communications Commissioner, the Chief Surveillance Commissioner and the Intelligence Service Commissioner will be brought together under a single investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC).
 - The IPC will be a senior Judge. S/he will be supported by a team of Judicial Commissioners, who will also be former or serving High Court Judges. They will authorise the use of investigatory powers, audit compliance, undertake investigations and inform Parliament and the public about the need for, and use of investigatory powers.
 - Interception**
 - The right to intercept information will be limited to the nine agencies currently authorised to carry it out – these include the Armed Forces, intelligence agencies and a small number of law enforcement bodies, but no local authorities. Warrants will only be issued in the interests of national security; for the prevention and detection of serious crime; or in the interests of the economic well-being (EWB) of the United Kingdom where it is connected to national security.
 - Currently warrants have to be authorised by the Secretary of State or Scottish Minister. In future they will also have to be authorised by a Judicial Commissioner.
 - The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will oversee and audit the work of the nine agencies in this regard and publish his/her findings.

• **Communication data**

- At present Communication Service Providers can be required to retain communication data for up to a year. This includes information on when, how and with whom a person communicated, rather than what was said.
- In future rules governing retention of communication data will be brought together under one act
- The definition of communication data will be widened
- There will be a new offer of 'wilfully and recklessly acquiring communications data
- A Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for each of the designated security and intelligence agencies will channel requests to Communication Service Providers, to ensure requests are proportionate and consistent. A Designated Person, independent of the investigation, will sign off requests.
- Communication Service Providers will be required to retain Communication Data Records – not the data itself, or a person's browsing but details of services a device has accessed, for a maximum of 12 months.
- The process will be overseen by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner

• **Equipment Interference**

- The Draft Bill introduces a specific legal regime for agencies who wish to interfere with electronic equipment in order to obtain communication data. Interference with electronic equipment can reveal what was said, as well as who, when and where the person communicated with
- The nine designated agencies will have to make a specific request to intercept equipment and will not be able to use other powers
- Equipment interference will only be permissible to prevent serious crime
- A Judicial Commissioner will be required to authorise warrants, in addition to the Secretary of State and a Chief Constable, as at present.

• **Bulk Personal Datasets**

- These are datasets containing information about large groups of people. Examples include the electoral roll or telephone directory.
- At present these may be obtained from public or private bodies by the Intelligence and Security Services.
- The Secretary of State and Judicial Commissioner will have to approve warrants for a class of information. These will last up to six months. If the Security and Intelligence service require information that falls outside these classes, a separate warrant will have to be obtained and approved.

• **Obligations on Communications Service Providers**

- The draft bill brings together all existing obligations on Communication Service Providers.
- The Government will issue notices to Communication Service Providers detailing the information they should retain. However this will only be accessed with a warrant.
- Appeal routes will be strengthened.
- For overseas companies, enforcement will be limited to communication data acquisition and (targeted and bulk) interception powers only. The courts will have to take into account any potential conflict of laws.
- A separate code of practice will outline how security services obtain, store, and dispose communication data.
- The Investigatory Powers Commissioner will oversee this process.

How will this effect the Wirral?

- The Investigatory Powers Act will allow local authorities to retain some investigative powers, such as surveillance of those suspected of benefit fraud, but they will not be able to access internet connection data

Policy Developments

Briefing: Re-use of public sector information

This briefing looks at new regulations that came into force in July 2015 that will make obtaining public bodies information for re-use easier. Since 2005 public bodies have been encouraged to make information available for re-use; most public bodies are now required to make information available for re-use.

Under new regulations public bodies are required to:

- Make information available at marginal cost.
- Establish an internal complaint procedure and deal with complaints within a “reasonable time”.
- Escalate any unresolved complaints to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) and in specific circumstances to the First-tier Tribunal.

Regulations have now been extended to include public sector museums, libraries and archives. These bodies are not required to permit re-use, but may choose to do so.

Source: [Mark Upton, Briefing: Re-use of public sector information, LGiU, 17th September 2015](#)

Briefing: Managing provider failure – National Audit Office

The National Audit Office (NAO) explores the principles Whitehall departments should use to manage service provider failure and how this is relevant to commissioning across the public sector, including local government.

