



Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee

Date: Wednesday, 23 March 2016

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Patrick Sebastian

Tel: 0151 691 8424

e-mail: patricksebastian@wirral.gov.uk

Website: www.Wirral.gov.uk

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 - 14)**

To confirm the Minutes of the Special meeting of the Committee held on 16 February 2016 as a correct record.

4. **PEER REVIEW REPORT (Pages 15 - 34)**

5. **2015/16 QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE (Pages 35 - 46)**

6. **2015/16 QUARTER 3 CAPITAL & REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITOR REPORTS (Pages 47 - 84)**
7. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR (PART 1)**
8. **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.

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

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 16 February 2016

Present:

Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors	R Abbey	T Anderson
	P Brightmore	D Burgess-Joyce
	C Muspratt	W Clements
	W Smith	A Sykes
	M Sullivan	S Williams
	KJ Williams	P Gilchrist
	J Williamson	I Williams

25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Doughty and B Kenny and from Mr M Harrison.

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

No declarations of interest were received.

27 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

28 **2016/17 BUDGET CONSULTATION FINDINGS - PRESENTATION**

The Committee received a presentation by the Senior Manager: Marketing and Communications on the feedback from the Budget Consultations that had recently been undertaken.

The Committee noted that the key messages from the public consultation process were as follows:

- The Council was required to save £28 million during the coming financial year.

- This was part of an ongoing programme of savings which totalled £129 million over the next few years, up to 2020-21.
- The vast majority of savings this year had been found without a massive impact on services and staff.
- There were, however, a series of proposals which had been published on 18 December 2015 and had been subject to consultation with the public.
- This consultation concluded for the majority of proposals at the end of January 2016.
- The Cabinet would consider the results of the consultation and use them to inform its budget proposal to the Council.

The Senior Manager: Marketing and Communications reported on the methodology behind the process and the number of responses (10,000) and their geographical break down from 2010/11 to 2015/16. He also informed that there were three petitions in respect of the Council's budget proposals in relation to:

- Save Girtrell Court Respite Home.
- Stop the Job Cuts, Stop Service Cuts.
- School Crossing Patrol, Christ Church School.

The Committee noted that there was support for the following proposals:

- Shared Services.
- Charging for Services.
- Alternative Delivery.
- Commissioning Services.
- Reviewing the use of Council owned buildings, provide services from a smaller, more cost effect number of locations.

The Committee also noted the responses in respect of the following proposals:

Garden Waste Charging

201 comments had been received from residents on this proposal. The general themes of the feedback were:

- A large proportion of comments received actually supported the proposal to increase the cost, stating that a £5 increase in the annual cost was reasonable.
- Those people who disagreed with the proposal expressed concern that it could lead to increased levels of fly-tipping and reduced recycling rates if people opted out of the service.

Re-Provision of Girtrell Court

189 comments had been received through the Council's consultation channels, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents expressed concerns about the level and quality of alternative provision available in the private and voluntary sector; these concerns were being addressed in the ongoing consultation process.
- Residents were concerned that relationships with staff and other users of the Girtrell Court facility would be lost should the service be re-provided elsewhere.

Self-Assessment

48 comments had been received relating to this proposal, which could be summarised as follows:

- This proposal was generally supported provided that provision was made to support those people unable to complete self-assessments.

Community Safety

42 comments had been received related to this proposal, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents were keen to ensure that any changes to the community safety services mentioned did not lead to a reduction in service.

Leisure Centre Concessions and Golf

114 comments had been received relating to this proposal, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents were generally understanding and at times supportive of the proposal to reduce concessions to make leisure centres more cost-effective.
- Some concerns were expressed about the impact on health and wellbeing and suggestions were made about different proposals and pricing structures for the services which were currently available for free.

Re-Provision of Library Service

The Council had received detailed feedback on this proposal from the Friends of Wirral Libraries Steering Group, which had been considered as part of this consultation process. 90 further comments had been received, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents expressed concerns that a library service relying more on volunteers and community support would be less reliable and quality would suffer.

- Some residents were in general agreement with this proposal if it resulted in no library closures, and other residents highlighted that a smaller number of better libraries would be the preferable option.
- A number of residents had expressed concern about the potential loss of professional librarians and their associated knowledge and expertise.

Community Partnership: Parks

The Wirral Parks Friends Forum had expressed concerns in relation to this option around the availability of volunteers, and the wider deliverability and impact of the proposal. 55 comments had been received relating to this proposal, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents expressed how valuable Wirral's parks were to their local communities and the wider environment.
- Many residents were generally supportive of this proposal, provided volunteers were provided with enough advice and support.
- People made a number of other suggestions related to income and efficiency to further protect Wirral's parks and open spaces.

Charges for Pest Control

38 comments had been received, which could be summarised as follows:

- A number of residents disagreed with implementing a charge for this service.
- Around an equal amount of residents did agree, with many of these stating that a form of means-testing should be employed to ensure the most vulnerable were still able to access the service if required.

Highways and Road Safety

The Council had received a petition in relation to part of this budget proposal. 72 further comments had been received, which could be summarised as follows:

- This proposal had received mixed feedback, with most comments focussed on ensuring safety was paramount when making any changes.

DHP and Welfare Advice

A number of letters had been received specifically in relation to the Council's welfare advice services, which had been considered as part of this consultation. A further 60 comments had been received, which could be summarised as follows:

- Residents were generally comfortable with the proposal in relation to Discretionary Housing Payments.

- Comments had mainly focused on the welfare rights service provided by the Council, with residents expressing how valued the service was.

The Committee was informed that the Council was required to set its budget and Council Tax Levels during March 2016 for the following financial year. The Council's budget meeting was on 3 March 2016. The Cabinet would meet on 22 February 2016 and agree a budget to recommend to the Council.

Following the presentation Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and Officers responded to them as appropriate. Issues considered included the following:

- Whether the consultation feedback had provided a quantitative or qualitative picture and whether it was broken down into constituencies as they may have different priorities.
- Libraries and volunteers to run them – community management and the need to consider the findings of the Mori Poll.
- The consultation findings had been transcribed by Officers and were available online.
- There had been a consultation exercise but only a small number of consultees had taken the time to set out what they thought.
- The response rate to the consultation was correspondingly low for Wallasey. A mechanism was required to represent Wallasey. However, it was possible to get a feel for this as those who did respond to the consultation usually made the same points.
- There was an overwhelming response to the consultation online rather than hard copy.
- People who are unhappy will respond to consultation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Senior Manager: Marketing and Communications be thanked for his presentation on the feedback from the Budget Consultations that had recently been undertaken; and**
- (2) the content of the presentation be noted.**

29 **2016/17 BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT**

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources set out the work of the three Policy and Performance Committees regarding the scrutiny of the 2016/17 budget options. This followed 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 was provided for each Committee and these were attached to the report as Appendices 1 – 3. Each of these reports contained a brief summary of the options reviewed with the comments of Members in attendance. The Committee was requested to

acknowledge these reports as the scrutiny response to the 2016/17 budget proposals and refer these on to the Cabinet.

Councillor M McLaughlin informed that the Policy and Performance Committees had adopted the same workshop approach as they had in the previous year. She also informed the Committee that it would not be debating the budget proposals at this meeting. That would be done by the Council at its budget meeting. The report was presented to inform Members of the views expressed on the consultation.

Councillor M McLaughlin reported on the proceedings of the Policy and Performance Committee - Families and Wellbeing's Workshop which had been very well attended and had gone well. Fourteen Members had attended and everyone had contributed something. The discussions held were 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 Workshop had examined both positive and negative impacts and made suggestions on how to mitigate negative impacts. It had also considered how Leisure concessions could operate in the future.

Councillor P Gilchrist made reference to an email he had sent to each of the Committee's Members the previous day regarding the proposal to close Girtrell Court – a respite centre.

Councillor M McLaughlin informed that the areas Councillor P Gilchrist had highlighted in his email had been explored at the Workshop and she did not want to change the narrative of resulting report.

However, Councillor P Gilchrist considered that it was legitimate to receive information later as there had been concerns raised at various other meetings since the Workshop and they should be reflected upon.

Councillor M McLaughlin did not agree with the point being made and informed that she did not want to change the emphasis of the Workshop report as feedback from other consultation exercises would be fed into the process.

Councillor P Gilchrist informed that he had circulated a summary and some suggestions. He was aware some Members may not have seen it. He asked Members if any were in agreement to these being put forward.

With the Committee's agreement Councillor P Gilchrist proceeded to read out his email as follows:

'Dear Chair, Members and Officers,

The recent 'tradition' at Co-ordinating Committee has been that the Committee has received the report from the deliberations of the working parties. Onward transmission of the Committee's views has not often led to lengthy debate.

The process was reviewed in February 2015.

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=28024>

In broad terms the deliberations of the working parties have been transmitted to Cabinet as they covered the range of views expressed by Members.

I have also looked back at the scrutiny review of the original Girtrell Court project considered in Nov 2014.

It is worth recalling that the re-provision of the service has been under consideration for some time.

This is a summary of the issues raised recently -

Since the budget option on the services at Girtrell Court was outlined a number of parents have attended the Wirral South and Wirral West Constituency Committees.

In addition details of various alternative services known to be available have been circulated to carers.

Officers have embarked on a series of one to one consultations with carers.

Doubts have been raised about the suitability of the alternatives.

Requests have been made for developing alternatives that must meet the quality of experience at Girtrell.

Anxieties have been expressed that the alternatives might not be accessible or might not provide for the age ranges attending Girtrell Court.

The Department of Adult Social Services has recognised that detailed work is required to 'commission' services tailored to the needs of the service users. There has been a recognition that individual services at Girtrell Court should continue until alternatives are properly developed.

As we are only a few days from the Cabinet meeting on Monday morning I think that the Co-ordinating Committee should submit a specific, updated comment on the Girtrell Court issues.

I would like to offer this proposal –

That this meeting of the Policy and Performance Co-ordinating Committee wishes to highlight the concerns expressed by Members at the budget scrutiny working party relating to services offered at Girtrell Court.

During those deliberations it was recognised that

‘The key challenge is to match the needs of individuals with what can be provided’. ...

And that...

‘Assurances were sought about availability and quality of the independent sector provision and also how each person would have their needs assessed.

It was also reported that ...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’

In view of the concerns raised since the Workshop met it is even more important that attention is given meeting the detailed needs of the families involved.

Services need to be offered at Girtrell Court until it is clear that a range of providers are in place and lined up to offer services truly tailored the physical, recreational and emotional needs of the users and are demonstrably appropriate to their ages and circumstances.

In view of the tight timescales that have caused concern the officers and Cabinet need to ensure that the transition to future provision is appropriately managed with clients able to use services at Girtrell Court until such time as alternatives are duly commissioned’.

This Motion was seconded by Councillor W Clements. It was put to the vote and lost (6 for, 8 against, 1 abstention).

A Member wished to ask a question on Government funding but was told that the appropriate Officers were not in attendance at the meeting to answer questions and it was not the intention for the Committee to debate the budget proposals.

Councillor J Williamson informed that the Policy and Performance Committee – Transformation and Resources’ Workshop had been held on 14 January 2016. It had provided the Committee with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of proposals affecting services that fell under its remit. Those budget proposals selected for further examination were those deemed to be of greatest significance in terms of value and the public interest. Overall the Workshop had been very beneficial and there had been some good discussions around the budget options, some agreement and some split opinion. Members were aware that the Policy and Performance Committee – Transformation and Resources would receive an update on welfare reform in March 2016.

