



Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment Committee

Date:	Monday, 18 January 2016
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

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

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 14)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015.

3. NOTICE OF MOTION: HAMILTON SQUARE - EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY OF CONTROVERSIAL SCHEME (Pages 15 - 16)

At the meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2015 (minute 92 refers), the attached Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse and seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary was referred by the Mayor to this Committee for consideration.

In accordance with Standing Order 7 (6), Councillor Brighthouse has been invited to attend the meeting in order for him to be given an opportunity to explain the Motion.

4. DEVOLUTION - VERBAL UPDATE

5. CREATION OF A PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (Pages 17 - 24)

6. POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER - JANUARY 2016 (Pages 25 - 58)

7. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Report to Follow

8. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 59 - 64)

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

10. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE 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.

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

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2 December 2015

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	M Sullivan (Chair)	
	Councillors	KJ Williams J Crabtree G Ellis R Gregson J Hale	D Mitchell T Pilgrim C Spriggs A Sykes S Williams
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillors	C Muspratt (In place of S Niblock) M Patrick (In place of M Daniel) J Salter (In place of J Stapleton)	
<u>Cabinet Member in attendance:</u>	Councillor	S Whittingham	
<u>Visiting Member:</u>	Councillor	C Blakeley	

22 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

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Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

The following declarations were made:

Member	Item(s)	Reason	Action
Councillor D.Mitchell	Agenda Item 3 – Notice of Motion: Proposal for a Fire Station on Green Belt in Saughall Massie	Non-pecuniary interest – By virtue of his membership of the Planning Committee	Left the room whilst the item was under consideration – did not vote.

Councillor J. Salter	Agenda Item 6 – Amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, Objections to Highways Proposals	Non-pecuniary interest – By virtue of his membership of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, having previously considered the item on 23 November	Took part in the debate.
Councillor J.Hale	Agenda Item 6 – Amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, Objections to Highways Proposals	Non-pecuniary interest – By virtue of his membership of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, having previously considered the item on 23 November	Took part in the debate.
Councillor C.Muspratt	Agenda Item 6 – Amendment to the Scheme of Delegation, Objections to Highways Proposals	Non-pecuniary interest – By virtue of her membership of the Wirral Cycle Forum	Took part in the debate.

23 **MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 be approved.

24 **NOTICE OF MOTION - PROPOSAL FOR A FIRE STATION ON GREEN BELT LAND IN SAUGHALL MASSIE**

Reference Minute No 11 (15 September, 2015), Members further considered the issues raised by the Motion put before the Council on 6 July 2015 (proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Bruce Berry): That

“Council acknowledges the overwhelming public opposition to the proposal by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) for a fire station on green belt land in Saughall Massie, as demonstrated by:

- The 200 people who attended a public meeting arranged by MFRS, and a further 270 who were unable to gain admission to the venue.

- The opposition of the Saughall Massie Village Area Conservation Society and the Wirral Society.
- The 970 people who have, so far, signed a petition against the proposal.

Council impresses upon Cabinet:

- (1) To maintain protection of Wirral's Green Belt, as set by agreed policies and stop inappropriate development.
- (2) Not to gift, sell or lease the land concerned in Saughall Massie, because of the value it has for the community."
- (3) To ask officers to continue to work co-operatively with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service in identifying and facilitating a more suitable brown field site for operational purposes and to maintain the amenity of the local people."

That Motion had been rejected by the Committee at its meeting on 15 September 2015 but the Committee had not decided on its recommendation to the Council on the issues the Motion had raised.

A Member informed the Committee that as a result of the important issues raised by Councillor Blakeley when presenting his Motion and the subsequent debate on the item, the Committee's Chair had requested that a Senior Officer from the Fire Service, with knowledge of the site selection process, be invited to attend the meeting in order to answer any questions.

Consequently, Mr Dan Stephens, Chief Fire Officer, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance at the meeting.

Members questioned Mr Stephens on site selection for the proposed new Fire Station, requesting information on the circumstances behind the proposal to site a Fire Station on Green Belt land at Saughall Massie and availability of other possible locations not in the Green Belt.

Mr Stephens informed the Committee of the requirement to make significant budget savings in 2015/16, and explained how closures of existing fire stations and sharing/re-siting of services in other areas of Merseyside had been implemented to achieve this. At this point, the Chair quelled an interruption from the public gallery that had questioned the relevance of this information.

A Member noted that it was important to understand the context and pressures that had brought about this proposal.

Mr Stephens went on to inform the Committee of the mid-point location of the proposed site (equidistant between the current Upton Fire Station and West Kirby Fire Station). He explained that a 12 week consultation exercise had taken place across the affected areas earlier in the year, he also provided information on operational matters i.e. response times summarising the statistical analysis, and issues faced by the Fire Service regarding the initial site selection – Greasby Library (brownfield site), and acknowledged that as a result the only sites that met the requirements of a combined Fire Station that would achieve the required response times were located in the Green Belt. He explained that the matter would ultimately be decided by via submission of an application to the Council's Planning Committee. Mr Stephens informed that a number of alternative sites had been under consideration, but as the Fire Service did not have any compulsory purchase powers, any site would have to be purchased / leased with the permission of the owner.

