



# Budget Council

Town Hall  
Wallasey

19 February, 2021

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the Budget meeting of Council to be held at **6.00 p.m. on Monday, 1 March 2021** virtually, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects:

This meeting will be webcast at  
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**Contact Officer:** Andrew Mossop  
**Tel:** 0151 691 8501  
**e-mail:** andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk  
**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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## AGENDA

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

A dispensation has been applied for.

### 2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive the Civic Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence.

### 3. BUDGET MEETING PROCEDURE (Pages 1 - 12)

The Council is requested to consider the recommendation from Policy and Resources Committee of 17 February, 2021, in respect of the procedure to be adopted for this extraordinary meeting of Council, as specified in appendix A to the report of the Director Law and Governance.

Minute and report attached.

**4. MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL - RECOMMENDATION FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF 17 FEBRUARY, 2021 CONCERNING BUDGET DECISION MAKING**

**A. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE 2020/21 (Pages 13 - 50)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

**B. CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER THREE 2020/21 (Pages 51 - 64)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

**C. BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 - 2025/26 (Pages 65 - 356)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

1. Budget recommendation
2. Council Tax setting

**D. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-26 (Pages 357 - 378)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

**E. CAPITAL FINANCING STRATEGY 2021/22 (Pages 379 - 400)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

**F. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22 (Pages 401 - 432)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.

A revised version of appendix 5 to this report will be circulated with the supplementary agenda.

**G. INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22 (Pages 433 - 444)**

Minute with recommendations and report attached.



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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 73 BUDGET MEETING PROCEDURE

Philip McCourt, Director of Law and Governance, introduced a report on a proposed process for the Budget decision making meeting of Council.

In response to Members' comments he confirmed that a positive vote in favour of a budget proposal would be required of the Budget Council meeting.

**RECOMMENDED – To Council, that for the duration of the extraordinary meeting of 1 March 2021 (Budget Council):**

- (a) the procedure attached as Appendix A to the report, be followed in respect of the meeting; and
- (b) Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) be suspended together with such other standing orders as may conflict with the Budget Council procedure or the Mayor's administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 17 February 2021

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>BUDGET MEETING PROCEDURE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

To recommend to Council a process for the Budget decision making meeting of Council.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

That the Committee recommend to Council that

1. For the duration of the extraordinary meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (Budget Council):
  - (a) the procedure attached as Appendix A be followed in respect of the meeting; and
  - (b) Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) be suspended together with such other standing orders as may conflict with the Budget Council procedure or the Mayor's administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Council has a duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a lawful budget in a timely manner. Members have a fiduciary duty to council tax payers to facilitate the setting of a lawful budget.
- 1.2 Failure to set a lawful budget in time may lead to a loss of revenue, significant additional administrative costs, as well as reputational damage. Failure to set a budget may lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under section 15 the Local Government Act 1999.
- 1.3 Budget Council is an extraordinary meeting of full Council and, in order to meet the legal duties at that meeting to set a balanced and lawful budget within the time set by legislation, the meeting requires within it a process for additional flexibility and compromise.
- 1.4 To provide for additional flexibility and compromise, and to allow further advice from the Chief Finance (s151) Officer in respect of budget proposals and amendments and the debate as it progresses, an alternate procedure is set out as Appendix A.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

A Budget Council debate can be run in accordance with ordinary standing orders. This will not provide the same level of flexibility and efficient administration of the meeting in this particular instance.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Delay in setting the Council Tax means a delay in collecting the Tax due not only to the Council, but also the precepting authorities.
- 3.2 The Council has a legal duty to provide a range of statutory services (such as refuse collection, homelessness prevention etc.) and is not absolved from its duty because of the late setting of the Tax. It also has to pay the monies due to the precepting authorities whether or not it collects any Council Tax.
- 3.3 Even if the Council sets the budget before the deadline but much later than the planned Budget Council Meeting, there is still likely to be some disruption to the administrative arrangements relating to the collection of Council Tax (such as printing, posting, delivery of demands) that have cost implication.