Councillor Mike Sullivan the Chair of the Policy and Performance – Regeneration and Environment Committee informed that it had been agreed by the Group Spokespersons that all six budget proposals which were out to public consultation would be scrutinised at the Workshop as they were all considered significant in either the savings provided or the value of the service. To ensure that there was sufficient time for appropriate scrutiny to take place, the scrutiny of these budget proposals had been carried out through two dedicated workshops held on 11 and 18 January 2016.

The Workshop had discussed various issues and as a result it had been agreed that some task and finish work in relation to them would be carried out by the Committee.

Members reported that there had also been comments at the Regeneration and Environment workshop on the charge for garden waste and the potential impact on the cost of landfill. There had also been a difference of opinion in respect of the condition of the highway network.

A Member informed that she found it difficult “to bring the voice of the community” to the Committee. There was some agreement in respect of this and it was considered that there should be some discussion on how the process could be refined. There were issues associated with timing but not just in relation to the budget but on other matters too e.g. how the Wirral Plan was being implemented.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the three budget scrutiny reports as the scrutiny response to the 2016/17 budget proposals be noted; and**
- (2) these reports be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.**

30 **ANNUAL REPORT: EQUALITY PLAN 2014 - 17**

The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources introduced his report that highlighted progress being made against the Council’s Equality Plan 2014 - 2017. The Committee was informed that the Equality Plan had been approved by the Cabinet in July 2014 and embracing equality had remained central to the way the Council had delivered services over the last year. It had taken into consideration the needs of its employees and customers in the decisions that it had made.

The report also set out some of the work that the Council had undertaken to support its priorities. Members noted that this was an ongoing process and the Council continued to focus on providing a workplace where employees felt comfortable to be themselves and perform to the best of their ability, and by ensuring services which met the current and future needs of the diverse residents of the Borough were provided.

A Member drew attention to the Performance Appraisal and Development form that now included best practice elements of the Equality Framework for Local Government and reasonable adjustments. This meant all staff members were now asked how they had promoted equality and diversity within their work. Plus, there was an automatic annual review of an employee’s reasonable adjustments as part of their appraisal. The Member was surprised that this was considered to be an achievement as performance appraisals currently had a RAG rating as not all staff had been through the performance appraisal process this year.

The Strategic Director informed that the latest position was that 76% of the workforce had received their performance appraisals and 89% of managers had received one. The process had been improved and the inequalities issues had been picked up. Performance appraisals were conducted on an annual process. The next round of them would commence on 1 April 2016. The figures in respect of this would be reported on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED:

That the progress of the Equality Plan 2014-2017 and the planned activities for the forthcoming year be noted.

31 **2015/16 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE PLAN CORPORATE PLAN**

The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources introduced his summary report on the Council’s Quarter 2 (July to September) performance against the delivery of the 2015/16 Corporate Plan (as approved by the Council at its meeting on 8 December 2014). A detailed report was attached to the Director’s report as Appendix 1 and detailed progress against a suite of agreed performance indicators. The performance indicators related to a

range of pledges under the three Wirral Plan themes of People, Business and Environment.

The Committee was informed that it had in front of it a snap shot in time. Issues associated with performance had moved forward. A Member suggested that more information be provided in writing to help the Committee to understand the current situation.

With reference to opiate users the Committee noted that the data set out in Appendix 1 was quite old now. However, the Council's performance did put it in the top quartile nationally.

A Member made reference again to the RAG rating in respect of performance appraisal and asked if they were carried out on a rolling programme because if they were not done quickly at the beginning of the new financial year performance against this target would dip. She asked if the staff would be appraised in equal numbers across the year.

The Strategic Director reported that all staff members should receive their performance appraisal on the anniversary of their last one but there was no reason why managers could not carry out their performance appraisals earlier.

The Committee took on board the point that the Member had made that there was potential for a dip in respect of the performance appraisal target.

A Member drew attention to the Corporate Performance Indicator – Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 and that the narrative was getting stronger and stronger. There were targets set and reference was made to a decreasing target that had been set for this measure to bring Wirral more in to line with the North West average and that of the Council's statistical neighbours. The Member asked if there were strategies in place. Councillor M McLaughlin responded that this must be done safely and that she would raise it at the Policy and Performance Committee– Families and Wellbeing. She noted that this Council was out of line with other local authorities as it took more children into care and they stayed there longer.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of this report be noted.

32 **2015/16 QUARTER 2 CAPITAL AND REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITOR REPORTS**

The Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources introduced his report that provided the Committee with the Quarter 2 Capital and Revenue Financial Monitoring details, as reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 5

November 2015. This was done to enable the Committee to scrutinise progress against the 2015/16 Revenue and Capital budgets and to highlight any areas for further clarification. The Revenue and Capital monitoring reports were appended to the Director's report.

A Member asked a question in relation to the Quarter 2 Capital Monitoring Report about phased payments for capital receipts and why payment was conducted in this way. It was agreed that the reply to this question would be circulated to Members after the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of these reports be noted; and**
- (2) the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources be requested to send a reply to the Member's question on capital receipts to all of the Members who are in attendance at this meeting.**

33 POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPERS

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources introduced the January Policy Inform Briefing papers which outline the key features of the Autumn Statement and the Spending Review, which was announced on 25 November 2015. As a continuum the Policy Inform papers include any relevant policy developments that had emerged over the past three months.

Appended to the Director's report were:

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

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Policy Briefing papers be noted.

34 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME - UPDATE REPORT

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources set out the Scrutiny Work Programme to enable the Committee to review progress as at the end of quarter 3. Members referred to the Committee's own Work Programme (Appendix 1) and noted that good progress had been made with the Cumulative Impact Scrutiny Review and it was expected that this review would be completed by the end of March. The Work Programme highlighted 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 were requested to give consideration to how they wished to prioritise these pieces of work and when they should be scheduled.

The Director's report also set out the Work Programmes of the other three Policy and Performance Committees, (Appendices 2 – 4). These had been included to enable the Committee to undertake its constitutional role to 'determine the overall Work Programme for the Policy and Performance Committees, and ensure there was an overall planned approach to in-depth review'.

The Committee noted that the Scrutiny Work Programme needed to be developed as a means to support the delivery of the 20 pledges set out in the Wirral Plan.

Councillor M McLaughlin informed that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 22 March 2016 which was the day before purdah commenced. She also informed that items for the next meeting should include the LGA Peer Review and the usual Monitoring Reports. She asked Members if they wanted the meeting to go ahead. There was general agreement to hold the next scheduled meeting but with a shortened agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the Scrutiny Work Programme across all Policy and Performance Committees be noted; and**
- (2) Members give consideration to the potential scrutiny reviews highlighted above to determine how they wish to prioritise and schedule these pieces of work; and**
- (3) the next meeting of the Committee will go ahead on 22 March 2016 with a short agenda.**

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**Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, 23 March 2016**

REPORT TITLE:	Corporate Peer Challenge
REPORT OF:	Strategic Director: Transformation and Resources

REPORT SUMMARY

Wirral Council is committed to external review and challenge in order to continue to improve how it works and how it is able to achieve positive outcomes for residents. The Council has a strong track record for participating in peer reviews and in November 2015, a team of experts from across the public sector were invited to conduct a corporate peer challenge.

The findings of the report have been published and the Council has developed an action plan in response to its findings, which it immediately set to work on delivering. The peer team confirmed the Council has the right plans in place and also helped to identify where additional attention was required, to ensure the Council and its partners focus on the right things in the right order to deliver improved outcomes for our residents and businesses.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Coordinating Committee is requested to note the contents of the Corporate Peer Challenge report and associated action plan and to highlight any areas for further clarification.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

For Coordinating Committee to be able to scrutinise the Council's Peer Review and Action Plan.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Council agreed a new five year plan in July 2015 which was adopted by all Wirral partners. The Wirral plan commits to achieving a set of 20 Pledges by 2020 to improve the quality of life enjoyed by all Wirral residents. The peer review team was led by Mark Rogers, Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council and included peer members and officers from other local authorities. The team were asked to focus on the Council's capacity to deliver the Wirral Plan, its approach to partnership working and the work currently underway to develop new models of service delivery.

The findings report is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration by Coordinating Committee. The review highlighted that the Council has strong leadership from the Leader and Chief Executive, and that there was clear long-term planning in place with impressive sign up to the Wirral Plan by partners.

The review also considered the Council's proposed new operating model which sets out a new way of working for the Council to provide capacity for strategy development, managing business efficiently and delivery of services to residents. The report findings indicate that the team considered the proposed model as appropriate and described it as major step forward for the Council.

The team also highlighted the importance of developing a stronger corporate transformation function to drive change within the organisation. A report to Cabinet in March 2016 responds to this and describes the proposed approach to developing the Council's transformation function and establishes the outline of a new operating model for the organisation.

The findings of the review reinforced the need for the organisation to have a stronger focus on long-term financial planning and aligning resources to the Wirral Plan pledges. The Council has made significant progress on budget planning following the recent approval of the 2016-17 budget and work is underway to develop long-term budget plans which are aligned to the Wirral Plan pledges.

The Corporate Peer Challenge report has been published and an action plan has been prepared in response to the findings. A copy of the action plan is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration by Coordinating Committee.

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

The review took place over four days in November 2015 and during this time the team met with Elected Members, senior officers, partners, businesses and members of staff at all levels of the organisation.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The report is for information and there are no direct equality implications as a result of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Lucy Barrow*
Strategy Manager
telephone: (0151) 691 8006
email: lucybarrow@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Peer Review

Appendix 2 – Peer Review Action Plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL - N/A

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18 November 2015

Eric Robinson
Chief Executive
Wirral Council
Wallasey Town Hall
51 Brighton Street
Wallasey, CH44 8ED

Dear Eric,

RE: WIRRAL COUNCIL – CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

On behalf of the team, I would like to say how much we enjoyed spending time in Wirral again to work with you and colleagues on the recent corporate peer challenge, following close behind the LGA financial review undertaken in October 2015. The team very much appreciated the welcome we received and the positive way with which everyone engaged in the process and the support provided in the lead up to, and during the course of, the challenge.

It is testimony to the council's desire for constructive external insight that Wirral commissioned the corporate peer challenge. It reflects the council's long held view of the value of external help within the local government sector, as the council had a previous corporate peer challenge in 2012. Peer challenges are managed and delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The peers who delivered the challenge were:

- Mark Rogers, Chief Executive, Birmingham City Council
- Cllr Peter John, Leader, London Borough of Southwark (Labour)
- Cllr Robert Light, Group Leader, Kirklees MDC (Conservative)
- Giles Perritt, Assistant Chief Executive, Plymouth City Council
- Rob Vincent, LGA Associate
- Neil Shaw, Programme Manager, Local Government Association

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-orientated and tailored to meet individual council's needs. You asked the peer team to explore:

- The council's capacity to deliver the Wirral Plan 2020
- The council's approach to partnership working
- New models for service delivery

The peers used their experience and knowledge to reflect on the evidence presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read. There are a series of guiding questions for all corporate peer challenges which the team also explored. These are:

- 1) Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
- 2) Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- 3) Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
- 4) Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change and transformation?
- 5) Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?

All five of these questions were explored by the peer team by examining the first area of focus the council identified: the council's capacity to deliver the Wirral Plan 2020.

Executive Summary

During the last few months the council has begun to set out a new approach to its longer-term aspirations for Wirral. This is focused around the Wirral Plan 2020. The Plan sets out twenty 'pledges' for the council and its public sector partners in Wirral to deliver on over the next five years. The Plan aims to make a stronger impact on delivering better outcomes for local people, within the reducing funding environment for all public bodies. The Plan is a work in progress and the peer team explored key issues which will enable the Plan to be delivered effectively.