Service provider failure can have serious consequences which must be managed effectively; though provider failure should not be avoided, it can be the necessary price of innovation and effective competition.

Managing failure requires prior planning to minimise negative impact and swift action to respond to changing external pressures. Planning starts with deciding how a service will be provided and is informed by how much risk of failure is to be tolerated. It is recognised that the political implications of failure will be of particular importance in the context of local government.

Commissioner’s appetite for failure may change over time as priorities and delivery environments change. What is considered to be failure is also likely to change over time. Plans for managing failure may therefore have to be continuously reviewed and updated.

The NAO observe that in central government, while failure regimes have often been established there have been very few occasions when government has allowed providers to actually fail.

Source: [Mark Upton, Briefing: Managing provider failure – National Audit Office, LGiU, 5th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Income generation – general: a policy in practice briefing

This briefing is the first of a pair of briefings on how local authorities are generating income to fund services, the first focusing on bringing money in for revenue services.

Due to cuts in government grants, local government is set to face a funding gap of £9.5 to 10 billion by 2020. Alongside this are constraints on council tax rates and rising demand. Local government's current financial position is 'unsustainable without radical change'.

The briefing draws on the most recent Revenue Outturn (RO) data from 2013-14 to illustrate areas where Councils could generate additional income.

Following the introduction of Business Rate Retention and the New Homes Bonus, Councils can generate income by facilitating housebuilding and helping to increase their business rates base. Specific examples of how Councils have done this are provided.

A number of ways in which service income can be generated, other than through charging and trading are identified. These include:

- Providing staff to other councils and partner organisations.
- Capital investment in cultural and recreational assets.
- Working with partners to build for private rental.
- Turning waste into revenue.

Source: [Alan Weaver and Tom Lawrence, Briefing: Income generation – general: a policy in practice briefing, LGiU, 13th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Income generation – Charging & Trading: policy in practice briefing

This is the second of a pair of briefings on how local authorities are generating income to fund services. This briefing focuses on commercial approaches to generating income, in particular the use of charging and trading.

The current financial position of local government is 'unsustainable'. Commercial approaches are becoming increasingly important in helping councils to generate income.

It is said that income generation from commercial activity now plays a role in the vast majority of councils' 2015/16 budgets. Examples of authorities who have taken such 'corporate' commercial approaches are highlighted.

The briefing explores good practice surrounding charging, local authority charging arrangements and lessons to be learnt from these.

Examples of innovative and experienced local authority trading organisations are also highlighted. The challenges presented by trading are outlined and key lessons and guidance for local authorities are provided.

Source: [Tom Lawrence and Alan Weaver, Briefing: Income generation – Charging & Trading: policy in practice briefing, LGiU, 14th October 2015](#)

Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax and Benefits Changes: Economic and Distributional Impacts

This briefing deals with the likely economic impacts of the National Living Wage (NLW) and the combined distributional impacts of the NLW, benefits cuts, and tax changes announced in the July 2015 Budget.

Despite the defeat of the relevant regulations for tax credits in the House of Lords, this briefing remains relevant first because it was the distributional implications of the July Budget that prompted the Lords' opposition and second because the analyses presented will help in the assessment of further changes to be announced in the Autumn Statement.

There is considerable uncertainty about the economic impacts of the NLW; however, the central forecasts produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) suggest that the macroeconomic effects will be small.

The Resolution Foundation calculates that the largest rises in the wage bill as a result of the NLW will be in the catering, cleaning, hotels, residential care, and retail sectors.

Estimating the distributional impacts of the combined tax and benefit changes and the NLW is complex because of the wide variation in work and family circumstances across households. However, it is clear that the cumulative effect of this re-distribution is regressive; some types of working families will lose substantially.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax and Benefits Changes: Economic and Distributional Impacts, LGiU, 27th October 2015](#)

Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax Benefits Change: Economic and Distributional Impacts

This briefing deals with the likely economic impacts of the National Living Wage (NLW) and with the combined distributional impacts of the NLW, benefit cuts, and tax changes announced in the July 2015 Budget.