#### **4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the Council has to set its budget before 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.
- 4.2 If the budget is set after that date, the Act's provisions state that the failure to set a budget within the deadline does not, in itself, invalidate the budget. Such delay, however, is likely to have significant financial, administrative and legal implications, including potential individual liability of any Member who contributed to the failure to set a budget.
- 4.3 Section 66 of the 1992 Act provides that failure to set a Council tax (or delay in setting a Council tax) shall not be challenged except by an application for judicial review. The Secretary of State and any other person with an interest or "standing" may apply for judicial review.

#### **5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 5.1 There are no additional resource requirements directly from this report, however, specific savings initiatives may impact staffing.

#### **6.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 6.1 Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

#### **7.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Views were sought of Group Leaders in formulating the appended procedure.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY, CLIMATE AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no additional resource requirements arising directly from this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Philip McCourt  
Director of Law and Governance

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Procedure for Budget Decision Meeting of Council

**BACKGROUND PAPERS & SUBJECT HISTORY**

BUDGET DECISION COUNCIL 5TH MARCH PROCEDURE AND RULES  
Report to Cabinet and Council 2018/19

**THE BUDGET DECISION MEETING OF COUNCIL**

**Prior to the Council meeting**

1. The recommendations of the Policy & Resources Committee will be proposed in respect of the agreement of the annual Budget, setting of the council tax requirement and related matters to the Council, which if seconded, will be debated by Full Council, in accordance with the provisions below and voted upon by a simple majority.
2. Any elected Member may put forward to the Council any amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee's budget proposal. Members should not put forward any proposal, however, that would mean setting an unlawful budget and they must take advice from officers to ensure their proposals are in order. To this end any amendments put forward must be evaluated by the Chief Finance Officer (s.151) and Monitoring Officer, or officers appointed by them for the purpose, to determine the service, financial and legal implications of implementing those proposals. The Chief Finance Officer will seek to give to the elected Member putting forward the amendment, and discuss with them where appropriate, the affect that those proposals will have on the on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Budget calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (The Chief Finance Officer's duty to report to Council under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003).
3. For this purpose, the intended amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee's budget proposals are required to be submitted to the Chief Finance Officer by no later than **9 am five (5) calendar days before the Council Budget Setting Meeting**.
4. The amended proposals, once received by the Chief Finance Officer, will be held confidentially by officers and not shared with other political parties, with the exception that any amendments received for an elected Member who is part of a Group will be shared with the relevant Group Leader. All amended proposals will be considered by finance services officers by no later than **12 noon three (3) calendar days before the day of the Council meeting**, excluding the day of the meeting itself. The Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer will confirm the legality and impact of all proposed amendments. Any that in the Monitoring Officer's opinion are unlawful shall be rejected.
5. All proposed amendments will be shared with all elected Members, by email, by the Chief Finance Officer by **5pm three (3) calendar days before the Council meeting**, excluding the day of the meeting itself.
6. Following a period for negotiation, any alterations to proposed amendments, will be allowed up to **9am on the day of the meeting**, provided they do not have substantial impact and are agreed with the Chief Finance Officer. By noon on the day of the Council meeting Democratic Services Officers will circulate

copies of all remaining proposed amendments to all Members of the Council, by email, in case any have been withdrawn.

7. At the Council meeting, the Mayor will refuse to accept any proposals for amendment that have not been through the above process and signed off as being lawful a proposal. This will not affect the Mayor's ability to allow an amendment at the meeting if the Mayor, in their absolute discretion, considers that the amendment is necessary for the purpose of ensuring the Council can set a balanced and lawful budget. If the Mayor considers this unusual step necessary, there may be an adjournment called to obtain officer advice on the new or revised amendments or alterations and also to allow for agreement between political groups.