Core council service performance provides a good foundation, although this is notwithstanding an identified risk in children's services. The council has recently published a Delivery Plan: Phase 1, which sits behind the Wirral Plan. There is still considerable work to develop the detailed programme which will ensure disciplined implementation. The council has identified six building blocks which will enable the Wirral Plan to be delivered effectively.

The Wirral Partnership, which is looking to drive the implementation of the Plan, has shown good intent by agreeing the pledges in a relatively short time. There is good commitment from the partners to improve outcomes for local people. There is now a need to identify what priorities and projects will provide the focus for the Partnership for the next 12-18 months. There will be a need to think through the sequencing and interdependencies between these projects. The council will also need to manage the risks around performance in children's services. If they find this needs to be improved significantly this is likely to require investment, which might have an impact on these other projects.

The council is proposing a new operating model to achieve the outcomes in the Plan. The model is appropriate - with a different mix of service provision, work in partnership and greater commissioning - but now there is need for more engagement within the council on what this will mean in specific service areas, as well as to overall corporate capacity and capabilities. The council may want to re-look at where it is placing some of the functions (within Business Management, Strategy and Delivery).

To deliver on the pledges the council will need much more focus on organisational development and a strong corporate transformation function. It will also need to examine the functions which sit in Business Support to enable transformation to be effective and undertaken at pace.

The council faces a significant financial challenge as its budget reduces dramatically. There is a need to develop fully the 2016/17 budget (which is underway) and not divert from the savings proposals it will contain. The council will then be making steady progress towards formulating a 'pledge driven' budget over the following two to three years. This will include taking a more commercial approach (where appropriate) and, over time, aligning the financial strategies of partner agencies with the Wirral Plan.

Context and overview

1. It is three years since the council's previous LGA corporate peer challenge. The context for the council has changed considerably since that time. Wirral has made good progress since it moved out of the period where it had an Improvement Board up to 2013. In 2015 Wirral was judged by the Local Government Chronicle as the country's most improved council. There appears to be some loss of momentum in 2014 and this has affected confidence. Wirral 2020 and the new operating model are major steps forward. As identified in 2013, the need to strengthen corporate functions remains.
2. Performance indicators suggest that the majority of the council's core services are sound. The borough's performance on adult social care is good. It is beginning to make progress with integrating health and adult social care services. The borough now has some integrated service provision between adult care services and further integration is planned, including an integrated commissioning hub. The level of delayed transfers of patients from hospital is relatively low compared to other similar local authorities. Wirral is one of the best places in the country for promoting the independence of adults through rehabilitation/intermediate care. It is also one of the lowest spending authorities nationally on services like homecare. Challenges will remain nationally for adult's services with a growing ageing population and the anticipated future funding reductions for councils.
3. Wirral is experiencing a challenging time on children's services. It is five years since Wirral had an Ofsted inspection so it is difficult to judge in-depth the quality of children's social care provision. For a number of years the trend on the number of looked after children the council has responsibility for has remained at a high level compared to other Metropolitan local authorities. It currently has 672 looked after children and has experienced similar levels for the past 2-3 years. In other areas of children's social care there are positive indicators. For example, the percentage of

children subject to a second child protection plan is lower than the average for other Metropolitan authorities (11.7%, compared to an average of 15.7% for Metropolitan councils). Performance in some areas is good, but more work is needed consistently across children's services. This includes managing the 'front door' for children's social care with partner agencies to manage demand for services. As a result, children's services are a risk and this might affect the transition to the Wirral Plan if significant improvement is deemed necessary and needs to be supported by investment.

4. Educational attainment in Wirral is good overall. The trend on GCSE attainment has been above the national average for many years. 61.2% of students gained 5 GCSEs (A*-C) in 2015. The borough has good FE and HE provision. There is also evidence that the work of these institutions is being complemented by work-based training and development to equip local people with the right skills to enter the local job market. The Maritime & Engineering College at Cammell Laird being just one good example of this.
5. The performance of the council's 'clean and green' services has positives and areas which need further improvement. Wirral has considerable civic pride in its large number of parks and green spaces, including the renowned Birkenhead Park. The council's spend on waste management and street cleansing is below the average for Metropolitan councils, demonstrating generally good value for money. The number of fly tipping incidents has been reducing. The level of waste recycled is in line with other similar councils. However, parks and open spaces is a relatively high spending area (compared to other authorities). Wirral is the tenth highest spending council in the country for its collective spend on sport, culture and parks. This is an area which would benefit from more in-depth examination by the council and comparison with the performance, value for money and practice of other authorities in order to provide better value for money.
6. The borough's performance on health outcomes is an area all partner organisations recognise as a challenge. Life expectancy varies by 12 years between the best and worst outcome areas in the Wirral. Although Wirral is a 'Vanguard' area for health, improving public health in specific parts of the borough is a major challenge – recognised by both the CCG and the council. The new Wirral Plan pledges are seeking to address significant improvements in this area.

Detailed findings

The council's capacity to deliver the five-year Wirral Plan

7. During 2015 the council has begun to set out a new approach to its longer-term aspirations for Wirral. This is focused around the Wirral Plan 2020. The Plan sets out twenty 'pledges' for the council and its public sector partner agencies to deliver on over the next five years. The Plan is a work in progress. The council has recently published a Delivery Plan: Phase 1 which sits behind the Wirral Plan. There is still considerable work to develop the detailed programme which will ensure a disciplined implementation. The council has identified six building blocks which will enable the Wirral Plan to be delivered effectively. The peer team used these six areas,

summarised in the diagram below, to examine the council's capacity to deliver the Plan.



Financial strategies

8. In October 2015 the council had an LGA Financial Review. This explored the detailed financial position of the council and examined its approach to future financial viability. In overview, the council has a revenue budget of £259.2m in 2015/16. It has a track record of delivering significant savings in the past, although not always in line with the agreed budget framework. It has a number of key strengths it can build on in terms of financial management. There is now greater member involvement and steer on key budget issues.
9. However, the council is facing a larger savings challenge than some other authorities. On its own current projections the council will need to save £126m over the next five financial years and the 2015 Government Spending Review may well introduce further challenges. In past years the council has been overspending in some directorate revenue budgets and using its reserves to balance the revenue budget. This issue was reflected in the previous peer challenge in 2012 and the council needs to develop the 2016/17 budget and not divert from it. It is currently anticipating a £9.2m slippage on this year's savings target of £38m. The council needs to quicken the pace of implementation on major projects intended to deliver savings.
10. The council faces a key financial tension – balancing its short term budget for 2016/17, whilst developing a programme for delivering the bold ambitions for the longer-term expressed in the new Wirral Plan. It's important that members lead the budget process strategically and in the short term members need to feel assured that savings proposals for 2016/17 reflect priorities, are robustly risk assessed and may want to consider asking officers to seek new savings proposals for this year to

address the anticipated slippage in this year's savings plan. The council can then make steady progress towards a 'pledge driven' budget over the following couple of years. As the Wirral Plan is a Plan for the all of its public sector partners, not a council plan, the challenge will then be to align the financial strategies of partner agencies with the Wirral Plan. The council will also need to grapple with a number of high spending areas including; children's social care, leisure and parks/open spaces.

11. There are some great opportunities to take a more commercial approach. This is currently significantly underdeveloped in Wirral. Whilst it will not be appropriate for every service area, overall a more commercial approach will help as part of the work to bridge the funding gap. Some initial ideas on commercial opportunities were summarised in the financial review report and there are a range of potential ideas within service areas. From a leadership perspective this might include designating a senior officer and member with responsibility for commercialism.

Political leadership

12. The council identified political leadership as one of its key building blocks in delivering the Wirral Plan. The peer team explored leadership in a wider sense, including; political and managerial leadership and the role of governance. There has been stable political leadership since 2012, and there is widespread confidence amongst elected members and officers in the Leader's style and approach. The Leader's role as Chair of the Merseyside City Region is seen as recognition of the important role that the Wirral is playing in the development of the city region.
13. The council appointed a new Chief Executive in Spring 2015. The considered approach of the Chief Executive in shaping the vision of the organisation is appreciated across all sectors. He has been described as 'a breath of fresh air' and his approach is building confidence. He has played a key role in the development of the Wirral Plan.
14. There is an acknowledgement that Wirral is a member-led local authority and that members and officers work well together. Gaining cross party and officer ownership of the Plan and the 20 pledges is an important achievement. The senior operational managers who we have met are capable and energised, although frustrated at what they perceive to be the relatively slow pace of change. This view is shared by the political leadership of the council.
15. Senior managers are hopeful that the Wirral Plan will help to make the future work of the Wirral Partnership (including the council) 'personality proof' and not reliant on individual leaders for delivery. Organisational development needs to be tuned to deliver the transformation agenda. The Chief Executive needs to continue to engage with politicians, officers and external partners of the council. However, the Senior Leadership Team is not currently giving adequate corporate leadership and this needs to be much stronger if the Plan is to be delivered effectively. More connected leadership is needed from the top to the bottom of the organisation. The council must have the senior officer leadership resource to create capacity to deliver change. The peer team also had a concern at the current high use of consultants and interims who are providing temporary specialist support. This is not a concern about

consultants/interims per se, but an observation about their number and duration. The council should continue to 'invest to save' – efficiently and effectively – using the right external help for specific time-limited purposes, but look to reduce the overall number of longer-term interims in key roles. The council needs to move quickly to a new organisational shape to support the Chief Executive, including providing the right kind of strategic level capacity.

16. The council's scrutiny function has been remodelled with the establishment of four Policy & Performance Committees. Members of these committees would welcome the opportunity to play a role in developing and delivering the pledges as the detail of the Delivery Plan becomes clearer. The delivery of the Wirral Plan and pledges and the role of scrutiny may be enhanced in the longer term by offering opposition members a leadership role on the Policy & Performance Committees.

The Wirral Partnership

17. There is a clear commitment from Wirral's senior level partner agencies to deliver on the Wirral Plan pledges. There is palpable enthusiasm from the top level representatives of the council, the CCG, Merseyside Police, Wirral Metropolitan College, Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, the Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Community Action Wirral to make the Plan work. The Partnership has moved swiftly to develop and agree the twenty pledges.
18. There is much good work already underway on which the Partnership can build. To give a feel for this, it includes;
 - closer working on education/training (between the College and the Chamber)
 - integrating health and care commissioning (between the CCG and council)
 - joint community projects (between voluntary organisations and the Fire & Rescue Service)
 - joint work on tackling community safety and anti-social behaviour (between the Police and the council)
 - good collective work on key regeneration projects, such as the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone and the international golf resort proposal
19. There are two key immediate challenges for the Partnership. The first is to ensure the strategic aspirations expressed in the pledges are translated into implementation by senior officers in all the agencies. There appears to be a good sense of commitment within the council by senior officers, but it will be important to hold all agencies' senior officers to account for delivery. There are currently mixed messages – some keen to advance – others less so. There may be a temptation from some officers throughout to slow the pace of implementation particularly if they involve radical changes to the delivery model for specific services they directly manage. Officers at the top level in the council need to take stronger collective responsibility for translating the pledges into clear joined up action within the organisation. There is a particular need to be clear on the specific projects that will begin to help deliver the pledges over the next 12-18 months.