The briefing draws in particular on commentary and analyses produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), the Resolution Foundation, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

There is considerable uncertainty about the economic impacts of the NLW; however, the central forecasts produced by the OBR suggests that the macroeconomic economic effects will be small; they include an increase in unemployment of 60,000 by 2020 beyond that in the absence of the NLW, and a small reduction of 0.1 per cent in GDP by 2020.

The Resolution Foundation calculated that the largest rises in the wage bill as a result of the NLW will be in catering, cleaning, hotels, residential care, and retail sectors.

Estimating the distributional impacts of the combined tax and benefit changes and the NLW announced in the July Budget is complex because of the wide variation in work and family circumstances across households.

Source: [Andrew Jones. Briefing: The National Living Wage and Tax Benefit Change: Economic and Distributional Impacts. LGiU. 27th October 2015](#)

Briefing: Scotland and England: local government devolution – lessons and issues

The briefing seeks to describe the 2010-15 ‘devolution story’ in England, its prospective developments over 2015-20, and potential implications and insight the might provide for Scottish LAs. It also considers the case for further collaboration between England and Scottish LAs to progress shared ambitions and address shared concerns.

Overall, the paper argues that English LAs now have a very full ‘menu’ of devolution options that they may choose to pursue. However, the outcomes of these pursuits, and indeed the preconditions for enhanced devolution success, remain fragile and problematic.

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal, and three further recent Scottish city-anchored ‘devo-deal’ proposals mean that Scottish LAs are now major players in the process. The case for understanding and learning from English experience, and for inter-LA collaboration is strong – both for the four ‘deal’ areas and for those outside the deals. The challenge may be mediating and resourcing purposeful and sustained exercise.

Source: [David Marlow. Briefing: Scotland and England: local government devolution – lessons and issues. LGiU. 29th October 2015.](#)

Briefing: Business Rates Devolution

On 5th October 2015, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a forthcoming package of reforms to business rates and local authority funding. There will be a move to local government retaining

100% business rate collected by 2020, with an end to Revenue Support Grant. Also, there will be changes to the rate at which tax is levied. LAs will be able to cut rates as much as they like. Directly elected mayors will be able to add a premium to businesses to pay for infrastructure - subject to a vote on the Local Enterprise Partnership.

A related announcement was made by the Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Government on the 16th October. This stated that Scottish LAs will be able to lower rates bill for business in their area from October 31, based on a criteria they choose, such as the type of property, its location, occupation or activity.

This briefing sets this announcement in context of legislation on Business Rate Supplements and Business Rate Reliefs and recent and current reviews of the business rates system. It reproduces the relevant excerpts on the announcement from the Chancellor's speech and comments on them.

Source: [Tom Lawrence, Briefing: Business Rates Devolution, November 4th 2015](#)

Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for England was released on 30 September 2015.

The IMD is a huge dataset, ranging across the domains of employment, income, health, crime, environment, education, and skills, and housing and access to services; these various domains are combined to create various composite indicators. The IMD can be used at neighbourhood level or for a local authority area as a whole.

This briefing sets out the background and methodology of the IMD and presents a selection of results.

A preliminary analysis indicates a persistence of deprivation in parts of the north and midlands and parts of London, although London appears to be improving in relative terms; there appears to have been some deterioration in the position of some coastal areas.

Data produced from the IMD is of crucial importance for planning, targeting resources, and preparing funding bids.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015, LGiU, 12th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts

This report, by the Work and Pensions Committee (WPC), is the result of an inquiry into the changes to Tax Credits proposed in the July 2015 budget.

In particular, the WPC investigated the likely impacts on household incomes of proposals to reduce the earnings threshold for Tax Credits and raise the rate at which Tax Credits are withdrawn as income rises; these proposals are examined alongside any compensatory effects of a higher National Living Wage, a higher personal income tax threshold, and an extension of free child care.

The WPC argue that the proposed changes to Tax Credits will result in very substantial cuts to the incomes of working families which will not be fully compensated for by the other measures announced in the July Budget.