### **At the Council Meeting**

8. Budget Council is an extraordinary meeting of Council and, under Standing Order 3.2, the business to be conducted shall be restricted to the Budget matters contained in the summons.
9. That means that the agenda for the Budget Council will set out the budget and council tax setting decisions as the only items of business to be transacted at the meeting. None of the items of business that would be on an agenda of an ordinary meeting, including motions on notice, questions, petitions, minutes and so forth, will be taken. Public engagement in respect of the budget decision making, in the form of the opportunity to submit questions, statements and receiving of petitions, will have been made available at the preceding Policy and Resources Committee when formulating the Budget recommendations.
10. The Mayor or Council has agreed to deal with the Budget related motions or amendments in one debate (under SO15.15 Joint Debates) to facilitate the setting of a lawful budget; a process that requires flexibility and compromise.
11. To that end, the Council will be asked to agree suspension of Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) and such other standing orders as may conflict with this budget process or the Mayor's administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.

### **Debate at Council**

12. At the Council Budget Setting Meeting the Leader as Chair of Policy & Resources Committee (or in their absence the Vice-Chair), will speak to the minute and preceding report and will move the motion to propose the Council's annual Budget. The Leader will have 15 minutes maximum for their speech.
13. The Chair of Children, Young People & Education Committee will speak to the Schools' Budget element of the Policy & Resources Committee Budget Recommendations/Minute(s) will have 7 minutes maximum for their speech.

14. The proposals will need to be seconded and the Member seconding has 7 minutes available for this purpose, or where proposed alterations have been circulated, 10 minutes. The seconder may speak at the time of seconding or reserve their speech for later on in the debate.
15. The Leader of the next largest Group on the Council will have the right to speak first on the proposal, who may propose any amendment, which has been signed off by the Chief Finance Officer, and will have 15 minutes maximum for their speech. Any amendment will need to be seconded and the Member seconding the amendment has 7 minutes for this purpose and may make their speech at the time of seconding or reserve it for later in the debate on this amendment.
16. The Leader of the next largest Group will have the right to speak next on the earlier proposals put before Council, and may have 15 minutes to propose their own amendment provided it has been signed off by the Chief Finance Officer, which shall need to be seconded with the seconder having a maximum of 7 minutes for this purpose and the right to reserve their speech until later in the debate.
17. This process continues until the Leader of each Group and all Members who are not in a Group have had the opportunity to speak, and the budget and all proposed amendments have been proposed and seconded.
18. The matter is then open to one full debate from all Members of the Council. Each Member may speak only once on this item, other than those who have submitted the original proposal or an amendment who will later have a right of reply. Each speaker, other than as set out above, has a maximum of 3 minutes to speak.
19. The debate is managed by the Mayor who has control of the debate and may use their discretion to ensure the effective, efficient, fair and orderly conduct of the business. The Mayor's interpretation and their application of the standing orders and this process will be final.
20. At the end of the debate if any Member seconding a proposal (the substantive proposal or a proposed amendment) has reserved their seconder's speech to later in the debate, their speeches, of a maximum of 7 minutes will be taken in the reverse order in which the motions were proposed and seconded.
21. When the debate has concluded the Leader of the Council, and any Group Leader or Member not in a Group who has proposed an amendment, will have a right of reply. Each speaker will be taken in the reverse order in which the motions were proposed and seconded, with the Leader of the Council having the last right of reply on behalf of the Policy & Resources Committee. Any speaker with a right of reply has up to 5 minutes to respond.
22. When the debate has concluded, the Mayor will if he/she thinks fit, sum up the debate before putting the amendments to the vote. In doing so he/she may

request the Chief Finance Officer to draw the attention of the meeting to any relevant factors.

23. The Mayor will then put the amendments to the vote in the order of the amendments proposed by the smallest Group Leader first, followed by the next largest etc. Each amendment will be voted on in turn, with a recorded vote being required to be taken on each amendment.
24. Some proposed amendments may impact on others and there may be inter dependencies between them. For example, if one amendment is passed or lost it may result in others automatically being lost, whilst some amendments may have no impact on others and may stand alone regardless of the outcome of voting on other amendments. The Chief Finance Officer will advise accordingly and the Mayor may adjourn the meeting to facilitate the provision of that advice. Following the conclusion of the voting on the amendments, the Chief Finance Officer will confirm how the individual amendments that have been carried affect the Council Tax proposal as necessary.
25. There may be a need for a short adjournment to allow for the preparation of the Council Tax resolutions to reflect the budget proposals as amended/if amended to be circulated prior to the substantive vote.
26. Once the amendments have each been voted upon and determined, the Chief Finance Officer will clarify any amendments that have been agreed and how they affect the budget proposal. The Mayor will then put the substantive proposal (motion), as amended if they have been amended, to the Council for a vote. A recorded vote is required and will be included in the minutes.
27. If the budget proposal is accepted without amendment by Council, the Council may make a decision which has immediate effect.
28. If the budget is lost, the Council will be asked by the Mayor to adjourn and allow members of the Policy and Resources Committee to meet as a working group and return to the adjourned meeting with further proposals.
29. An adjourned meeting must make a lawful resolution before 11<sup>th</sup> March.