20. The second key challenge will be for the agencies to engage their workforces in the detail of the delivery plan as it is developed. The pace of implementation is currently good, but it will be important to try and ensure 'buy in' from staff in all the agencies and create opportunities to empower staff to implement the changes to service delivery in the way which works best on the ground (whilst still keeping clear sight of what is intended in each pledge area). Some key agencies are not currently signed up to the Wirral Plan, for example, Magenta Living – a very large Wirral housing association. The partners run a risk in delivering the pledges if some large local agencies cannot be influenced to help on delivery.
21. The council is exploring what services will be delivered on different 'footprints' before proceeding on implementing the operating model. This is complicated. Some services are likely to be delivered in greater collaboration with Wirral partner agencies (through the Wirral Partnership), some pan-Merseyside with public agencies across the city region and some may be delivered outside Wirral with partners in Cheshire or further afield. There is no one model for future service delivery. There have already been some exploratory plans to integrate some specialist health/social care services across Merseyside. This seems appropriate due to the specific and complex nature of service users for these functions. The peer team did not have the time within the challenge to explore this issue in any depth, but would simply recommend the council keeps its options open to delivering services on these different 'footprints', fully exploring the potential benefits and risks associated with moving to a new operating model for specific services. If the council decides a specific proposal for sharing or collaborating on service delivery is not likely to work to Wirral's benefit it needs to make an early decision rather than prolonging explorations and discussions.

Relationship with residents

22. The council and its partner agencies recognise that they want to form a different relationship with residents in the future. There is general recognition that relationships with local communities has been negatively impacted by the past challenges the council has had to deal with. The new relationship will be based on a clearer Wirral narrative, a greater ability to listen to resident's issues, making better use of the data and intelligence the council gathers across the Wirral and greater use of channels use as digital and social media.
23. The council has very recently completed an independent residents' survey for the first time in many years. We understand there have been over 1,200 responses. No results from the survey were yet available, but this will be an important source of intelligence with which to inform the shaping of the implementation of for the Wirral Plan as well as providing a clearer view of how residents view the council. The council will need to address a specific challenge in its new approach: how it better manages the expectations of residents as public sector funding for services reduces considerably across the Wirral.
24. The council has four Constituency Committees across the Wirral. These are used by local members. They could play a useful role in identifying community groups and other providers who may wish to be considered as more services move to different operating models. There are already some examples of this, by working with some

community groups who have undertaken community asset transfers of facilities. The Constituency Committees can also play an important role in trying to build the resilience of local communities. This is likely to be important as all public agencies in the Wirral review their future level and type of service provision. Before services can move to new operating models, capacity needs to be built in local communities who will be directly affected, so they can manage low levels calls on service themselves in the future, and other types of service delivery can focus on the most vulnerable.

New Operating Model

25. The Wirral Plan is focused on future services being provided through a range of operating models, including; direct delivery by the council, in partnership with other organisations and commissioning others to deliver better outcomes. There is some activity already underway which illustrates how some of these operating models may work. For example, a range of specialist adult care services are now being commissioned and delivered in partnership with the NHS and some community asset transfers have been undertaken to community groups.
26. The existence of a Transformation Team and Fund presents the opportunity for real change within the organisation. The £12m fund has not been used to its full potential and there are more opportunities to design 'invest to save' projects to help deliver the transformation and generate savings. The council needs a corporate transformation function of a sufficient strength to deliver a challenging change agenda. The current function has not been able to drive change effectively or with sufficient pace. Linked to this there is a need for a planned methodology which is clearly programme managed. Some key corporate functions need to be better attuned to supporting the implementation of service delivery changes, including HR/OD which needs to develop a clear workforce strategy that reflects the intended direction of travel with the future operating model.
27. The Wirral Partnership has aspirations to make more holistic use of the public estate in the Wirral. The partners estimate the public estate could be worth in the region of £2bn. The council has an asset portfolio in the region of £650m. Whilst it has a current Asset Management Plan, this needs further development to ensure the council can use its assets to help make a significant contribution to the overall savings targets and make a stronger contribution to delivering the pledges. The council has engaged Local Partnerships to help it begin to look at this process. This needs to move at pace, identifying how buildings will be shared more extensively, how some services no longer need to be 'building based', and how some of the asset portfolio can be disposed of to generate greater capital receipts.
28. Whilst the peer team recognises the attachment some communities and elected members have to specific buildings, the council needs to acknowledge that outcomes can be delivered in a variety of ways and its property portfolio in 2020 needs to be significantly smaller overall and more assets shared with other agencies. More joined up conversations on the public estate need to be translated through to concrete plans quickly. Part of this improvement could include a joint (or virtual) single Asset/Property Team for Wirral across the public estate. A number of councils have

made good progress on rationalising their use of assets, either under the One Public Estate Programme or through work they have undertaken themselves. Wirral is likely to benefit from examining the work of councils like York and Barnsley who have both significantly rationalised their building assets.

29. The council have recognised that their work on the digital agenda is another key part of its move to different operating models. The council's Transaction Centre is being delivered with considerable determination, although all transaction channels have yet to be consolidated within this unit. The council's work on 'digital' needs to enable a more flexible and agile approach to working as part of its overall organisational development work over the next couple of years. A number of councils have made good progress on the digital agenda including Leeds (on its Data Mill), Kent County Council (on taking an integrated approach to data to inform commissioning), Cheshire (integrating care records) and Bristol (using integrated data on its Troubled Families work). Wirral is likely to benefit from examining the work of councils like these and others who have transforming services through their work on digital.

Devolution

30. At the time the peer team were on-site the Liverpool City Region were aiming to get each of the authorities to approve its 'devolution deal' agreed in principle with the Government. The proposal is being considered by each authority and looked likely to be approved. There is a great desire to work in an integrated way across the city region. Wirral is demonstrating commitment to the city region work through its Chair, and has gained the confidence of other partners. As outlined, earlier there have been some exploratory plans to integrate some specific health/social care services across Merseyside. This seems appropriate due to the specific and complex nature of service users for these functions. There is now an opportunity for all the authorities working together to be ambitious and use the city region as the means of agreeing practical collaborations.

The council's approach to partnership working

31. The council's strategic partnership working takes place within the Wirral Partnership, and this was explored earlier in this report. There are a very wide range of operational partnerships. There are some excellent examples of partnership working within the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Team. The Public Health function is seen as innovative, supportive and a good partner internally and externally. Wirral is also a 'Vanguard' area for health and social care commissioning. The community and voluntary sector in Wirral is mature and understands the asset-based approach to community development proposed in the new operating model.
32. However, there is very limited collaboration between some council back-office functions such as audit and human resources between the council and the CCG. There are differing views about the health and social care integration timetable and no evidence of a written plan or timeline to achieve full integration with pooled budgets. Community, business and trade union partners are anxious to be kept informed of the development of the new operating model and future transformation

plans to deliver the 20 pledges. There is evidence of community involvement in the council's budget processes, although more limited evidence that this has influenced decision-making.

33. Partnerships supporting growth and regeneration projects will play a major part in the future economic success of the Wirral. The peer team received very positive feedback from the local businesses it engaged with, including the Chamber of Commerce. The council have built positive links with the Chamber and there are a range of practical regeneration projects they can work in partnership on. To accelerate the partnership with the business sector, the council needs to provide greater clarity around a growth plan, a Birkenhead masterplan and a waterfront strategy.
34. There needs to be a much bolder approach to developing and sharing insight and intelligence across the partner agencies, and using that to drive a more comprehensive commissioning approach. The council is considering how it can make more coherent use of its own insight and data and there are opportunities to extend this across the partner agencies. There is also an opportunity for a more co-ordinated and cost-effective approach to community engagement amongst the Wirral Partnership members. This might extend to a more joined up approach to communications and campaign activities.

New models for service delivery

35. The council is keen to better understand other service delivery models and new ways of working. The reports has already explored issues like greater commercialism, channel shift and greater community ownership of assets or delivery of services. There is considerable strength within the organisation at service manager level and all of those the peer team saw are enthusiastic to take forward new ways of working, although they are frustrated by some internal barriers to achieving change.
36. The new operating model appears to be an appropriate response to the challenges facing the council. There are some clear examples of new delivery models being implemented such as Edsentials (traded services to schools) and Evolutions (day care delivery). The possibility of wider stakeholder ownership of these should be explored, for example, wider services which could be traded to local schools. The council's 'clean and green' services demonstrate excellent commitment to partnership working and delivering new models of working to reduce costs, for example, by transferring some work to 'Friends' groups. There are a number of areas where the council is exploring alternative delivery models in partnership which shows the council is thinking differently in order to make a stronger impact.
37. However, the council's key corporate services are not consistently focussed on helping to deliver new models of working. Services like transactional human resources, organisational development, asset management, legal and property are too often ponderous, risk averse (rather than risk aware), not sufficiently enabling or quick enough to respond as change moves at pace.

38. Effective work with residents and staff will be important in enabling the new models of working to be implemented effectively. Delivering significant change must take account of some instances of low staff morale generated by the perception of indiscriminate universal cuts in service provision in recent years. Continued communication is needed to explain proposed new models to the public, some of which could well be perceived by them to be radical due to the long history the council has of protecting services. Lessons should be drawn from, for example, the establishment of 'Evolutions' to support a solid business case and sound programme/project management approach to future service delivery changes to avoid unnecessary cost burdens.
39. The move to new ways of working will need to be driven by a much more powerful Senior Leadership Team to collectively own and drive transformation. It will need a strong corporate team supported by a well-balanced transformation support/delivery unit.

Finally, we would like to thank colleagues and members at Wirral, especially Lucy Barrow, for their support in the lead up to the challenge and during the challenge itself. The council supported the process very well.

Further on-going support is available through the Local Government Association's Principal Advisor, Gill Taylor (email: gill.taylor@local.gov.uk, tel: 0778 9512173). The LGA is keen to follow up its corporate peer challenges in a more structured way. Gill will liaise with the authority in the coming months to explore specific issues the council may wish to be supported on and to track progress on the key issues explored in this report.

Report contact

Neil Shaw
Programme Manager
Local Government Association
email: neil.shaw@local.gov.uk

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: ACTION PLAN

AREA	PEER TEAM FEEDBACK	ACTION	BY WHO	BY WHEN	STATUS
New Operating Model Page 31	<p>The model is appropriate. Move quickly to a new organisational shape to support the Chief Executive and consider communications and engagement of the model.</p> <p>The council needs a decent corporate transformation function with a planned methodology and programme management approach.</p> <p>Workforce strategy required in partnership which develops connected leadership from the top to the bottom of the organisation.</p> <p>Develop leadership resource to create capacity to deliver change.</p>	<p><u>Immediate Action</u></p> <p>Identify immediate resource to strengthen transformation function and develop programme methodology and approach.</p>	CEX / Head of Human Resources	March 16	Green
		<p>Identify immediate resource to develop workforce development capacity that fully aligns to a new transformation programme.</p> <p>Identify the commercial skills, capability and capacity required in key posts to develop the Council's approach to commercialism.</p> <p>Complete review of short term capacity gaps in the Council's corporate functions and immediate resource requirements.</p> <p><u>Long Term Action</u></p> <p>Implement New Operating Model to create the following functions and strengthen organisational capability and capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategic hub - business management functions - delivery vehicles <p>Review leadership training and development programme to create leadership capability within the organisation and with partners.</p> <p>Review and refresh the organisational values and behaviours to ensure they are clear and visible and ensure they are launched as part of the new operating model.</p>			