Members questioned the Chief Fire Officer on a range of matters specifically related to the selection of the site in Saughall Massie, public objections to the planned location and the scope and outcome of the consultation process. The Committee noted the difficult position faced by the MFRS in terms of its budget, having lost 38% of its Revenue Support Grant i.e. £26million from an initial figure of £70million. It was noted that the most cost effective option available to the Fire Service in terms of location would arise from obtaining the land which was currently in the ownership of the Council.

A Member pointed out that the original Motion consisted of three elements – protection of the Green Belt, not to gift land, and to look for alternative sites. These were the issues upon which the Committee should report.

The Chair pointed out that it was the duty of the Committee to obtain as much information on the matter as was feasible before making its recommendation to the Council.

A Member pointed out that in the long run, whatever the site, the primary objective remained 'to save lives', and as such response times were a key factor to be taken into account.

A Member informed that whether the Committee agreed that a Saughall Massie site was appropriate or inappropriate, development in the Green Belt was ultimately subject to Planning Law and the Council's own Development Plan and by agreeing the Motion, the Committee could in effect block this essential service, and the debate to find a solution would have to continue.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning clarified that, at present, the use of Green Belt land for the building of a Fire Station under the Development Plan was classed as inappropriate development - unless special circumstances could prove otherwise – this could include technical data and information

regarding the consideration of other sites. The matter would have to be considered by the Planning Committee in planning policy terms.

Discussion took place regarding the appropriateness of the site at Greasby Library and the complex reasons for its removal as an option for consideration. The Chief Fire Officer provided additional information about approaches to private land owners in the area, and how given the lack of response and refusal to engage in dialogue these site options had also been discounted.

At this point in the debate,

The following Motion was moved.

Proposed by: Councillor Matthew Patrick

Seconded by: Councillor Chris Spriggs

“The Council acknowledges that the devastating cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority put the Authority in an incredibly difficult situation.

Whilst the Council expresses strong disapproval of the Conservative Government’s decision to cut 38% from the Fire Authority’s grant, it acknowledges that there is a lack of time to force the Fire Service to find alternatives.

Council impresses upon the Cabinet to:

Support Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in its obligations to balance the budget and ensure that a decision is not unnecessarily delayed.

The Council also recognises that the Planning Committee will be responsible for the planning aspect. It further recognises that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will also have to agree with the development’s appropriateness.”

A vote was taken:

For: 8

Against: 5

The Motion was therefore carried.

At this point, the Chair quelled an interruption from the public gallery relating to a Member’s right to speak further on the original Motion (which had already been exercised at the previous meeting).

Resolved:

That the COUNCIL BE ADVISED that this Committee supports the Motion:

“The Council acknowledges that the devastating cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority put the Authority in an incredibly difficult situation.

Whilst the Council expresses strong disapproval of the Conservative Government’s decision to cut 38% from the Fire Authority’s grant, it acknowledges that there is a lack of time to force the Fire Service to find alternatives.

Council impresses upon the Cabinet to:

Support Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in its obligations to balance the budget and ensure that a decision is not unnecessarily delayed.

The Council also recognises that the Planning Committee will be responsible for the planning aspect. It further recognises that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will also have to agree with the development’s appropriateness.”

25 **NOTICE OF MOTION - SUPPORTING WIRRAL'S PART IN OUR NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES**

Members of the Policy and Performance Regeneration and Environment Committee considered a motion to Council (6 July 2015) as proposed by Councillor Steve Williams and seconded by Councillor Wendy Clements, that:

“Council notes many Wirral residents work in our major nuclear power and defence industries, both directly (in companies such as Urenco, Cammell Laird and CNS) and indirectly, in the supply chain.

Council believes these highly-skilled, well paid advanced engineering jobs offer opportunities for residents and welcomes the skills and apprenticeship training at Wirral Metropolitan College for young people entering the industry.

Council agrees with the Leader of the Council that Wirral has a strong track record in manufacturing for the nuclear industry and calls on the Administration to play an even greater part in providing students with the skills required to play a full part in future manufacturing and production.”

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Williams introduced the Motion, and informed the Committee about the opportunities arising from Wirral's well-established nuclear power and defence industries and available apprenticeship training. He provided detail regarding the types, and levels, of employment in the industries informing of the need to support and keep 'high value, high tech' employment opportunities on the Wirral. Members noted that the employment figures for those employed in the nuclear and defence industries on the Wirral were in the region of 21% compared to the National average of 10%.

Members applauded the Wirral businesses success welcoming any opportunity to develop or expand the workforce in such industries. Although supporting the Motion, a Member expressed concerns regarding the problems associated with the handling of nuclear waste by-products. Other Members of the Committee compared the cleanliness of nuclear power generation methods to fossil fuel power production, and informed that the local businesses included research facilities looking to further improve safety and cleanliness of the industry.

A vote was taken:

For: 9

Against: 1

Abstained: 3

Resolved:

That the COUNCIL BE ADVISED that this Committee supports the Motion in respect of Wirral's part in providing students with the skills required to play a part in the future of our Nuclear Industries i.e.

“Council notes many Wirral residents work in our major nuclear power and defence industries, both directly (in companies such as Urenco, Cammell Laird and CNS) and indirectly, in the supply chain.