The report also considers possible ways of mitigating the impacts of the cuts to Tax Credits; it concludes that altering the income threshold or the rate at which income is withdrawn cannot simultaneously meet the objectives of protecting the incomes of low income households, maintaining work incentives, or reducing expenditure.

The report concludes by suggesting that a limit has been reached to cuts in working age benefits and states an intention to investigate the generational balance of welfare expenditure over the course of this Parliament.

Source: [Andrew Jones, Briefing: Work and Pensions Committee Report: A Reconsideration of Tax Credit Cuts, LGiU, 19th November 2015](#)

Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015

This briefing reports on recent key developments on the HS2 project and other related activities. It includes details of the interim evaluation report for HS1, published in October 2015, focusing particularly on the section of the report which deals with the local economic impacts.

The briefing also reports on progress on the HS2 Hybrid Bill. This includes recent developments relating to the route in Chilterns and proposals for Euston Station. A brief overview of other recent developments relating to HS2 and HS3, the proposed east-west high-speed rail link, is provided.

Opponents of the scheme continue to highlight concerns about the project, focusing particularly on reports of the spiralling costs. However, it is pointed out that with the Government having recently begun the process of appointing companies to construct HS2, they are clearly determined to press ahead with the project.

Source: [Ruth Bradshaw, Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#)

Briefing: Preventing Violent Extremism

The briefing summarises the Counter Extremism Strategy, launched by the Government on the 19th October 2015. The strategy assess threat from extremists, outlining the Government's strategic response and sets out proposals for challenging extremist ideology and disrupting terrorist activity through strengthened partnership working and community cohesion.

The strategy argues that British values such as respect for democracy and the rule of law have evolved over centuries in response to the damage and bloodshed caused by religious intolerance and discrimination. The strategy also outlines concerns regarding the separation of some communities; the adoption of harmful and illegal practices like Female Genital Mutilation; and alternative judicial processes such as Sharia councils which have been known to restrict women's right to divorce and protected violent male partners.

In response the Government will:

- Counter extremist ideology
- Work in partnership with organisations that are against extremism
- Disrupting extremists
- Building Cohesive Communities

[Source: Rachel Salmon, Briefing: Preventing Violent Extremism, LGiU, 25th November 2015.](#)

Briefing: Impact of funding reductions on fire and rescue services – NAO report

The briefing summarises the 'Impact of the funding reductions on fire and services' report published by the National Audit Office. The report examines the comparative patterns of change in income, spending and financial and service sustainability across fire and rescue authorities since 2010-11.

Fire and Rescue authorities have absorbed reductions to their funding ranging from 26% to 39% since 2010-11, while maintaining the long-term downward trend in fire casualties. However, some are beginning to experience greater challenges. But while improvements to reducing casualties are slowing down in some areas, the NAO did not find a correlation between casualties' figures and funding reductions.

The report complements, and coincides with the publication of a separate the NAO's value-for-money report on the approach taken by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to fire and rescue authority funding. A separate LGiU member briefing on that particular report will be published shortly.

[Source: Mark Upton, Briefing: Impact of funding reductions on fire and rescue services – NAO report](#)

Useful Sources

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

Key Announcements:

[Chancellor George Osborne's Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015, Government website, speech, 25th November 2015](#) – *Full speech*

[Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015: key announcements, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key announcements emerging from the statement*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[Department for Education's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department for Education*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

[Lauren Lucas, Briefing: The Spending Review and Autumn Statement, LGiU, 25th November 2015](#) – *Key points emerging from the statement*

Further Analysis and Impact on Local Government and Partners:

[LGA Responds to 2015 Spending Review, Lord Porter, Chairman of the Local Government Association, 25th November 2015](#) – *LGA response to the spending review*

[Home Office's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Home Office*

[Department of Health's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the spending review for the Department of Health*

[LGA responds to Education Services Grant announcement, Cllr Roy Perry, Chairman of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, 26th November 2015](#) – *Outlines the Education Services Grant announcement and highlights concerns*

Briefing: Autumn Statement and spending review 2015, APSE, November 2015 – *Analysis of the Autumn Statement and Spending Review and the impact local council frontline services*