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: ACTION PLAN

AREA	PEER TEAM FEEDBACK	ACTION	BY WHO	BY WHEN	STATUS
		<p>Develop approach to Wirral's digital agenda and consider a more flexible and agile approach to working.</p> <p>Develop commercial skills training approach for staff.</p> <p>Review business processes to ensure they are appropriate to support service delivery.</p>			
<p>Page 32</p> <p>Financial Strategies</p>	<p>Make the transition from a short term budget to a more 'pledge driven' budget.</p> <p>Develop the read across between the strategic intent and the delivery models.</p> <p>Develop the 2016/17 budget and make steady progress towards a 'pledge driven' budget.</p> <p>Develop the Council's commercial approach.</p> <p>Align the financial strategies of partner agencies with the Wirral Plan.</p>	<p><u>Immediate Action</u> Conclude current round of budget planning by December 2015 for consultation and approval by Council in March 2016.</p> <p>Accountability Statements to be issued to responsible officers at start of each financial year. This process will include signing for budgets by budget holder.</p> <p><u>Long Term Action</u> Develop future business planning approach with Chief Officers for 1 year business plans in place for each functional area aligned to the new delivery vehicles.</p> <p>Commence 2017-18 and future years budget planning process in March 2016 which is fully aligned to partner plans and the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges.</p>	<p>SLT / Chief Officer Group</p>	<p>March 16</p> <p>June 16</p>	<p>Green</p>

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE: ACTION PLAN

AREA	PEER TEAM FEEDBACK	ACTION	BY WHO	BY WHEN	STATUS
Relationship with residents	<p>Consider the council's role with its citizen and manage residents' expectations on services due to funding reductions.</p> <p>Take a partnership approach to engagement and communications. Explore the potential to develop a joined up communications function.</p> <p>Build on the role of ward members as community advocates and leaders.</p>	<p>Develop approach to communications to encourage a new relationship with residents with partners which focusses on behaviour change, co-production and co-design with residents and the Council's leadership role.</p>	<p>Senior Manager: Communications and Marketing</p>	<p>June 16</p>	<p>Green</p>
Wirral Partnership	<p>Consider the key priorities and projects for the next 12-18 months.</p> <p>Identify the appropriate sequencing and interdependencies.</p>	<p>Develop and implement partnership enabling projects including digital, assets and neighbourhood working approach.</p>	<p>SLT / Wirral Plan Partnership Delivery Group</p>	<p>June 2016</p>	<p>Green</p>
Devolution	<p>Utilise the Combined Authority as the means of agreeing practical collaborations</p>	<p><u>Immediate Action</u> Identify the immediate organisational resources required to deliver the agreed devolution deal.</p> <p><u>Long Term Action</u> Identify the long term resources required to represent Wirral's contribution to the implementation of the devolution deal.</p>	<p>CEX</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>May 16</p>	<p>Green</p>

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**Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, 23 March 2016**

REPORT TITLE:	2015/16 QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the Council's Quarter 3 (October to December) 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 number 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.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

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

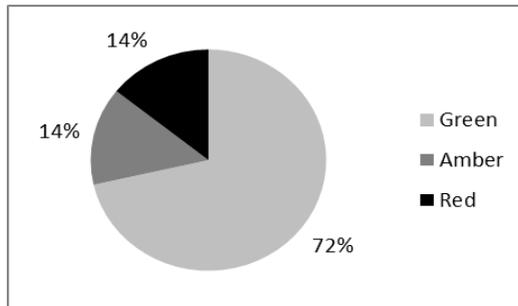
2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The report follows the standard format for Corporate Plan performance reporting in line with the 2015/16 reporting cycle.

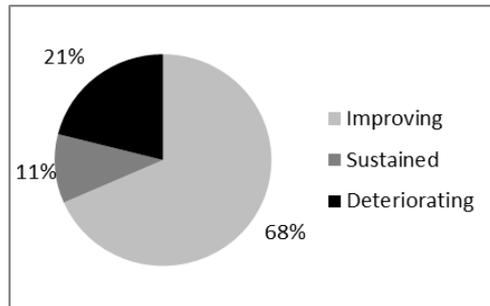
3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 21 reportable indicators, 15 are rated Green, 3 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, 13 are improving, 4 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

The report is provided for information and there are no direct equality implications as a result of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Michael Callon*
Team Leader – Performance and Scrutiny
telephone: (0151) 691 8379
email: michaelcallon@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - 2015/16 QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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APPENDIX 1 - 2015/16 QUARTER 3 CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	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%	95.00%	Apr-Dec	Green	93.5%	↔	
RECP03	Number of new affordable homes	250	150	230	Apr-Dec	Green	250	↔	
RECP04	Number of adaptations completed	2000	1500	1995	Apr-Dec	Green	2000	↑	
RECP05	Number of interventions to improve private rented sector properties	400	300	759	Apr-Dec	Green	900	↑	<i>Over-performance is due to initial implementation of additional Selective Licensing and Healthy Homes activity and more staff contributing to this output, the year-end forecast has been revised to reflect this.</i>
RECP06	Increase the number of jobs created and safeguarded via Invest Wirral	975	475	655	Apr-Dec	Green	975	↑	<i>Performance during 2015/16 has consistently achieved or exceeded trajectory figures and cannot be readily compared to performance progress from this time last year because of the unusually high volume of Regional Growth Fund (RGF) Grant Applications awarded. Current performance remains on track to meet or exceed the 2015/16 year-end target.</i>
RECP07	Gross Value Added per head of population	£13,213	£13,213	£13,589	2014	Green	£13,589	↑	<i>This data is annual for 2014 and was released in December 2015. Wirral's new GVA per head figure has outperformed the target by 2.8%.</i>

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
RECP08	Percentage of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits (economic in-activity)	13.6%	14.1%	13.1%	Apr-Jun	Green	13.4%	↑ Latest performance data represents Q2 2015/16 showing Wirral is performing at 13.1% and is on track to meet or exceed the end of year target for 2015/16. Q3 (July-Sept 2015) performance is not available until February 2016. Data for this indicator is reported on a calendar year basis.	
RECP18	Develop and deliver the Wirral Selective Licencing Scheme (WSLS)	100%	83%	83%	Apr-Dec	Green	100%		
Promoting Independence									
CSC003	Rate of Children in Need (CIN) per 10,000	350.0	369.0	388.8	Dec-15	Amber	399.7	↑ There has been a slight improvement in the rate of Children in Need since the previous quarter; however the high number of referrals into social care has had an impact. The following actions are being taken to improve this measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to ensuring the Threshold of Need is understood internally and externally and associated correct intervention is applied rigorously. A series of multi-agency workshops are scheduled to take place in March to increase understanding of roles, responsibilities and thresholds. • A review of Children In Need cases that have been in place longer than 6 months remains ongoing. • The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub screening process for domestic abuse referrals has been strengthened through a joint triage with social care and police. • Work continues to ensure we consistently utilise were appropriate the early help offer. This will ensure that cases are stepped down to early help with clear plans reducing the re-referral rate. 	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC008	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000	96.2	97.2	99.0	Dec-15	Green	99.8	↑ The number of children in care is high and we are seeking to safely reduce the overall number of children in care by strengthening and supporting families, this is the focus of the Children in Care Task Force. Children in care need support from a dedicated team of social workers who can provide stable and enduring relationships, so that all children in care can achieve permanence. The reorganisation of Specialist Services supports these aims through the Children in Care teams. Decisions for a child to become looked after are taken by senior managers to ensure consistency in the application of thresholds. Legal Advice and Action meetings ensure that assessments and plans are clear as to the reasons for the child becoming looked after. Wirral uses a number of options to secure permanence which are tracked to ensure drift and delay is minimised.	
ADCP07	Permanent Admissions of older people (65+) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	696.9	710.9	738.3	Apr- Dec	Green	780	↑	
ADCP11	Proportion of new requests for support resolved by advice and information	50%	50%	58%	Apr- Dec	Green	57%	↑	
ADCP16	Proportion of people who have received short term services to maximise independence requiring no ongoing support	75%	75%	74%	Apr- Dec	Green	75%	↓	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
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	710.8	Jan - Dec 15	Green	820	↑ <i>Performance continues on a positive downward trajectory, one that it has generally sustained for the last two years. Work is planned that will look at achieving a better understanding of the factors that may be driving this downward trend so that it can be sustained.</i>	
PHCP02	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check offered (PHOF 2.22i)	20%	10%	14.7%	April - Sept 15	Green	20%	↑ Numbers of invitations issued by practices is on target. Uptake of invitations offered however, is currently below target (although similar to C&M average) and improving performance for this programme continues to be a challenge. Factors that are likely to have contributed to this are as follows: - Data quality: All but 2 practices have now switched over to EMIS (data holding), this has increased the data quality and simplified data collection. - GP Confidence in NHS Health Check programme: Core group of practices remain unconvinced as to its value Actions taken to address performance issues update: - Point of Care testing pilot has now been completed and data is currently being analysed - Training for frontline staff to be revamped during February and March will take into account any changes as directed by Public Health England - Re-issuing comparative GP performance profiles - All publicity materials have now been distributed. A video will be shown in various settings, including screens in GP practices, dentists etc.	
PHCP03	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check take up (PHOF 2.22ii)	55%	55%	30.6%	April - Sept 15	Red	55%	↑	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
PHCP04	Proportion of opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	10%	10%	8.6%	Jun 14-May 15 (completions) June 14 - Nov 15 (re-presentations)	Amber	10%	↓ The reporting period now includes the data from the first 4 months of the new service when the system went through considerable re-organisation and mobilisation, resulting in some major disruption, with a consequence impact on performance. Analysis of the performance data for this period does show a reduction in the numbers completing treatment so it has been anticipated that, as this worked through the monitoring system it would be reflected in a drop in performance. A drop in performance has now continued for some months. However this is the 3rd month when performance has levelled out so at this time this drop off has not been substantial. Commissioners and provider are monitoring these trends closely, and there are some encouraging indications that performance will begin on an upward trajectory over the next 3 or 4 months. The current Wirral performance is higher than the national average of 7.3% (currently in the Top Quartile range for Comparator Local Authority's).	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
PHCP05	Proportion of non-opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	53%	53%	41.8%	Jun 14-May 15 (completions) June 14 - Nov 15 (re-presentations)	Amber	53%	↓ The performance of this indicator has shown a further reduction since the previous month. Performance has been interrogated at contract review meetings (see above) and although the reduction has been noted by both commissioner and provider, analysis of factors influencing this performance provide cause for some confidence that this will now level out and begin to move to an upward trajectory. This will continue to be monitored closely but still remains above the national average of 38.7%. (currently in the top quartile range for comparator Local Authorities). As above, this performance will continue to be affected by transitional factors for several more months.	
Transforming the Council									
TRCP02	Projected Delivery of Council budget savings	£29.273m	-	£21.125m	Apr 15 - Dec 15	Green	£29.273m	N/A	
TRCP03	Performance Appraisals completed by September 2015	80%	80%	51%	Apr 15 - Sep 15	Red	51%	↑ This PI has a target completion date of September, therefore the 2015/16 out turn of 51% remains, however as at 3 February 2016 performance appraisals have been completed for 76% of all staff and 89% of managers. Performance against this measure is being reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team in advance of the 2016 appraisals cycle.	

2015-16 Corporate Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Q3 2015/16				Year End Forecast	DoT	Corrective Actions (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
TRCP04	Sickness Absence: The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)	9.75	6.7	7.46	Apr 15 - Nov 15	Red	11.77	↓ It is forecast that the year-end sickness absence will be 2.02 days above the 9.75 day target. This is a reduction from the Q2 year-end forecast of 12.06 days. 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	

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**Policy and Performance - Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, 23 March 2016**

REPORT TITLE:	2015/16 QUARTER 3 CAPITAL & REVENUE FINANCIAL MONITOR REPORTS
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Coordinating Committee with the Quarter 3 Capital and Revenue Financial Monitoring details, as reported to Cabinet on 22 February 2016. This is to enable Coordinating Committee to scrutinise progress against the 2015/16 capital and revenue budgets and highlight any areas for further clarification. The Capital and Revenue 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 3 Capital and Revenue Monitoring Reports that went to Cabinet on 22 February 2016. These are included as follows:

- Cabinet Report 22/02/16 Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 3
- Cabinet Report 22/02/16 Revenue Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 3

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none directly arising from this report. The information contained within the appendices cover the financial position of the Council as at the close of quarter three. These are monitoring update reports which are essentially for noting.