Council believes these highly-skilled, well paid advanced engineering jobs offer opportunities for residents and welcomes the skills and apprenticeship training at Wirral Metropolitan College for young people entering the industry.

Council agrees with the Leader of the Council that Wirral has a strong track record in manufacturing for the nuclear industry and calls on the Administration to play an even greater part in providing students with the skills required to play a full part in future manufacturing and production.”

The Policy and Performance Committee Regeneration and Environment received a verbal update on the current position of Devolution in the Liverpool City Region from Ms. Rose Boylan, Policy & Strategy Manager.

Ms Boylan informed that in the Budget 8 July 2015 the Chancellor confirmed the Region's commitment to negotiate a "Devolution Agreement" with Government, and that a framework of devolution 'asks' formed submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review on 4 September 2015. The Committee was advised of detailed on-going negotiations, with a number of meetings to outline scale of ambition having been held with:

- Rt. Hon Greg Clark 10 September
- Lord Heseltine 29 October
- Lord O'Neill 9 November

The Committee noted that following months of negotiations, a deal had been agreed with Government on 17 November and that this had been formally agreed by all 6 participating Councils on 19 November, and at the meeting of the Combined Authority on 20 November 2015.

The Policy & Strategy Manager informed Members that the deal was phase one of Devolution, and gave Councils in the City Region more power on key issues of economic growth, business support, skills, housing and transport, with phase 2 discussions to start now, focussing on health, social care, police and fire & rescue services.

Members were informed that key areas of the deal were as follows:

- Economic Development – to support trade and movement of goods through the Port Recognition of the River and Liverpool Bay as a key asset within Northern Powerhouse. A commitment to review a business case to develop a cost-effective tidal power scheme was also included in the deal.
- Transport Responsibility for a devolved and consolidated local transport budget with a multi-year settlement, that included powers to rebrand bus services, and a commitment that the Department for Transport work with the City Region to review Tunnel Tolls.
- Housing and Planning – agreement of a Statutory City Region Framework to support delivery of strategic employment and housing sites, with further discussion to take place on the potential devolution of housing loan funds and future housing ambitions.

- Employment and Skills – a focus on hard to reach groups, using a household approach and the improvement of skills and vocational education.
- Governance – In response to the devolution of the above powers, the City Region would be voting for an Elected Mayor in May 2017

The Policy & Strategy Manager informed Members that the devolution of powers was to provide an investment fund worth £900m over 30 years, direct influence over key policy areas – Skills, Employment, Business Support, Euro funding, Transport, Public Assets and Culture. Members noted that the deal also provided a realistic prospect of reducing Tunnel Tolls, committed Government to further discussions about Housing; Vocational Education; Tidal Power and other possible areas for devolution.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

27 **AMENDMENT TO SCHEME OF DELEGATION - OBJECTIONS TO HIGHWAY PROPOSALS**

The Head of Environment and Regulation introduced his report that set out proposed changes to the existing Scheme of Delegation in respect of unresolved objections to traffic management measures, including traffic regulation orders. The report recommended that delegated powers to decide on such objections be devolved to the Head of Service (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder) in cases where unresolved objections were below a set threshold. Members were informed that the views of both the Regeneration & Environment Policy & Performance and Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee were being sought in advance of seeking approval for the change to the Constitution at Council in December.

The Head of Environment and Regulation informed of the procedures as operated under the current Scheme of Delegation, whereby detailed reports regarding objections are put to the Highways & Traffic Representation Panel, which considers the officer's report and invites representations from objectors. He further informed of the actions undertaken following consideration by the Panel.

The Head of Environment and Regulation explained that the proposed amendment to the procedures recommended that the Scheme of Delegation in relation to unresolved objections to traffic management measures be altered such that it operates in a similar manner to the Scheme of Delegation for objections to planning applications.

Members were informed that following consideration by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee 23 November, 2015 (Minute No 10 refers) noting that a number of recommendations had been proposed, namely to alert Ward Councillors on local highways matters under the new procedures. Members were also informed that the words 'traffic management' were to be removed from para 3.3. of the proposal to allow a broader, more practical, approach to supporting objections. A further amendment to para 3.2 included the removal of the words 'from individual households'.

In support of the Amendments put forward by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, Members requested that new procedures must incorporate provision of notice about highway schemes to Ward Councillors 'in good time', to include a deadline for views / submissions from Members, and that the notices or 'Ward Reports' be supplied in a larger print font than currently. Members stated that these incorporations and alterations would provide an opportunity for Councillors to discuss proposals with residents.

Visiting Councillor, Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member Transport, Technology Strategy and Infrastructure assured Members that such notifications were currently circulated to Councillors via e-mail.

Resolved: That

- (1) the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as outlined be endorsed; and**
- (2) the COUNCIL BE RECOMMENDED to approve the changes to the Council Constitution in respect of Part 3, Schedule 5, Scheme of Delegation - Objections to Highway Proposals.**

28 **MINUTES FROM HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC REPRESENTATION PANEL**

Resolved: That

- 1) the recommendations of the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel as detailed in the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2015 be endorsed; and**
- 2) the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation be recommended to take appropriate action in respect of the following:**

PROPOSALS TO INTRODUCE CALMING FEATURES AND 20MPH SPEED LIMIT, ANNESLEY ROAD AREA, WALLASEY - That the

proposal as shown on drawing no. DC/0113/100 be approved for implementation.

PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE OFF ROAD UN-SEGREGATED CYCLEWAY/FOOTPATH(S) AND ROUNDABOUT IMPROVEMENTS ALONG CORPORATION ROAD AND CLEVELAND STREET BETWEEN DUKE STREET AND BEAUFORT ROAD - That the proposal as shown on drawing no. 357912-MMD-H-DR-01-0100-001 is approved for implementation.

29 **2015/16 QUARTER 2 DIRECTORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Head of Regeneration and Planning presented a report of the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment that set out Quarter 2 (July – September 2015) performance against delivery of the Regeneration and Environment Directorate Plan. Members noted that the Directorate Plan had been reported to the Policy and Performance Regeneration and Environment Committee on 15 September 2015.

A performance report attached as Appendix 1 to the main report set out progress against a suite of agreed key performance indicators.

The report informed that for each performance measure, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating had been assigned, setting out a performance level against a target, and showed the direction of travel for each measure to illustrate whether performance was improving, deteriorating or sustained.

Of the 14 reportable indicators, 13 (93%) were rated Green, and 1 (7%) was rated Red. For indicator rated Red, the responsible officer had indicated the corrective action being put in place to get performance back on track.

Members were informed that although the first 6 months of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014 showed there have been some KSI improvements in pedestrian casualties (particularly child KSIs), there had been increases in the number motorcycle and scooter casualties as well as in-car casualties. Members noted that a multi-agency action/activity plan had been agreed by key partner agencies to address the matter.

A Member informed the Committee about the Safety Awareness Show held in July attended by 1048 children from across the Wirral and Liverpool, at no cost to the attendees. He informed that people had given up the spare time, to instruct the attendees these included Doctors, Nurses, Police, Police Cadets, Rail Transport Police, Coastguards, Merseytravel, Network Rail, Wirral Borough Council road safety team, CEOPS, St John,s Ambulance, and the NHS. He stated that the event had surpassed all expectations, and hoped that

another such event already planned for July 2016 would be just as successful in raising awareness of road safety issues to young people.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

30 **FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

The Head of Regeneration and Planning presented a report of the Acting Section 151 Officer that set out the financial monitoring information for this Committee. The report provided a basis for Members to scrutinise budget performance for the Directorate and provided financial information for Quarter 2 (July-September 2015) as reported to Cabinet on 5 November 2015.

The report informed of the following key points:

- Environment and Regulation: Highway Maintenance - was the largest component of this part of the Capital Programme, and so far £3.3 million of the £3.9 million budget had been spent. Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting) - competitive tendering process has resulted in a contract saving of £1.074 million with the scheme being successful in securing an interest-free loan. Coast Protection - aids to Navigation scheme will now be completed during the 2016/17 financial year. In respect of West Kirby Flood Alleviation the business case has been submitted to the Environment Agency. Approval to commence the scheme was awaited and anticipated to be primarily in 2016/17.
- Housing: In order to allow people with disabilities to live more independently, Aids and Adaptations and Grants continue to be approved and the budget was committed. Incurring of the budget spend was determined by the grant applicant which meant that there would invariably be works approved remaining uncompleted during the year. The clearance programme involved complex legal processes and with potential Compulsory Purchase Orders, public enquiries and business relocations could impact on the delivery of the programme.
- Regeneration - Regional Growth Fund. Additional grant will be received to match the expenditure relating to this particular regeneration activity. Nearly £5 million has been provided from this and other growth funds to provide investment and assist with the regeneration and development of local businesses.

Members noted the summary figures as below:

Capital Programme 2015/16 at end of Quarter 2 (30 September)

	Capital Strategy	Revisions Since Budget Cabinet	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend September 2015
	£000	£000	£000	£000
R&E Environment & Regulation	12,633	-147	12,486	4,698
R&E Housing & Community Safety	6,412	-984	5,428	1,308
R&E Regeneration	1,808	4,736	6,544	5,018
Total expenditure	20,853	3,605	24,458	11,024

Note: revisions reflect re-profiling of schemes from 2014/15 plus additional grant funding

Discussion took place regarding the proposed Hamilton Square Accessibility Improvements and historic links with previous spending on projects in the Square. Members debated the merits and their concerns regarding proposals to revitalise the area, noting the need to link the Square and other plans to improve and integrate Birkenhead Town Centre linking with local bus routes, and the Mersey Tunnel. Members noted that the proposal formed part of proposals within the Wirral 2020 Plan / Culture Strategy, to animate the Wirral Waterfront and develop Wirral's culture, tourism and heritage.

Members agreed that Birkenhead Town and its immediate environs were of strategic importance to Wirral and that they would welcome a more in-depth look at the work that was going on in this area by the Committee. The specific way in which this was best done would be discussed and agreed between the Party Spokespersons and the Head of Regeneration and Planning.