#### Exclusion of notices of motion and formal questions

30. Formal questions from Councillors and Notices of Motion shall not be received and considered and the respective Council Standing Orders 12 and 13 shall accordingly not apply.
31. For the avoidance of doubt, neither public questions may be asked nor statements or petitions be submitted (Council Standing Orders 10 and 11) and other reports will not be considered. Motions without notice may be moved (Council Standing Order 14 applies).

## **Speakers**

With exception of right of reply, each speaker may speak only once.  
Speakers will be allocated the following time

The Leader of the Council speaking to the P&R's Budget Recommendation(s)/Minute(s)	15 minutes
The Chair of Children, Young People & Education Committee speaking to the Schools' Budget element of the P&R's Budget Recommendation(s)/Minute(s)	7 minutes
Seconder - May reserve right to speak later <sup>a</sup>	7 minutes
The Group Leader of the largest other political group speech in response and (if applicable) in proposing their respective Amendment (Alternative Budget Proposals)	15 minutes
Seconder (if applicable) speaking to their respective Alternative Budget Proposal(s) / Amendment - May reserve right to speak later <sup>b</sup>	7 minutes
Next largest Group – as above	15 minutes
Repeated for each Group in descending order of size	7 minutes
Other speakers – general debate	3 minutes
<sup>b</sup> Seconder of amendments (if reserved right to speak) independent member/smallest group first - then next largest - repeated	7 minutes
<sup>a</sup> The Seconder of the P&R Budget Recommendation(s) / Minutes(s)	7 minutes
The Group Leaders of the political groups right of reply independent member/smallest group first - then next largest Repeated for each Group in ascending order of size	5 minutes
<i>Move to the vote. Amendments in ascending order of size of Group, followed by substantive motion on proposals</i>	-

*(For the avoidance of any doubt the times mentioned in the table above shall not affect the Mayor's discretion to permit a speaker to speak beyond the allotted time).*

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 66 2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources introduced a report which provided a summary of the projected year-end revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2020) of the 2020/21 financial year, including:

- the financial risk profile presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and
- a review of pressures and savings contained within the original budget position.

The year-end forecast recorded as part of December's financial monitoring activity represented an adverse variance, net of exceptional financial support, from revenue budget of £8.948m; this comprised:

- £16.378m adverse forecast variance in relation to revenue budget, stemming largely from matters arising through the Covid-19 pandemic.
- £3.3m forecast deficit on expected capital receipts, which support the revenue budget position via flexible use of capital receipts and
- the above items being offset by £10.73m government funding to compensate for lost sales, fees and charges compensation due to the impact of Covid-19.

The change in the position from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 forecast was mainly as a result of additional Covid-19 funding received by Government which was included in the Quarter 2 forecasts as being funded from Directorate budgets, additional temporary savings being found since Quarter 2 and a reduction in pressures, mainly in relation to Children and Families.

The Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic continued to present financial risk due to uncertainty and fluidity in the external environment, however the ringfenced "tranche" funding, was forecast to a balanced position.

The overall financial position for the Council remained challenging, and a number of actions were in progress to mitigate the overall forecast position presented at quarter 3, including limiting spending to essential areas of service delivery only, with Corporate Directors supported to mitigate the risk of overspending.