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

The reports are provided for information and there are no direct equalities implications as a result of this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: *Michael Callon*
Team Leader – Performance and Scrutiny
telephone: (0151) 691 8379
email: michaelcallon@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

- Cabinet Report 22/02/16 Capital Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 3
- Cabinet Report 22/02/16 Revenue Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 3

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

**CABINET
22 FEBRUARY 2016**

**CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16
QUARTER 3 (TO DECEMBER 2015)**

Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:

‘It is important that we are robust and transparent in how we manage all Council expenditure. This report demonstrates that we have made good progress on our capital programme for the current year, and are taking sensible and pragmatic steps to make best use of resources.’

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the progress in delivering the Capital Programme 2015/16 at the end of December 2015. The report recommends that Cabinet agrees the rephasing of the 2015/16 Capital Programme down to £47.1 million and reports expenditure to date of £26.2 million.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decisions in this report are key decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet is asked to note the spend to date at Month 9 of £26.2 million, with 75% of the financial year having elapsed;

That Cabinet is asked to agree and refer to Council the revised Capital Programme of £46.9 million (Table 1) which includes the return of the £0.4 million Liverpool City Region Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package grant to Merseytravel.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 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.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

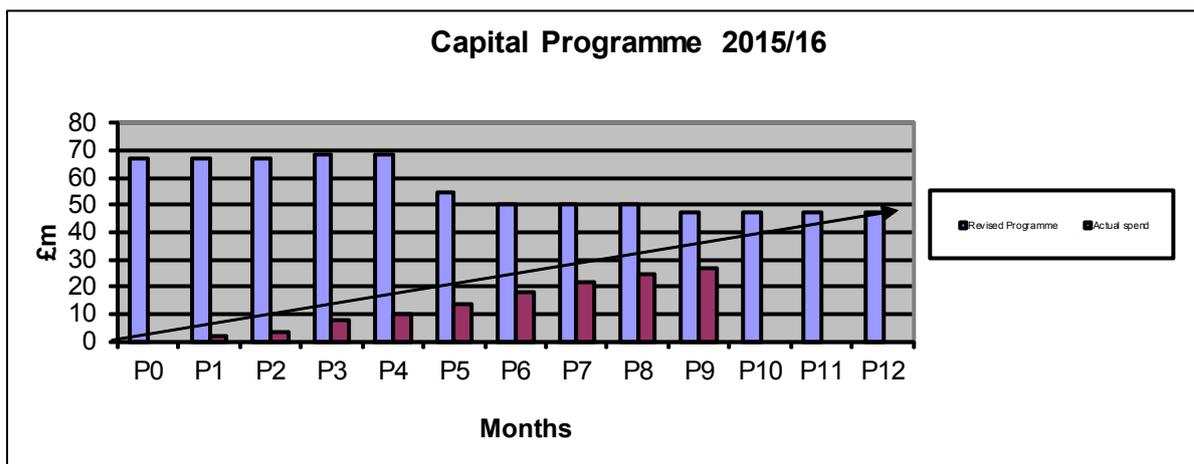
2.1 No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OVERALL POSITION AT END OF DECEMBER 2015

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

Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit



ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2015/16

3.2 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. 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 31 December 2015

	Capital Strategy	Revisions Since Budget Cabinet	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend December 2015
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Transformation Resources	10,556	-3,258	7,298	3,663
Families – Children	8,517	2,287	10,804	5,404
Families – Adults	8,263	-5,386	2,877	649
Families – Sport & Rec	1,865	599	2,464	1,531
R&E– Env & Regulation	12,633	-1,089	11,544	7,256
R&E– Hsg & Comm Safety	6,412	-984	5,428	2,319
R& E – Regeneration	1,808	4,694	6,502	5,344
Total expenditure	50,054	-3,137	46,917	26,166

- 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 and are reflected in Table 1. The variances which have arisen since September 2015 are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Variations to the 2015/16 Programme

Scheme	£000
Transformation & Resources	
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy – schemes proceeding ahead of schedule	400
Demolition of Foxfield school - reprofiled	-30
Families & Wellbeing – Sport & Recreation	
Guinea Gap football pitches and West Kirby fitness suite both complete – reduced requirement	-211
Families & Wellbeing – Adults	
Girtrell Court – provisionally deferred to 2016/17. Depends on the outcome of savings option, may be removed from the programme	-2,000
Integrated I.T. – software development, equipment for self-assessments, extension of Liquid logic and support for hospital discharges now planned for 2016/17	-440
Reg & Env – Environment & Regulation	
Cemetery extensions and improvements – reprofiled	-100
West Kirby Flood alleviation - reprofiled	-50
Road Safety – reprofiled. Budget controlled by constituency	-97

committees and schemes yet to be decided.	
Active Travel – as above	-78
Bridges – reprofiled. Combination of awaiting information from Network Rail re bridge strengthening works and lack of in house resources	-261
Transport for Growth – reprofiled. Budget controlled by constituency committees and schemes yet to be decided (£100,000). Various other schemes are either in the development stage or have been objected to (£162,000).	-262
Coast Protection – reprofiling. Time constraints service delivery.	-94
Reg & Env – Regeneration	
LEP Regional Growth Fund – payment of further grant matched by additional grant receipt	178
New Brighton – additional slippage identified	140
Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements – scheme withdrawn following public consultation	-360
Overall variation since Quarter 2	-3,265

3.4 Transformation and Resources

Solar Campus - work is complete;
 South Annexe - building works are almost complete;
 North Annexe – any work will be put on hold for now depending on the outcome of the overall office rationalisation review;
 Old Market House – lease terms with Land Registry have been renegotiated.

Parks Rationalisation. The review of Parks and Open Spaces has been completed. This together with the outcome of public consultation regarding the budget proposals will partly determine the level of capital expenditure required

The Secretary of State for Education has requested further information to support the application for the disposal and change of use of the former Rock Ferry High School.

The I.T. development programme is focused on modernising the Council's I.T. capability. The move to Windows 7 and upgrade of pcs is largely complete although there may be some residual costs incurred. Further development includes upgrading servers and the Council e- mail system which is currently in progress. Negotiations are also under way regarding the development and

location of a data centre to provide enhanced coverage and reduce IT system and data risks.

3.5 Families and Wellbeing - Children

Fender Primary School – completion of a 2 classroom and resource extension. Elleray Park Special School – works on the four new classroom extension and welfare facilities were completed in October. Devonshire Park – a range of projects had been undertaken to support the increase in pupil numbers. The contract for the classroom extensions at Stanley School has been awarded (£0.590m); alterations at Lingham Primary (£0.130m) have commenced; extension at Town Lane Infants (£0.5m) is on hold pending a feasibility study for new classrooms and dining hall.

3.6 Families and Wellbeing - Adults

The project at Girtrell Court has been deferred. The scheme is intended to refurbish and reuse as a residential unit for a variety of Learning Disability services. The outcome of the public consultation regarding the savings options will dictate whether this continues to be included in any future capital programme.

Transformation of Day Services is ongoing. The current year's programme includes £0.615 million which will help to support Wirral Evolutions to provide centres of excellence.

Community Intermediate Care Service - works on a dedicated integrated care facility to ensure admission avoidance is progressing.

3.7 Families and Wellbeing – Sport and Recreation

The new fitness suite at Guinea Gap is still seeing an increase in usage. Membership at West Kirby Leisure Centre has increased following the improvements to the fitness suite there.

Improvements at West Kirby Marine Lake have commenced.

3.8 Regeneration and Environment – Environment and Regulation

In respect of West Kirby Flood Alleviation the business case has been submitted to the Environment Agency. Approval to commence the scheme is still awaited and anticipated to be primarily in 2016/17.

The major areas of expenditure to date are in respect of highways and bridges with expenditure exceeding £4.7 million. The most significant schemes are Kings Parade, Spital Road, North Wallasey Approach Road, Rake Lane, micro asphaltting and Bidston Bypass bridge.

The LED Street Lighting scheme is well under way with expenditure of £1.4 million incurred by 31 December with a further £1.8 million to be expended in this phase.

3.9 Regeneration and Environment – Housing

£1.3 million of grant aid has been provided for the provision of essential aids and adaptations giving disabled people better freedom of movement in and around their homes

3.10 Regeneration and Environment – Regeneration

Over £5.2 million Regional Growth Fund and business investment grants have been allocated to date which is helping to create jobs and encourage growth and investment. Allocations include a grant of £1.2 million towards Redsun Development's overall £7 million investment to support the new Turbine Business Park which will provide an estimated 235 local jobs, with businesses operating from new units on the site. Capital and Centric Plc, have received £0.9 million with upwards of 50 jobs set to be created with the opening of a £2.5 million complex of new super-energy efficient offices and warehouses in Birkenhead.

Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements – the original proposal has been withdrawn following public consultation and the £0.4 million Liverpool City Region Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package grant will be returned. There are a series of projects being developed which will form part of a wider strategy for Birkenhead town Centre which will include improved linkage and developments within the Woodside area, Hind Street and the Europa Pools area. Any further proposals for Hamilton Square should they arise will fall within this strategy.

FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.11 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	14,964
Capital Receipts	12,693	8,621
Revenue and Reserves	537	572
Grants	17,734	22,760
Total Financing	50,054	46,917

- 3.12** Any reprofiling which reduces borrowing will produce one-off revenue savings. A permanent saving only occurs if schemes cease, otherwise the full budget will be required in 2016/17 when the re-profiled expenditure is incurred.

PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 3.13** 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.
- 3.14** 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 2020 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	14,964	12,725	0	27,689
Capital Receipts	8,621	13,339	2,414	24,374
Revenue / Reserves	572	1,004	66	1,642
Grants	22,760	16,527	13,135	52,422
Total Financing	46,917	43,595	15,615	106,127

For noting – 2017/18 has been amended to include £3.624 million indicative Schools Basic Need and Condition grants.

SUPPORTED AND UNSUPPORTED BORROWING AND THE REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSUPPORTED BORROWING

- 3.15** Based on the current cost, £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of approximately £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 9 there is a sum of £27.8 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	14,964	12,725	0	0
Cumulative	14,964	27,689	27,689	27,689
Annual Revenue repayment costs				
Cumulative	302	1,354	2,028	2,028

- 3.16** The re-profiling of the Capital Programme, the use of internal borrowing i.e. using the Councils cash flow balances rather than taking out external loans, 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.

CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION

- 3.17** 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	2,079	3,740
In - Receipts Assumption	2,400	15,000	10,500
Out - Funding assumption	-8,621	-13,339	-2,414
Closing Balance	2,079	3,740	11,826

- 3.18** Additional flexibilities relating to the use of future capital receipts has recently been announced by the DCLG. This may result in a re-assessment of the Authority's intended use of future receipts with a subsequent impact on the financing of future capital programmes.
- 3.19** In respect of major site disposals, the Council has entered a 16 week exclusivity period with the purchasers of both Acre Lane and the Manor Drive site. The application to the Secretary of State for Education for the disposal and change of use of the former Rock Ferry High School has been submitted. 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 reflect the best estimate of these.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The revised 2015/16 Capital Programme is £46.9 million and anticipated capital receipts remaining at the year-end £2.1 million.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been no specific consultation with regards to this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report

REPORT AUTHOR: Reg Huyton
Principal Accountant
telephone: 0151 666 3415
email: reghuyton@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16

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

Appendix 3 – Capital receipts 2015/16

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports presented to Cabinet previous report to Cabinet	Various
Capital Programme – Council	25 February 2014
Capital Programme – Council	24 February 2015

Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16

APPENDIX 1

Transformation & Resources	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	2,000	1,662	2,000	-	-	2,000
Fund to assist land assembly and re-sale	587	165	587	-	-	587
Cleveland St. Transport Depot	315	127	315	-	-	315
Park depots rationalisation	520	145	520	-	-	520
Energy efficiency Initiatives	596	360	596	-	-	596
Demolish Stanley Special & external renovation work	150	150	150	-	-	150
Demolish Foxfield	126	103	126	-	-	126
CCTV Cameras and other equipment	100	-	100	-	-	100
I.T. development	2,904	891	2,904	-	-	2,904
	7,298	3,663	7,298	-	-	7,298

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	1,050	971	850	-	200	1,050
School remodelling/additional classrooms (Primary Places)	2,050	347	1,800	-	250	2,050
Condition/Modernisation	4,458	2,643	-	-	4,458	4,458
Basic Need allocation	1,897	702	-	-	1,897	1,897
Children's centres	53	14	-	-	53	53
Aiming Higher	24	58	-	-	24	24
Youth Capital	149	-	98	-	51	149
Birkenhead High Girls Academy	80	159	-	69	11	80
Funding for 2 year olds	18	2	-	-	18	18
Universal Free School Meals	209	139	-	-	209	209
Somerville Mobile Replacement	366	262	366	-	-	366
Family Support Scheme	200	63	200	-	-	200
Wirral Youth Zone – the Hive	100	42	100	-	-	100
Stanley Special - additional classrooms, medical/hygiene provision	150	2	150	-	-	150
	10,804	5,404	3,564	69	7,171	10,804

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Families and Wellbeing - DASS						
Citizen and Provider Portal for Social and Health Services	617	-	-	-	617	617
Transformation of Day Service	615	185	-	-	615	615
Integrated IT	645	444	560	-	85	645
Community Intermediate Care Services	1,000	20	-	-	1,000	1,000
	2,877	649	560	-	2,317	2,877
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation						
West Kirby/Guinea Gap/Europa Pools	2,024	1,332	2,024	-	-	2,024
Refurb of Artificial Turf Pitch & perimeter fence repairs at the Tennis & Sports Centre	240	188	240	-	-	240
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated accommodation and service delivery	100	11	100	-	-	100
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	100	-	100	-	-	425
	2,464	1,531	2,464	-	-	2,464

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	60	45	60	-	-	60
Active Travel	107	68	107	-	-	107
Transportation	104	89	104	-	-	104
Bridges	1,305	1,159	467	-	838	1,305
Street Lighting	76	53	26	-	50	76
Highway Maintenance	3,935	3,547	1,400	-	2,535	3,935
Transport for Growth	1,436	323	-	-	1,436	1,436
Start Active, Play Active, Stay active	34	12	34	-	-	34
Wirral Way - widening and safety improvements	14	6	14	-	-	14
Cemetery Extensions and Improvements	71	18	71	-	-	71
Coast Protection	23	23	23	-	-	23
Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting)	3,162	1,430	3,162	-	-	3,162
Allotments	165	20	165	-	-	165
Parks Improvements	38	35	-	13	25	38
Parks vehicles replacement	684	428	684	-	-	684
West Kirby Flood Alleviation	50	-	-	50	-	50
Dock Bridges Replacement	280	-	280	-	-	280
	11,544	7,256	6,597	63	4,884	11,544

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	1,268	-	-	2,000	2,000
LIFT	2	3	2	-	-	2
Clearance	516	469	220	100	196	516
Home Improvement	420	244	270	150	-	420
Improvement for sale grants	180	-	-	180	-	180
Empty Property Interventions	160	58	150	10	-	160
New House Building Programme	1,500	277	1,500	-	-	1,500
Cluster of Empty Homes Fund	650	-	-	-	650	650
	5,428	2,319	2,142	440	2,846	5,428
Regeneration and Environment - Regeneration						
New Brighton	140	48	140			140
Other Regional Growth Fund Schemes	3,208	2,890	-	-	3,208	3,208
LEP Regional Growth Fund Schemes Targeted Assistance	2,265	2,265	-	-	2,265	2,265
Business Investment Grants	780	105	780	-	-	780
The Priory	69	36	-	-	69	69
Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements	40		40	-	-	40
	6,502	5,344	960	-	5,542	6,502
Total	46,917	26,166	23,585	572	22,760	46,917

Capital Programme 2016/17 and 2017/18

ANNEX 2

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Universal & Infrastructure		
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	1,619	250
Cleveland St Transport Depot	2,800	-
Demolish Bebington Town Hall/Liscard Municipal	378	-
Demolish former Rock Ferry High	395	-
Parks depot rationalisation	750	-
Demolish Foxfield	30	-
	5,972	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	3,086	2,794
Basic Need	1,414	830
Wirral Youth Zone – The Hive	2,400	-
Family Support	100	-
	9,185	4,374
Families and Wellbeing – DASS		
Community Intermediate Care Services	1,000	-
Pensby Wood day service remodelling	1,200	-
Extra Care Housing	2,000	-
LD Extra care Housing	3,000	-
Girtrell Court	2,000	-
Integrated I.T.	440	-
	9,640	-
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation		
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated Accommodation and service delivery	740	-
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	325	-
	1,065	-

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Regeneration and Environment - Environment & Regulation		
West Kirby Flood Alleviation	1,950	-
Road safety	97	-
Active travel	78	-
Bridges 261	-	-
Transport for Growth	262	-
Highway maintenance	3,060	2,938
Coast Protection	228	-
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	250	-
	10,016	7,748
 Regeneration and Environment - Housing & Community Safety		
Aids, Adaptations and DFGs	4,308	2,573
Clearance	1,324	-
Home Improvement	434	-
Empty Property Interventions	178	-
Cluster of Empty Homes	603	-
Housing Renewal	570	670
	7,417	3,243
 Regeneration and Environment - Regeneration		
Business Investment Grants	300	-
	300	-
 Total	43,595	15,615

Capital Receipts 2015/16**ANNEX 3**

	£000
Ex-HRA Magenta Housing Right to Buy	699
Ingleborough Road, Covenant	500
New Hall Farm	295
Empty Homes (various)	267
Plot 9 Tarran Industrial Estate sale of ground lease	30
Land at Belmont Road	500
Ashford Road (Family Support)	26
Total	2,317

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COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

**CABINET
22 FEBRUARY 2016**

**REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16
QUARTER 3 (TO DECEMBER 2015)**

Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:

“Robust and transparent management of the Council’s finance is a fundamental role; and one which in which we are demonstrating continuous improvement. This quarter three projection shows we have made major progress in delivering a stable budget through effective and rapid management.”

REPORT SUMMARY

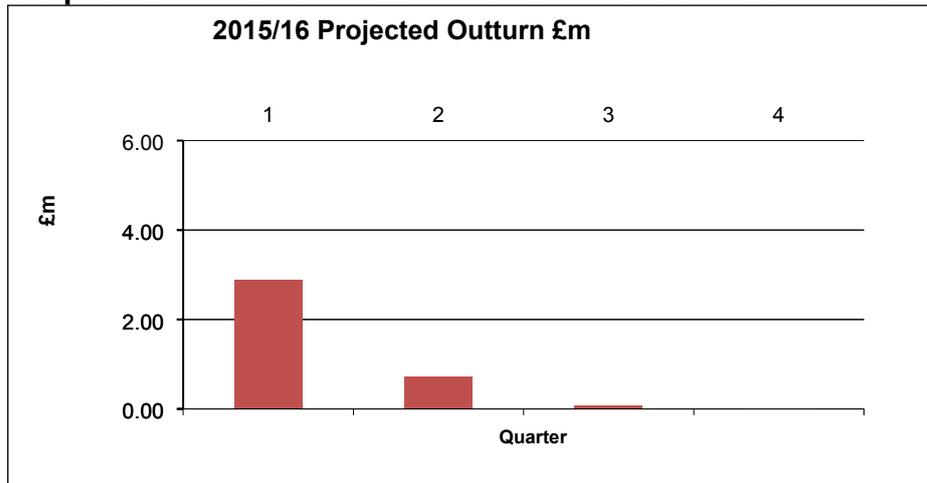
This report sets out the projected revenue position for 2015/16 as at the close of quarter 3 (31 December 2015). The projected outturn shows an improvement of £0.65 million on the quarter 2 position.

The latest position forecasts an £80,000 year end overspend (previous period £0.73 million). There has been further improvement in the quarter within both Regeneration & Environment and Transformation & Resources predicted underspends. The most significant positive variance in the quarter relates to Regeneration & Environment with an improvement of £1.08 million due to a combination of early achievement of 2016/17 savings and the release of budget set aside to match fund future grant delivery programmes not required this financial year.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The headline position is shown in the graph.

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



The decisions in this report are key decisions.

Recommendations

1. That the improvement of £0.65 million in the 2015/16 Revenue Budget position during quarter 3 be noted.
2. That Officers continue to identify actions and to take measures to reduce the projected overspend of £80,000 and to mitigate against any in-year funding reductions for Public Health and to replenish General Fund balances.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 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 regular reporting of the financial position.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 This is a monitoring report but any options to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

3.1.1 The 2015/16 Budget was agreed by Council on 24 February 2015 and is detailed in Annex 1; 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 3	Revised Net Budget
FWB - Adult Social Care	68,305	2,934	-173	71,066
FWB – Children & Young People,	67,964	4,816	-322	72,458
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	7,956	831	619	9,406
Regeneration & Environment	90,287	-795	-31	89,461
Transformation & Resources	31,947	-797	-110	31,040
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-7,267	2,611	17	-4,639
Net Cost of Services	259,192	9,600	0	268,792

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

3.1.2 The main budget movements in quarter three relate to the transfer of Adult Social Care Safeguarding to FWB Further Areas for reporting purposes and an adjustment within the support services budget. Both of these adjustments have no effect on the net cost of services.

3.2 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

3.2.1 The projected outturn position as at the end of December 2015, key issues emerging and Directorate updates are detailed in the following sections.

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

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
			Quarter 3		
FWB - Adult Social Care	71,066	73,478	2,412	R	2
FWB – Children & Young People	72,458	75,143	2,685	R	885
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	9,406	9,791	385	R	135
Regeneration & Environment	89,461	87,651	-1,810	Y	-1,080
Transformation & Resources	31,040	27,590	-3,450	Y	-450
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-4,656	-4,796	-140	G	-140
TOTAL	268,775	268,857	82		-648

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).

3.3 DIRECTORATE UPDATES

Families and Wellbeing: Adult Social Care

3.3.1 The forecast has been contained at a £2.4 million overspend which is mainly due to demand pressures within Community Care. A number of projects are being supported by the Improvement and Transformation Team and saving plans and profiles are continuously under review. Actions include:

- A programme of targeted reviews of care packages is being undertaken, including joint reviews with NHS colleagues.
- A new 'asset based' assessment framework has been implemented to determine need.
- The Liquid Logic case management system has been implemented and the support structure consultation agreed. This is streamlining working processes and increasing efficiency.

3.3.2 The transformation of day services has progressed. The Local Authority Day Services Company commenced on 1 December 2015.