[LGA responds to national schools funding announcement in Spending Review, LGA, 26th November 2015](#) – *Brief outline of the impact of the new national funding formula*

[Laura Sharman, Spending Review: Warning that councils at financial tipping point, LocalGov, 26th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for council budgets and services*

[William Eichler, Spending Review: Local authorities to retain 100% of business rates, LocalGov, 25th November 2015](#) – *Outlines Business Rates Retention for councils*

[Department for Communities and Local Government's settlement at the Spending Review 2015, Government website, 25th November 2015](#) – *Impacts of the Spending Review for DCLG*

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill

There are no further developments at this time. The Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill

[National Insurance Contributions \(Rate Ceilings\) Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the National Insurance Contributions (Rate Ceilings) Bill and any latest updates*

Finance Bill

[Finance Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Finance Bill and any latest updates*

Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

There are no further developments at this time. The Policing and Criminal Justice Bill will be kept under review and developments will be outlined in future Policy Inform briefings.

High Speed Rail Bill

[High Speed Rail Bill, Parliamentary Website](#) - *Brief analysis of the High Speed Rail Bill*

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Summer 2015, LGiU, 23rd July 2015](#) – *Update on key developments and other related proposals since April 2015.*

[Ruth Bradshaw, High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015, LGiU, 24th November 2015](#) – *Update on key developments and other related activities since July 2015*

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

[House of Commons, Briefing Paper- Welfare Reform and Work Bill, 16th July 2015](#) – *Brief analysis of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill*

[Welfare Reform and Work Bill, Parliamentary website](#) - *Previous debates on all stages of the Childcare Bill and any latest updates*

[Andrew Jones, The Welfare Reform and Work Bill: Welfare Reform Update, 20th August 2015](#) – *Brief overview of the Bill and any latest updates*



COORDINATING COMMITTEE

16 FEBRUARY 2016

REPORT TITLE	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME – UPDATE REPORT
REPORT OF	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the Scrutiny Work Programme to enable members of Coordinating Committee to review progress as at the end of quarter 3. In terms of the Coordinating Committees' own work programme (see appendix 1), good progress has been made with the Cumulative Impact Scrutiny Review and it is expected that this review will be completed by the end of March. The work programme highlights three other potential pieces of work as follows:

- Review of Constituency Committee decision-making
- Pre-decision scrutiny
- Review of the number of Councillors (following Notice of Motion in September 2015)

Members of Coordinating Committee are requested to consider how they wish to prioritise these pieces of work and when they should be scheduled.

The report also sets out the work programmes of the three Policy and Performance Committees, (see appendix 2 – 4). This is to enable Coordinating Committee to undertake its constitutional role to 'determine the overall work programme of the Policy and Performance Committees, and ensure there is an overall planned approach to in-depth review'.

Going forward with the Wirral Plan, the Scrutiny Work Programme should be developed as a means to support the delivery of the 20 Wirral Plan pledges. The report affects all wards. The report is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- Committee notes the content of the scrutiny work programme across all Policy and Performance Committees and highlights any areas requiring further clarification.
- Committee to review the potential scrutiny reviews highlighted above to determine how it wishes to prioritise and schedule these pieces of work going forward.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

For the committee to discharge its constitutional role to maintain an overview of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For each of the Policy and Performance Committees the work programme is made up of a combination of standing items, officer reports, items referred from other committees and scrutiny reviews. These are set out in a schedule at the start of the municipal year and reviewed at regular meetings of the committee. Each work programme should align with our priorities and thereby support the delivery of the Wirral Plan.

The work programme should align with Council priorities. It should be informed by service priorities and performance, risk management information, public or service user feedback and referrals from the Executive.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

There are none arising from this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

N/A

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

No because there is no relevance to equality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Coordinating Committee Work Programme