In October 2020, the Committee had requested exceptional financial support (capitalisation directive) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and an offer had recently been provided from MHCLG to enable a balanced budget to be reported for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The Ministry had indicated that they were able to offer a capitalisation direction up to a maximum value of £14.8m for 2020/21, subject to conditions. This value was based on the Quarter 2 forecast at the time of the offer. The Committee's agenda included the 2021/22 Budget Report, which included a recommendation to Full Council that:

The Council proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February, 2021.

It was assumed that the value of exceptional financial support would be provided at the level required, up to a maximum of £14.8m at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. Therefore a forecast balanced position for 2020/21 could now be reported.

Responding to a Member's comment, Shaer Halewood confirmed the rigid processes in place for vacancy control through the Senior Leadership Team.

**A. Resolved - That this Committee:**

**(1) notes the balanced year-end forecast position;**

**(2) notes the impact of funding and expenditure as a direct consequence of Covid-19, including the additional funding sources which have been identified, but as yet, not received.**

**B. RECOMMENDED –**

**To Council the 2020/21 budget of £41.144m in relation to Covid-19 funding for Council use and notes the additional £134.490m of funds that is to be made available to the Council for onward relay to other organisations as passported funding. This recommendation follows on from the recommendation made by Policy & Resources Committee on 11 November 2020, following the recent notification of additional funding.**

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER THREE (APR - DEC)</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides a summary of the projected year-end revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 (December 2020) of the 2020/21 financial year, including:

- the financial risk profile presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and
- a review of pressures and savings contained within the original budget position.

The year-end forecast recorded as part of December's financial monitoring activity represents an adverse variance, net of exceptional financial support, from revenue budget of £8.948m; this comprises:

- £16.378m adverse forecast variance in relation to revenue budget, stemming largely from matters arising through the Covid-19 pandemic.
- £3.3m forecast deficit on expected capital receipts, which support the revenue budget position via flexible use of capital receipts and
- The above items are offset by £10.73m government funding to compensate for lost sales, fees and charges compensation due to the impact of Covid-19.

The change in the position from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3 forecast is mainly as a result of additional Covid-19 funding received by Government which was included in the Quarter 2 forecasts as being funded from Directorate budgets.

The Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic continues to present financial risk due to uncertainty and fluidity in the external environment, however the ringfenced "tranche" funding, is forecast to a balanced position.

The overall financial position for the Council remains challenging, and a number of actions are in progress to mitigate the overall forecast position presented at quarter 3, including limiting spending to essential areas of service delivery only, with Corporate Directors supported to mitigate the risk of overspending.

In October 2020, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the request for exceptional financial support (capitalisation directive) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to enable a balanced budget to be reported for 2020/21 and

2021/22. The Ministry have indicated that they are content to approve a capitalisation direction up to a maximum value of £14.8m for 2020/21, subject to conditions. This value is based on the Quarter 2 forecast at the time of the offer. The Policy and Resources Committee as part of the 2021/22 Budget Report, includes a recommendation to Full Council that:

The Council proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February 2021.

It is assumed that the value of exceptional financial support will be provided at the level required, up to a maximum of £14.8m at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. Therefore a forecast balanced position for 2020/21 can now be reported.

This is not a key decision.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Policy & Resources Committee:

1. Note the balanced year-end forecast position.
2. Note the impact of funding and expenditure as a direct consequence of Covid-19, including the additional funding sources which have been identified, but as yet, not received.
3. Recommend to Council the 2020/21 budget of £41.144m in relation to Covid-19 funding for Council use and note the additional £134.490m of funds that is to be made available to the Council for onward relay to other organisations as passported funding. This recommendation follows on from the recommendation made by Policy & Resources Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020, following the recent notification of additional funding.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Revenue Budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Other reporting frequencies could be considered, but quarterly reporting is standard practice.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1.1 This report provides a summary of the projected year-end revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3, Month 9 (December 2020) of 2020/21 financial year.
- 3.1.2 The year-end forecast recorded as part of December's financial monitoring activity represented an adverse variance from budget of £8.948m. Exceptional financial support provided as a conditional offer from MHCLG now results in a balanced forecast position for this financial year.
- 3.1.3 The expenditure on direct Covid-19 activity, which represents a separate source of funding, is projecting a balanced position.
- 3.1.4 Capital receipts, which underpin revenue activity, are forecast to under-deliver against plan by £3.3m.
- 3.1.6 The MTFP will be updated for the Budget Report to Council in March 2021.
- 3.1.7 Service Committees monitor and challenge budget and forecast positions.