Resolved: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- 2) Members should look in more detail at the various initiatives taking place in and around Birkenhead Town Centre. The best way of doing this to be agreed between the Party Spokespersons and the Head of regeneration and Planning.**

31 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

The Policy and Performance Regeneration and Environment Committee noted the report of the Chair that updated members on the current position regarding the Committee's work programme as agreed for the 2015/16 municipal year.

The report summarised a number of key points in relation to the planned work of the Committee that included:

- Members to receive regular updates on the devolution deal for the Liverpool City Region. Noting that this particular update had been covered elsewhere on the agenda but would, in future, be included as a standing item for future Committee meetings.
- Initial scoping for the Task & Finish scrutiny review on Tourism had taken place.
- Three scrutiny workshops for Members to consider the delivery of the Wirral Plan had taken place. The workshops covered each of the three themes (People, Business and Environment) and the outcomes are to be presented in a consolidated report to the Policy & Performance Coordinating Committee scheduled for 10th December.

Resolved:

That the updated Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee work programme for 2015/16 as shown in the appendix to the report be noted.

Hamilton Square – Effective Scrutiny of Controversial Scheme *(as referred by the Civic Mayor to Policy and Performance Regeneration and Environment Committee)*

Proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

Seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary

Council notes that a public consultation was recently carried out regarding the redesign of the access to Hamilton Square, Hamilton Street and the area in front of Birkenhead Town Hall.

Council is aware that many principled objections have been raised to this scheme, with concerns around the re-introduction of unnecessary traffic and noise, the removal of the expensive landscaping and paved areas introduced by the Hamilton Quarter and the overall purpose of the scheme.

Given the Council's limited financial resources, it is important that this project is tested against the 2020 Vision. Before an investment of £1.1 m is committed, the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee is requested to examine, in detail, the criteria used to justify this investment.

Council, therefore, suggests that the Highways and Traffic Representation Panel is not the most appropriate forum for this fundamental study and requests that the project be the subject of full consideration by the Policy and Performance Committee.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY PERFORMANCE

COMMITTEE

18TH JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	CREATION OF A PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
WARDS AFFECTED:	POTENTIALLY ALL WARDS WILL BE AFFECTED BY THIS REPORT
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	CLLR PHIL DAVIES INVESTMENT
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The report below was agreed by Cabinet in March 2015.

1.2 This report seeks Members approval to create a Property Development Framework that would support the development of new commercial floor space in Wirral. The Framework would set out a number of alternative development models that could be used to address the economic viability of projects where the build costs are greater than the end value. This proposal would enable commercial projects to be delivered thereby meeting the objectives of the Council's Investment Strategy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The industrial and office property market in the Liverpool City Region faces challenges with end values remaining relatively low and grant funding still being required to enable developments to take place. That is the total cost of constructing speculative and bespoke accommodation is currently greater than its value on completion. The issue is further compounded by banks often refusing to lend against any kind of speculative development and limiting their lending against bespoke schemes, with a known end user, to a maximum of 60% of the projected end value. One of the other constraining factors moving forward is the fact that the availability of external grant funding from organisations including the UK Government and the European Union is reducing significantly.

2.2 This means that some of Wirral's indigenous companies who want to expand or grow are unable to do so due to the lack of suitable accommodation and the lack of new modern premises is also a limiting factor to the Council's aspirations of attracting new inward investment into the Borough.

2.3 In response to these circumstances, the Council has been reviewing the current models that are available to it in terms of supporting private sector development and

company growth, as well as exploring new ways of supporting such developments. The motivation for doing this comes from the Council's ambitious Investment Strategy which is seeking to grow Wirral's economy as well as providing sustainable employment opportunities for all Wirral residents.

A REVIEW OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT MODELS

- 2.4 The Council has successfully used a number of traditional ways of supporting private sector development which can still provide some opportunities for future developments. These are considered below:
- 2.5 **Land Acquisition / Assembly.** The Council has used this method in the past to buy land and property and then sell it on to the private sector. Strategically, this approach allows the Council to intervene in the marketplace to catalyse or kickstart development, but also to assemble land in preparation for development. This may, in certain circumstances, still be an appropriate approach but it does require the Council to identify significant financial resources to buy the land in the first place and if the sell-on price, because of land values, is only equal to the purchase price this provides the Council with little if no return on its investment.
- 2.6 **Gap funding.** Gap funding is required where there is a difference between values and costs with a grant being given to gap fund the difference between the construction costs and end value. Such an approach is subject to State Aid and therefore only a percentage of the gap can be funded. This has been further affected by changes to the State Aid framework in 2014. However, depending on the project the public sector can still intervene and land remediation is an example of how this can work to support large companies.
- 2.7 This approach has proved successful in Wirral and again, in certain circumstances, may still be the most appropriate response. However, funding is required to provide a grant and there is no return on this investment. There are external funds which the Council can utilise, for example through the growth deal secured for the Liverpool City Region which is yet to be allocated to projects, but resources for this are significantly reduced when compared to previous years.

NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL

- 2.8 **Council Head Lease.** This approach is based on using the strength of the Council's covenant to secure development. An example of how such an approach would work is that the Council agrees with Developer A to take out a head-lease on a proposed new building(s) for a period of years. For this period the Council agrees to pay the rent at an agreed figure including periodic reviews. At the same time, in a back to back arrangement, the Council agrees to lease the building to a company for the same period of time for a market rent plus a premium. This premium can be achieved because of the strength of the Council's covenant which allows money to be borrowed at a lower interest rate than would be available to a developer.
- 2.9 Such an approach should not require any up-front committed funding from the Council and the premium would result in a nominal revenue income for the Council. However, this is not without risk and there would be a need to ensure that a contingency fund was in place to cover any void periods and this is set out in detail in paragraph 8.4 below.

2.10 Table 1 below sets out these three Development Models and the risks associated with each of them is addressed in Section 3 below.

TABLE 1 – Overview of Development Models

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	CONSTRAINTS
1. Site/ Acquisition Land Assembly	To strategically intervene in the marketplace to address constraints causing barriers to the private sector. This may include land assembly to create developable parcels of land	Lack of available funding to support this type of option. Little or no return on the outlay.
2. GAP Funding	To address viability gaps by bridging the 'gap' between development costs and end values.	Again, the lack of available funding for this option presents a problem. However, the LCR LEP has been allocated some resources through the Growth Deal.
3. Council Head Lease	<p>Covenant strength allows a developer to secure higher levels of funding for a development, strengthening the yield of a development and addressing viability in a different way from GAP funding.</p> <p>The Council taking the head lease for a new developing significantly increases the viability of a development from the point of view of securing funding</p>	Using the Council's covenant strength in this way brings opportunities and risks. It exposes the Council to potential costs if the sub lease ends and there are void periods. However, mitigating actions can be put into place and the risk depends on the development plus the potential return for the Council.

2.11 It is proposed that a multi-disciplinary team of officers from Finance, Legal, Investment Strategy, Regeneration and Asset Management would work on the development and the implementation of the Property Development Framework which would include:

- Outlining in detail each of the delivery models set out in the above Table (Table 1);
- Setting out the criteria against which projects would be initially assessed for inclusion – namely that they would generate financial returns, floorspace, jobs, business rates income and/or be a catalyst for future development;
- Identification of potential sources of funding as outlined in 2.12.below.

2.12 Funding to progress projects within the Framework could come from a variety of sources and could include external funds such as resources identified through the Liverpool City Region's Growth Plan, or Government schemes such as Growing Places funding. The Council's Capital Programme could also be considered as a possible source of funding for specific projects. In addition funding generated by the retention of business rates within the Enterprise Zone could also be considered for re-investment into further developments through the EZ Investment Fund.

2.13 Projects coming forward through the Property Development Framework would be considered on a case by case basis in respect of the most appropriate development model and of the type of funding that could be secured. Each project would then be brought back to Cabinet with a detailed report for consideration and approval before being progressed. The report would include an assessment by the internal multi-disciplinary team of a comprehensive independent appraisal of the total project costs and end value of each scheme, a proposal as to the most appropriate delivery model and a proposal with regards to the funding route. The report would also set out how the proposal would comply with all financial and legal requirements.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 **Site acquisition/assembly and Gap funding.** The Council has a strong track record of delivering these approaches. Wirral International Business Park was created using both of these options during the 1990's and early 2000's. Since 2007, the Council has successfully worked in partnership on a number of occasions to develop and bring forward new commercial floor space with the latest one being Tower Wharf, funded using European Regional Development Fund monies. The key risk to this approach is the lack of available funding.

3.2 **Council Head Lease.** This approach has risks, as indeed are experienced by all such approaches to securing development. The main risk is that the company to whom the Council lease goes into receivership or liquidation at some point during the lease period. This would leave the Council in the position of still having to pay the rental amount for the period remaining on the lease as well as potentially needing to make good the building and make any alterations that might be required to meet business demand. This risk is higher in the early years when there are more years remaining on the lease and the risk will reduce as the lease period progresses. However, risk will remain until the lease period ends.

3.3 The risks would be mitigated by the following:

- a) a thorough independent financial check on the company prior to entering into the lease;
- b) an independent market appraisal of the demand for the type of space which was provided by the project should it be required to be re-let. Such an appraisal would be reviewed on an annual basis;
- b) an annual check on the company's performance by the Council;
- c) the ability for the Council to re-lease the building should the original leaseholder go into liquidation or receivership;
- d) in such circumstances the Council would be able to sub-divide a large building into smaller units making re-leasing easier and reducing void periods through the provisions that would be negotiated with the developer prior to the lease being entered into by the Council;
- e) the Council identifying a financial resource to cover any void periods if the original leaseholder went into liquidation or receivership and prior to a new lease or leases being entered into. This financial resource would only be required in these circumstances;
- f) A project group, including the Director of Resources, would monitor the number of projects undertaken using this approach and report on the Council's levels of risk as part of normal reporting procedures;

g) Members would approve all projects brought forward through the Property Development Framework.