Appendix 2 - Families & Wellbeing Committee Work Programme

Appendix 3 - Regeneration & Environment Committee Work Programme

Appendix 4 - Transformation & Resources Committee Work Programme

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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Appendix 1 - DRAFT 2015-16 Coordinating Committee Work Programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Regular Committee Dates				23rd			30th					16th	23rd		
Scheduled Reviews															
Approach to scrutinising Council Plan		Requested by Chair													
Cumulative Impact Policy		Requested by Member													
Potential Reviews															
Review Constituency Committee decision-making		Requested by Member													
Pre-decision scrutiny		Requested by Member													
Notice of Motion - Review of number and role of councillors.		Requested by Member													
Officer Reports															
Meeting Procedure Rules		Provided by officers													
Policy & Performance Committee Remits		Provided by officers													
Corporate Plan Performance 2014/15 Year End Report		Provided by officers													
Year End Budget Report		Provided by officers													
Council Plan		Provided by officers													
Wirral Plan Scrutiny															
2016/17 Budget Proposals Scrutiny Approach															
2016/17 Budget Scrutiny Report															
Equality Plan Annual Report															
LGA Peer Review and Action Plan															
Referrals from other Committees															
Notice of Motion - Review of number of councillors and election cycle.		Referred by the Mayor at Council 20/10/14													

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Call-in meetings															
Standing Items															
Work Programme Review															
Corporate Plan Performance Report															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Update															

Appendix 2 - 2015-16 Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee - Work Programme

Updated - 29/01/2016

(including Children Sub-Committee and the Health & Care Performance Panel)

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Committee Dates				Tues 30th			Tues 8th		Mon 2nd	Tues 1st	Tues 19th		Tues 8th		
Scheduled Reviews															
Safeguarding Children	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Agreed by P&P Committee on 5th Dec 2013									Committee report due				19/01/16 Report approved by Committee and referred to Cabinet.
Reducing hospital admission and dependency on nursing and residential home for older people (To be known as the Avoiding Admissions review)	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Agreed by P&P Committee on 2nd February 2015													12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to prioritise this review for early 2015. 02/02/15 - Committee agreed to establish a Task & Finish Group to work during the 2015/16 municipal year.
Children ready for school		Agreed by P&P Committee on 20th March 2015													
Budget options	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Part of the Council's budget process													
Wirral Plan - Development of delivery plan	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Proposed by Spokespersons, 21st July													Workshops held in November 2015. Report to Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015.
Impact Report from previous In-depth Reviews															
Looked After Children Review															Committee (02/12/14) requested future progress report in Dec 2015
Implications of the Francis Report for Wirral															12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel. A report was presented to the Panel on 20/10/14. Future updates will be provided.
Quality Assurance and Standards in Care Homes															12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel. A report was discussed by the Panel on 19/11/14. Future updates will be provided.
Reports Requested to Committee															
School Traded Services - proposed changes to service delivery (Edsential)	Clare Fish / David Armstrong														Committee (02/12/14) requested future progress updates, which will be provided in 2015/16 municipal year.
Safeguarding Children Annual Report 2014/15	Simon Garner														Complete
All-age Disability Strategy	Julia Hassall / Graham Hodkinson														
Child Poverty Strategy - update	Julia Hassall														Committee (02/02/15) requested future updates re effectiveness of the child poverty strategy. Complete
Disability service for children: budget option - progress report	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 24th Feb 2015													Deferred from 2014/15 municipal year

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Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
CRI - Follow-up from Spotlight session on 21st Jan 2015															01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel.
Public Health Annual Report - 2014	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by Spokespersons, 4th June 2015													Complete
Draft protocol to promote more effective working between Health & Wellbeing Board, Healthwatch and health scrutiny	Clare Fish	Agreed by Spokespersons, 4th June 2015													Draft protocol approved by F&W P&P on 30/07/15. Also approved by Healthwatch board. Awaiting approval from Health & Wellbeing Board
Healthwatch Wirral - update (including Annual Report)	Karen Prior														
Day centres and the establishment of Wirral Evolutions - progress report	Chris Beyga	Agreed by P&P Committee, 8th Sept 2015													Complete
Childcare Bill - update	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 3rd Sept 2015													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
Adults Safeguarding Annual Report	Bernard Walker / Simon Garner	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													Complete
Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people	Graham Hodkinson / Ian Platt	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													19/01/16 - Committee requested a follow-up report in 6 months (July 2016) re the implications of Gov't policy on future plans for Extra Care housing
Impact of the reduction in funding for public health	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													This issue will be reflected upon as part of the budget workshop (11/01/16)
Draft Children Strategy	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 9th December 2015													Complete
Healthy Wirral programme	Clare Fish	Agreed by Spokespersons, 9th December 2015													
Local implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015		Agreed by P&P Committee, 19th Jan 2016													A position statement report was requested in advance of possible review work
Reports to be distributed to Members for information															
Fostering Annual Report	Julia Hassall / Simon Fisher														Outstanding
Adoption Annual Report	Julia Hassall / Simon Fisher														Outstanding
Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Fiona Johnstone														
Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control - update	Julie Webster	Agreed by Spokespersons 7th January 2014													Complete