**TABLE 1 2020/21 BUDGET & FORECAST**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Chief Executive Office	1,471	1,649	(178)	-12%	Adverse
Resources	20,650	18,428	2,222	11%	Favourable
Neighbourhoods	55,922	68,771	(12,849)	-23%	Adverse
Legal and Governance	5,715	6,209	(494)	-9%	Adverse
Regeneration and Place	35,616	35,705	(89)	0%	Adverse
Children, Families & Education	84,082	83,649	433	1%	Favourable
Adult Care and Health	106,627	106,663	(36)	0%	Adverse
Cross Cutting Initiatives	(5,386)	0	(5,386)	-100%	Adverse
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>304,697</b>	<b>321,075</b>	<b>(16,378)</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
<b>Other Budget Impact</b>					
Capital Receipts	(4,500)	(1,200)	(3,300)	-73%	Adverse
Covid - 19 Direct Expenditure	41,144	41,144	0	0%	
Sales, Fees, Charges Compensation	0	(10,730)	10,730	0%	Favourable
<b>Operating Budget Gap</b>	<b>341,341</b>	<b>350,289</b>	<b>(8,948)</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Exceptional Financial Support			8,948		
<b>Budget Gap</b>			<b>0</b>		

*\*An adverse variance is one where the forecast position is worse than the planned position, conversely, a favourable variance is where the forecast position is better than the planned position.*

3.1.8 The Government's compensation scheme for lost income from Sales, Fees and Charges enables 75% lost income to be reclaimed after offsetting the first 5%. The figures in the following Directorate tables represent the gross loss of income in each area to provide a view of the extent of these losses by Directorate. The full value of income to be compensated for of £10.730m is shown as a total for all Directorates in Table 1.

## 3.2 Directorate Summaries

### 3.2.1 Adult Care and Health

3.2.2 As at the end of December 2020 (Quarter 3), the forecast year-end position for Adult Care and Health is an adverse variance of £0.036m against a net budget of £106.627m.

3.2.3 The forecast had been expected to significantly deteriorate to an adverse position of approximately £1m due to steadily increasing client numbers, particularly in Domiciliary care, alongside increasing average cost of care packages. However, access to the Government's Covid-19 Tranche grant funding and grants received to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) have helped to temporarily alleviate much of the in-year financial pressures.

**TABLE 2 2020/21 Adult Care and Health – Service Budget & Forecast**

	Budget	Forecast	Variance (+ Fav, - Adv)		Adv/Fav
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Adult Social Care Central Functions	9,778	9,217	561	6%	Favourable
Older People Services - WCFT	44,903	45,062	(158)	0%	Adverse
Mental Health & Disability Services - CWP	48,293	48,428	(135)	0%	Adverse
Other Care Commissions	(148)	182	(330)	223%	Favourable
Public Health	215	13	202	94%	Favourable
Wirral Intelligence Service	485	458	27	6%	Favourable
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>103,525</b>	<b>103,360</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>0%</b>	Favourable
Support / Admin Building Overhead	3,577	3,577	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(476)	(274)	(202)	42%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>106,627</b>	<b>106,663</b>	<b>(36)</b>	<b>0%</b>	

3.2.4 **Central Functions:** Favourable variance of £0.561m is mainly due to savings from employee costs from vacancies, staff not at the top of their pay scales although the budget is set assuming that this is the case and short delays in filling vacant posts.

3.2.5 **Older People Services:** Adverse variance of £0.158m. The main contributing factor for the deficit forecast in this area is the increased risk of non-achievement of efficiency savings approved at the start of the financial year. This pressure has been partially offset by access to Government Covid-19 monies and the CCG's responsibility to provisionally fund hospital discharges and deflections. However,

since September the remit for CCG funding has reduced and the average cost of a care package has increased, placing greater financial pressure in this area.