Families and Wellbeing: Children and Young People

3.3.3 The forecast overspend has increased by £0.8 million to £2.69 million. This reduces to a net £2.55 million once £0.14 million additional Educational Services grant confirmed in November (shown within the Corporate Savings, growth and grant line) is factored in. The overspend position is mainly due to an increase within residential placements and increased costs following the re-profiling of agency staff.

3.3.4 Actions being taken to reduce the overspend include:-

- A detailed review of all residential care and independent fostering placements
- A weekly Access to Resources panel to consider and approve all new care packages for children.
- Assessments are being undertaken to determine 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. Agency numbers reviewed on a monthly basis.
- Implementation of new Children's Centres structures

3.3.5 The Youth Justice Board has confirmed that its grant has been reduced by £70,000 in year which has been mitigated through the non-filling of vacant posts. In the longer term a review of structures and where possible further integration across the wider youth provision will be utilised to match the resources available.

Families and Wellbeing: Other

3.3.6 Leisure Services: The forecast overspend is currently £305,000. This figure reflects slippage in budget savings. Savings plans are under review to identify mitigating action. There are ongoing discussions and plans with regard to savings in 2016/17.

3.3.7 Public Health: The Chancellor's proposals to reduce in year the Public Health Budget have been confirmed and there has been a grant reduction of £1.9m. This had been anticipated in commissioning decisions earlier in the year and has been managed from savings within retendered contracts.

3.3.8 Safeguarding: An overspend of £80,000 is forecast within this area relating to agency costs.

Regeneration and Environment

3.3.9 There has been a further underspend of £1.08 million this quarter. Within Waste & Environment there is a forecast underspend of £0.2 million. The annual inflation rate applied to the Biffa contract was less than originally budgeted for resulting in a small underspend. There is also some additional income from litter enforcement fines and which is reflected within the above underspend position.

3.3.10 Due to EDRF funding for the salaries within Business Support being extended until November 2015, there will be an underspend of approximately £0.1 million on employee budgets. There are also further potential underspends of £0.3 million from budgets set aside to match funding future grant delivery programmes. As yet these monies have not been committed.

3.3.11 In Housing there is also additional income from DFG fees and underspends from employee vacancies during the year. A further £0.26 million has been added to this underspend by removing a budget allocated as a 'revenue contribution to capital' and using in its place other available capital programme resources.

Transformation & Resources

3.3.12 The projected saving has increased by £0.45 million in quarter 3 to £3.45 million. The increase is mainly due to increased vacancies within the directorate. The major element of the existing underspend (£2.5 million of the overall total) is within Treasury Management. This is from the continued use of internal cash flow to delay external borrowing and projected slippage within the Capital Programme (which delivers one-off in year savings). Other savings have arisen from continued vacancies during the year across a number of service areas.

3.3.13 In respect of Treasury Management, external borrowing to fund capital investment has been delayed through temporarily funding the 'borrowing' using cash flows derived 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/cash flow is utilised and/or to lock into lower rates before interest rates rise. Economic data and Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee announcements now make interest rate increases in 2015/16 unlikely. Therefore the timing of borrowing has been delayed to produce increased in year and one-off Treasury Management savings.

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

3.4.1 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 Dec 15	To be Delivered
B - delivered	24	14,258	14,258	0
G – on track	19	3,756	2,671	1,085
A - concerns	18	11,249	4,196	7,053
R - high risk/ not achieved	1	10	0	10
Total at Dec 2015-16	62	29,273	21,125	8,148

3.4.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2015/16 savings. The

tracker reflects the reprofiling referred to above.

3.5 GROWTH

3.5.1 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.

3.5.2 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.

3.6 INCOME AND DEBT

3.6.1 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	140,136	114,253	81.5%
Business Rates	71,349	58,385	81.8%
Fees and charges – Adults & Children	40,735	25,181	61.8%
Fees and charges – all other services	43,939	32,551	74.1%

COUNCIL TAX

3.6.2 Compared with December 2014 the collection performance is down by 0.9% and recovery action is well under way. Nationally collection is also down.

3.6.3 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

3.6.4 Compared with December 2014 the collection performance is slightly down by 0.6%.

3.6.5 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.

3.6.6 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December 2015 confirmed that Revenue Support Grant will be phased out but from 2020 Councils will keep all the Business Rates they collect. Further detail is awaited and the CLG Committee has called for submission of evidence as to how proposals will impact on local authorities. Under the existing arrangements Wirral currently receives a 'top-up grant' from Government and receives more than is currently collected in Business Rates.

DEBTORS

3.6.7 At the end of December 2015 the arrears stood at £23.6 million which compares to £19.4 million at December 2014. A large element of this increase (£1.7m) relates to a small number of large Merseyside Pension Fund invoices raised to Pension Fund employers at the end of the period and therefore showing as outstanding when the quarter closed. There has also been an increase in debt outstanding relating to Families and Wellbeing – however £1.1 million of this increase was debt which of less than 10 days old at the reporting date. Recovery action continues to be undertaken to minimise arrears and additional temporary staff will support this work.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

4.3 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	-0.1
Projected balance 31 March 2016	+14.5

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 There are no IT, staffing or asset implications arising directly out of this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 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

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

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

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

REPORT AUTHOR: Peter Molyneux
Senior Manager
Telephone (0151) 666 3389
Email petemolyneux@wirral.gov.uk

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 2015/16 (Quarter 1)	27 July 2015
2015/16 (Quarter 2)	05 November 2015
Budget Council	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	2,761	71,066
Children and Young People	67,964	4,494	72,458
Further Areas - Public Health, Schools, Sports and Recreation	7,956	1,450	9,406
Regeneration and Environment	90,287	-826	89,461
Transformation and Resources	31,947	-907	31,040
Net Cost of Services	266,459	6,972	273,431
Corporate Savings/Growth	-3,611	2,628	-983
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)	-	-4,200	-4,200
Potential Overspend at Quarter 3		-82	-82
Forecast Balances 31 March 2016	17,400	-2,882	14,518

Notes:

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.

Quarter 3 overspend includes impact of £140,000 additional Educational Services Grant.

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 31 December 2015 with the amount collected in the same period in 2014/15:

	Actual 2015/16 £000s	Actual 2014/15 £000s
Cash to Collect	140,136	137,344
Cash Collected	114,253	113,164
% Collected	81.5%	82.4%

Staff have been recruited to vacant posts which will help to begin to address recovery work with intention of recovering this drop in collection.

Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council Tax Support scheme was introduced from 1 April 2013. £26.2 million is currently in payment and the numbers of awards as at 31 December 2015 are as follows:

Number of pensioners	14,744
Number of vulnerable (working age)	9,364
Number of working age	<u>10,898</u>
Number of Council Tax Support recipients	<u>35,006</u>

Council Tax Support claimants have dropped from 36,231 to 35,006 (1,225) since the beginning of the financial year. There are a number of reasons for this, which include 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 December 2015

Period 1 April 2015 – 30 December 2015
2 awards (£902.19p), 47 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 31 December 2015 with the amount collected for the same period in 2014/15:

	Actual 2015/16 £000	Actual 2014/15 £000
Cash to Collect	71,349	70,633
Cash Collected	58,385	58,225
% Collected	81.8%	82.4%

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

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

Directorate Description	Less than 10 days	1st reminder	2nd reminder	3rd reminder	Total at 31.12.15
Chief Executive	£94,697	£4,777	£29,444	£876,950	£1,005,868
Neighbourhood	£14,507	£7,066	£0	£13,865	£35,438
Transformation & Resources	£2,352,010	£845,351	£228,400	£1,935,954	£5,361,715
Families & Wellbeing	£4,975,211	£652,650	£456,622	£9,829,635	£15,914,118
Regeneration & Environment	£343,751	£67,288	£123,284	£796,056	£1,330,379
Policy & Performance	£100,000	£15,000	£0	£153,756	£268,756
Totals	£7,880,176	£1,592,132	£837,750	£13,606,216	£23,916,274

The above figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of December 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 £342,882 to be made for unallocated payments at month end leaving a balance of **£23,573,392**

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 31 December 2015:

	2015/16	2014/15
Number of Private Tenant recipients	29,565	31,731
Total rent allowance expenditure	£105,179,580	
<i>Number under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme (included in the above)</i>	<i>11,200</i>	<i>11,980</i>
	£41,127,454	

Number of Council Tax Support recipients	35,006	36,954
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	£26,312,030	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	£131,491,610	

The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 31 December 2015 and gives the early year numbers to show the shift in sector by benefit claimants during the year.

	31.12.15	31.3.15
Claimants in the Private Rented Sector	13,137	13,723
Claimants in the Social Rented Sector	16,428	16,271
Owner Occupiers	10,181	10,112
Total claimants by age group		
- under 25 years old	2,018	2,238
- 25 – 60 years old	21,019	20,921
- over 60 years old	16,709	16,947

There are 39,746 benefit recipients in Wirral as at 31 December 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 2394 cases
- By 25% in 609 cases

The number of claims affected does fluctuate. The numbers above are a snapshot at 31 December 2015

Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries – 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	1199
Successful Prosecution/Administration penalty/caution	39

With effect from 1 November 2015 the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud transferred to the DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service. Fraud Investigation Officers in scope to transfer will do so at this time. New roles have now been recruited to and a newly formed Fraud Investigation team is in place, ensuring 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. The impacts of the ongoing Welfare Reforms continue to be a primary reason for the need of this additional support with Housing costs.

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 2015/2016 of £1,036,570.

The backlog of Discretionary Housing Payment applications previously reported is now clear. At the present time the strain on the available budget is less evident although Officers expect to see an influx in applications during Quarter 4 as awards due to end are sought again. Small awards continue to be made for shorter periods, essentially to allow the service to support more people through the use of this fund.

The present position is that we expect to spend 100% of the Government Grant by year end although that may not be the case with the local authority contribution, any residual amount of this top-up remaining can be carried forward, whereas unspent Government grant is lost.

date	Number of awards	current awards	committed awards up to 31/03/2016	% spent (committed)
08/04/2015		£4,687.23	£40,158.74	4%
05/05/2015	864	£40,421.27	£70,031.94	7%
01/06/2015	934	£47,148.86	£94,694.10	9%
02/07/2015	1041	£103,253.24	£208,173.93	20%
05/08/2015	1272	£158,082.51	£296,029.82	29%
01/09/2015	1387	£218,434.45	£366,839.57	35%
05/10/2015	1495	£294,417.37	£450,614.50	43%
02/11/2015	1614	£378,052.74	£529,915.74	56%
30/11/2015	1737	£455,259.79	£606,617.41	59%
04/01/2016	1845	£528,144.93	£654,367.64	63%

Local Welfare Assistance

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme was up until March 2015 directly funded by central government grant which has now been withdrawn with the recommendation that local authorities should consider funding future schemes from their General Fund.

On 10 February 2015, Cabinet agreed as part of its budget resolutions that £900,000 would be 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 a Task & Finish Scrutiny Review Panel reviewed the position and Cabinet approved a continuing scheme from 1 August 2015 whereby the Council continues to administer and maintain a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme with the remaining budget available with a number of small amendments to the scheme now in place. Primarily awards

made are in respect of immediate need, such as for food, utilities etc.

Officers provided an update to Transformation and resources Policy and Performance Committee of 1 February 2016 regarding progress of the scheme during 2015/16. Members acknowledged the progress made during 2015/2016 and agreed to recommend to Cabinet that actions are continued and that Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme is therefore maintained, albeit on a moderated basis during 2016/2017 utilising the projected residual funding of £414,820.

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
Oct	668	£35,241.04	£261,604.77
Nov	653	£31,939.49	£293,544.26
Dec	532	£25,713.19	£319,257.45