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Referrals from other Committees															
NOM - Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by P&P Committee 28th Jan 2014													Member's briefing produced. Complete
NOM - Becoming a 'Dementia-friendly' Council	Proposed: Cllr Tom Anderson; Seconded: Cllr Tracey Smith	Referred from Council, 14th July 2014													Complete
NOM - Mental Health Challenge	Proposed: Cllr Tom Anderson; Seconded: Cllr Lesley Rennie	Referred from Council, 6th July 2015													Complete
Standing Items															
Performance Dashboard															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Inform - Update															
Budget scrutiny															
Focus On.....' Sessions															
Vanguard Project	John Develing / Jo Goodfellow / Clare Fish	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015			20th										Complete
All-age Disability Service	Clare Fish / Julia Hassall / Graham Hodkinson	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
Widow Community Trust: update on service delivery	Karen Howell / Sandra Christie	Agreed by Spokespersons, November 2015										17th			
Mental Health	Clare Fish	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Proposed implementation of the Care Act 2014	Graham Hodkinson	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Health Inequalities	Fiona Johnstone	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee 8th July 2014													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Children Sub-Committee															
Sub-Committee meetings															
							23rd			16th			30th		
Early Years and Children's centres / 'Giving Wirral children the best start in life'	Julia Hassall / Deborah Gornik	Officer report prior to possible task and finish work													
School standards report regarding outcomes for Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, GCSE and A Levels, including impact on 'narrowing the gap'	Deborah Gornik / Sue Talbot	Officer report requested													
Children social care reorganisation	Julia Hassall / Lisa Arthey	Officer report requested													
Exception reports highlighting positive and negative aspects arising from school Ofsted inspection reports	Deborah Gornik / Sue Talbot														
Complaints report for Children's Services	Julia Hassall / Simon Garner	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													To be retained for the 2016/17 work programme (and to include comparators with other Local Authorities)
School standards report - attainment at GCSE and A Level: 2015	Sue Talbot	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Page 24 P6 qualifications and the impact on NEETs	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Outcomes of the Wirral Council Ofsted inspection (if available)	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Visits to both high performing and under-performing schools in terms of attainment.		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee , 23/09/15													Visits to be arranged
Special Guardianship Orders		Proposed by Chair, 30/11/15, as a result of the Safeguarding scrutiny review													
Governance arrangements and role of scrutiny in safeguarding		Proposed by Chair, 30/11/15, as a result of the Safeguarding scrutiny review													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Children Centres - Performance Indicators (CSC018 - CSC021) - further explanation		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee . 16/12/15													
Devolution of the Further Education budget and the apprenticeship framework		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee , 16/12/15													To be considered for the 2016/17 work programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Health & Care Performance Panel															
Panel meetings						20th	28th		25th		12th		16th		A meeting to review the draft Quality Accounts of health partners is scheduled for Tues 10th May 2016
Care home and domiciliary care – performance report (Amanda Kelly)	Amanda Kelly	Proposed by H&CPP, 19/11/14													
The impact of changes to Out of hospital services	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
Preparations for winter pressures	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
Quality framework and performance measures for the health sector in Wirral	Lorna Quigley	Standard agenda item													
Feedback from Quality Surveillance Group	Lorna Quigley	Standard agenda item													
Francis Scrutiny review – review of recommendations	Lorna Quigley, Jill Galvani, Alan Veitch	Proposed by H&CPP, 20/10/14													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Care Homes Scrutiny Review – review of recommendations	Amanda Kelly	Proposed by H&CPP, 19/11/14													
Social care complaints report, to include domiciliary care	David Jones	Proposed by H&CPP, 04/02/15													Follow-up report - Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from the CQC action plan (Sept 2014)	Jill Galvani, Evan Moore, Jean Quinn	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from the Best Improvement Plan	Anthony Hassall	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 02/02/15													P&P Committee (02/02/15) requested future updates
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from A&P targets		Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 02/02/15													
The implementation of the Better Care Fund (H&CPP, 01/04/15)	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
CQC inspection report for Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust (Inspection of June 2015)		Proposed by H&CPP, 20/08/15													
Drug and alcohol service / CRI - performance update	Julie Webster / Gary Rickwood + CRI	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
CQC inspection report for WUTH (Inspection of Sept 2015)		Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													To be arranged - once the report is available
WUTH: incidents of infection rates		Proposed by H&CPP, 25/11/15													
Macular degeneration		Agreed by Chair, 25/11/15													
Continuing Healthcare funding	Karen Prior - Healthwatch	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 01/12/15													
Improving people's experience of integrated care (service user experience questionnaire) - Performance Indicator ADDP13		Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 01/12/15													Complete
Member visits to CRI services		Proposed by H&CPP, 25/11/15													Visits to be arranged