3.4 The benefit to the Council of using its covenant strength is that this is a mechanism to ensure that a development can be implemented thereby providing new business space and creating employment opportunities. In addition the new floor space will generate revenue for the Council through the rental premium and through business rates.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Officers will continue to seek to secure external funds wherever possible to address the constraints to development identified in paragraph 2.1 of this report and to bring forward investment. Again, where a business case can be put forward and projects could generate returns, either financially or through floorspace, jobs and business rates income, then officers will report to Cabinet.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 This report is consistent with the principles of Wirral Council's Investment Strategy and Wirral which provides the framework for securing investment and growth within the Borough. This has been reviewed after extensive consultation with partners and has also been informed by consultation which has taken place with a number of private sector partners and local businesses through Invest Wirral's Business Forum.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 None

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are no implications for Voluntary, Community and Faith Groups arising directly from this report.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, FINANCIAL, IT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

8.1 A multi-disciplinary team of officers from Finance, Legal, Investment Strategy, Regeneration and Asset Management would work on the implementation of the Property Development Framework.

8.2 Officers will seek and secure best practice advice from other Local Authorities currently delivering projects using such development models, but it is likely that specialist legal, finance and commercial property specialists would need to be procured as appropriate. Officers will seek to recover these costs from the projects where appropriate.

8.3 As set out in paragraph 3.3 (g) above, any project progressed through the property development framework will be brought back to Cabinet in a business case form. This business case would include a proposal for where funds would be sought, for example whether it is using external resources, for example the Pension Fund, the Council's own funds such as the Capital Programme or the potential re-investment of the business rate uplift from the Enterprise Zone.

8.4 In respect of Option 3, the Council Head Lease, if Members agreed to the use of this approach for a development then a contingency budget would be required to minimise the risks should there be any void periods where the property was empty ie if the company leasing the building from the Council defaulted on that lease. The resource would be needed to (a) pay the rent to the developer for the period that the unit was vacant (2) to do any works of sub-division prior to re-marketing the building and (3) re-market the building. It is proposed that the sum of £700,000 would be required for this purpose and this would be made available from reserves from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. In addition any surplus made by the Council from the rental charged through the Head Lease arrangement would be reinvested into the contingency reserve. This would be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the annual performance report.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The creation of a Property Development Framework to support the development of new commercial floor space in Wirral will (as appropriate) require the Council to rely on the Council's ability to:

- (a) acquire land by agreement for the benefit, improvement or development of their area pursuant to section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- (b) dispose of land pursuant to section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- (c) borrow money for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs pursuant to section 1 of the Local Government Act 2003; and
- (d) invest for the purposes of the prudent management of its financial affairs pursuant to section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003.

9.2 The Council intends to ensure that the operation of the Framework complies with:

- (a) the application of the legal requirements set out in paragraph 9.1 above;
- (b) the application of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015;
- (c) State Aid requirements;
- (d) the Council's constitution; and
- (e) such other legal requirements relating to the project under consideration.

9.3 The report requesting Cabinet approval for each project shall set out how the legal requirements have been and/or will be satisfied and the operation of the Framework shall require Cabinet approval for each and every project.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The potential impact has been reviewed with regard to equality and links to the existing EIA conducted for Wirral's Investment Strategy.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0>

11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly out of this report.

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Any applications coming forward for consideration within the Property Development Framework will need to be assessed against the Council's Unitary Development Plan, the emerging Core Strategy Local Development Framework and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 Members of the Policy and Performance Committee are requested to note the contents of this report.

14.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

14.1 To establish a Property Development Framework for Wirral to deliver the objectives of the Investment Strategy.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER – JANUARY 2016
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The policy briefing papers are intended to provide Members with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the committees work programme and future scrutiny work.

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

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

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

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

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

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 No specific risks identified.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None considered.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

6.1 Not applicable.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

7.1 There are none arising directly from this report. Any implications identified in ongoing and recent national legislation and policy will require further

consideration by the Council to identify the appropriate action that will be taken.

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

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

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

(c) No because of another reason which is

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

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

1.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

13.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

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

14.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

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

APPENDICES

1. Policy Papers – January 2016

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	N/A

POLICY INFORM: REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Policy Inform- January 2016

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

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Autumn Statement and Spending Review - 25th November 2015

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

Local Councils

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

Housing



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

Planning, Transport and Regeneration

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

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor

for Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

David Armstrong- Project Sponsor

for Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future

Digital Government



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

Community Cohesion



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

DCLG

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

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



Arts and Sport

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

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



Businesses

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

Paula Basnett- Partner pledge led for Thriving Small Businesses

Devolution

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

Tax Credit

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

Families & Childcare

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

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

Environment

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

Our Partners:



NHS

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

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



Police

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

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



Schools and Apprenticeships

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

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

Further Analysis & Impact on Local Government and Partners

Local Government:

Funding

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

Business Rates

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

Social Care

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

Local Growth Fund

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

Housing

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

Our Partners:

NHS

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

Police

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

Schools and Apprenticeships

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wales Bill
Votes for Life Bill

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

Queen's Speech 2015- Developments and Implications

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

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

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

Further Developments:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

Housing and Planning Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

Home Ownership-

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

Housing Supply-

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

Further Developments:

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

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

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

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

Further Developments Continued:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

Wirral Implications Continued

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

Energy Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

Further Developments:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

High Speed Rail Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

Further Developments:

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

Further Developments Continued:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

The Enterprise Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

Further Developments:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

Synopsis and Key Points:

Synopsis:

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

Key Points:

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

Further Developments:

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

Wirral Implications:

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

Wirral Implications Continued:

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

Policy Developments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Briefing: Total Transport Authorities: IPPR report

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

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

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

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

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

Briefing: Housing and Planning Bill

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

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

There are eight parts set out in the Bill:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Housing and Poverty

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

How Do Landlords Address Poverty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Briefing: The English Indices of Deprivation 2015

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

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

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

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

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

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

Briefing: High Speed Rail Update: Autumn 2015

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Useful Sources

Autumn Statement and Spending Review

Key Announcements:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Housing and Planning Bill

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

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

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High Speed Rail Bill

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

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

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Enterprise Bill

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

Welfare Reform and Work Bill

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

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

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

WIRRAL COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT:	<i>WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates Members on the current position regarding the work programme for the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee as agreed for the 2015/16 municipal year.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council and be informed by service priorities and performance, risk management information, public or service user feedback and referrals from Cabinet or Council.

2.2 In determining items for the Scrutiny Work Programme, good practice recommends the following criteria could be applied:

- Public Interest – topics should resonate with the local community
- Impact – there should be clear objectives and outcomes that make the work worthwhile
- Council Performance – the focus should be on improving performance
- Keeping in Context – should ensure best use of time and resources

2.3 The work programme is made up of a combination of scrutiny reviews, standing items and requested officer reports. This provides the committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The current work programme for the Committee is attached as Appendix 1.

3.0 REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 A report on homelessness and the impact of removing housing benefit for under-21s was previously agreed to be rescheduled for inclusion on this agenda to inform a Task & Finish scrutiny review. Government has stated that £12 billion of savings would be delivered but details on how welfare reforms will be implemented have yet to be provided and this has an impact on how homelessness is responded to by the Council. It was agreed with Party

Spokespersons that a report will be presented to the committee when full details are made available.

4.0 PREVIOUS / CURRENT SCRUTINY REVIEWS – UPDATE

4.1 Tourism

The first evidence session was held in December and Members of the Review Panel had an opportunity to talk to the Council's Heritage Officer and a representative from the History and Heritage Association. The session provided the Review Panel with a detailed background to the diversity of heritage sites in Wirral and an understanding of the challenges to promote these. A further evidence session will be held with representatives from the Local Enterprise Partnership and Wirral Met College.

4.2 Coastal Strategy

The evidence session for the Coastal Strategy scrutiny review has now been held. The Review Panel focused particularly on areas detailed in the strategy that required intervention in the short-term from flood and coastal erosion risk and how these would be funded. A representative from the Environment Agency was also invited to the session to talk about Local Levy funding. A wrap-up session is to be scheduled imminently.

4.3 Budget Scrutiny

Workshops are to be held to enable members of each of the three Policy & Performance Committees to consider relevant items which form part of the 2016/17 budget proposals. Two workshops have been arranged for the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee (11th and 18th January). The outcomes from all of the workshops will form the basis of a single report which will be presented to Coordinating Committee on 16th February.

5.0 SPOTLIGHT SESSION

- 5.1 A Spotlight Session for Members focusing on Birkenhead Town and its immediate environs of strategic importance is to be arranged. The session will be informal and open to all non-executive Members. Once agreed, the final arrangements will be made available to Members.

6.0 WIRRAL PLAN WORKSHOPS

- 6.1 Members will be aware that three workshops were held in early November to enable members to consider the delivery of the Wirral Plan. The workshops covered each of the three themes: People, Business and Environment. The outcomes of the workshops were consolidated into a single report and presented to a meeting of the Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015. Feedback from the workshops has been provided to the authors of the appropriate strategy documents as they are developed and finalised.

7.0 PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 There are no further progress reports at this time

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report and approve the updated Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee work programme for 2015/16 as shown in the appendix, making any required amendments.

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2015-16 Regeneration & Environment Committee Work Programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Committee Dates					14th		15th		3rd	2nd	18th		2nd		
Scheduled Reviews															
Coastal Strategy	Cllr Bernie Mooney	Requested by Members													In Progress
Tourism	Cllr Chris Meaden	Requested by Members													In progress
Homelessness	Cllr George Davies	Requested by Members													
Budget Options	Cllr Moira Mclaughlin	Part of the Council's budget process													
Scrutiny of the Wirral Plan and Delivery Arrangements	Cllr Moira Mclaughlin	Agreed by Coordinating Committee													Workshops held in November 2015. Report to Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015.
Potential Reviews															
Reports Requested															
Tourism	Emma Degg	Requested by Members													T&F Review agreed
Homelessness / Impact of removal of Housing Benefit for under 21s	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Merseytravel	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													Completed
Enterprise Zone Investment and Property Development Fund	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Devolution	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													Completed
Flood Risk Management	Kevin Adderley	Requested by Members													
Notice of Motion															
Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority		Referred from Council													
Wirral's Economic Success		Referred from Council													
Supporting Wirral's Part in our Nuclear Industries		Referred from Council													
Hamilton Square															
Spotlight Session															
Birkenhead Town Centre															To be arranged
Standing Items															

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Performance Dashboard															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Inform															
Devolution update															
Recommendations from Highways & Traffic Representation Panels															