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Appendix 3 - 2015-16 Regeneration & Environment Committee Work Programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Committee Dates					14th		15th		3rd	2nd	18th		2nd		
Scheduled Reviews															
Coastal Strategy	Cllr Bernie Mooney	Requested by Members													In Progress
Tourism	Cllr Chris Meaden	Requested by Members													In progress
Homelessness and the impact of welfare reforms	Cllr George Davies	Requested by Members													
Budget Options	Cllr Moira Mclaughlin	Part of the Council's budget process													
Scrutiny of the Wirral Plan and Delivery Arrangements	Cllr Moira Mclaughlin	Agreed by Coordinating Committee													Workshops held in November 2015. Report to Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015.
Potential Reviews															
Reports Requested															
Tourism	Emma Degg	Requested by Members													T&F Review agreed
Homelessness / Impact of removal of Housing Benefit for under 21s	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Merseytravel	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													Completed
Enterprise Zone Investment and Property Development Fund	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Devolution	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													Completed
Flood Risk Management	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Street Lighting	Mark Smith	Requested by Members													
Notice of Motion															
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority		Referred from Council													
Wirral's Economic Success		Referred from Council													
Supporting Wirral's Part in our Nuclear Industries		Referred from Council													
Hamilton Square		Referred from Council													
Spotlight Session															
Birkenhead Town Centre															Session arranged for 29th February
Standing Items															

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Performance Dashboard															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Inform															
Devolution update															
Recommendations from Highways & Traffic Representation Panels															

Appendix 4 - 2015-16 Transformation and Resources Policy & Performance Committee Work Programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Committee Dates					15th		21st		4th	3rd		1st	22nd		
Scheduled Reviews															
Libraries	Cllr Chris Meaden	Requested by Members													
Disaster Recovery arrangements	Cllr Phil Davies	Requested by Members													
Wirral Plan - Development of delivery plan	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Proposed by Spokespersons													Complete - Referred to Coordinating Committee
Freedom of Information															
Potential Reviews															
Disaster Recovery processes	Cllr Phil Davies	Requested by Members													
Impact of Implementation of Universal credit / Removal of Housing Benefit for under 25s	Cllr Phil Davies	Requested by Members													
Notice of Motion															
Freedom of Information															Task & Finish Review
Reports Requested															
Reconfiguration of library services	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Complete
Asset management Strategy	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Complete
Performance Appraisals	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Task & Finish Review
Disaster Recovery Arrangements	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Complete
Customer Relationship Management	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Complete - update report requested for March
Security access to Council issued devices	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													Complete
Local Welfare Assistance Scheme Scrutiny Review - Update Report	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													
Community Safety Partnership	Joe Blott	Requested by Members													
Spotlight Sessions															
Standing Items															
Performance Dashboard															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Inform															

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
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