- 3.2.6 **Mental Health & Disability Services:** Adverse variance of £0.135m. The main contributing factor for the deficit forecast in this area is the increased risk of non-achievement of efficiency savings approved at the start of the financial year. The cost of care within Mental Health & Disability Services has been partially eased due to access to Government Covid-19 monies.
- 3.2.7 **Other Care Commissions:** Adverse variance of £0.330m is caused by early intervention and prevention (EIP) commissions. Many of these commissions have been extended longer than initially anticipated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.2.8 **Public Health:** The favourable variance of £0.202m is in relation to the Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Partnership (CHAMPS), where responding to the Covid pandemic has led to some vacancy and project slippage. As Public Health variances cannot be utilised by Wirral Council for any other activity, a corresponding movement in reserves is shown, having the impact of fully utilising the grant in-year, which is in line with the ringfenced nature of the grant for Public Health activity. Public Health is a ringfenced grant with an annual value £29.7m and projected to be fully utilised. £6.7m of this funding supports public health activities delivered by the Council, representing a significant funding stream. Costs relating to the Council's response to the pandemic are dealt with in section 3.9 of this report and do not impact here.
- 3.2.9 **Wirral Intelligence Team** Favourable variance of £0.03m represents surpluses in staffing costs mainly due to staff not being at the top of their pay scales, although the budget is set assuming that this is the case, coupled with short delays in filling vacant posts.
- 3.2.10 **Movement on reserves:** The movement within reserves relates to the Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Partnership (CHAMPS) budget as noted in 3.2.8. It should be noted that the Budget reserves position has moved from Quarter 2 (£5,864m) to Quarter 3 (-£0.476) to more appropriately reflect the controllable nature of the use of reserves by the Public Health team, as Wirral Council cannot access this funding stream.
- 3.2.11 **Pressures and Savings Statement:** The increased risk of non-achievement of the £3.75m of efficiency savings, approved at the start of the financial year and prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, are exacerbating the financial pressures. In the current circumstances, it has been difficult to forecast with confidence the likely progress toward the achievement of these savings due to the operational disruption and delays caused by Covid-19. At present and based upon savings to date, our forecast position assumes £1m of these savings will be achieved. There also continues to be the risk of, potentially significant, increases in demand for care services as we move through the year and the impact of Covid-19 and the period of lockdown is realised. The reduced 'cost of care' burden on the revenue budget will be offset by the increased risk of non-achievement of the full £3.75m of efficiency savings. £2.75m of these savings are considered high risk of non-achievement.

**TABLE 3 2020/21 Adult Care and Health – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Income	(83,919)	(83,734)	(185)	0%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	5,786	5,291	495	9%	Favourable
Non Pay	53,846	53,987	(142)	0%	Adverse
Cost of Care	127,813	127,816	(3)	0%	
Total Expenditure	<b>187,445</b>	<b>187,094</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>103,525</b>	<b>103,360</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	3,577	3,577	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(476)	(274)	(202)	42%	<b>Favourable</b>
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>106,627</b>	<b>106,663</b>	<b>(36)</b>	<b>0%</b>	

3.2.12 **Income:** Adverse variance of £0.185m due to the impact of Covid-19 through clients suspending packages of care during the pandemic.

3.2.13 **Employees:** Favourable variance of £0.495m. There are surpluses in all areas due to vacancies, staff not at the top of their pay scales although the budget is set assuming that this is the case, coupled with short delays in filling vacant posts.

3.2.14 **Non Pay:** Adverse variance of £0.142m relates to early intervention and prevention (EIP) commissions. Many of these commissions have been extended longer than initially anticipated due to the COVID pandemic.

3.2.15 **Cost of Care:** The adverse variance of £0.03m, is not material at this level. It should be noted that the forecast was expected to have significantly deteriorated to an adverse position of approximately £1m due to steadily increasing client numbers, particularly in Domiciliary care, alongside increasing average cost of care packages. However, access to the governments Covid-19 Tranche grant funding and other grants received to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) have helped to temporarily alleviate much of the in-year financial pressures.

### 3.3 Children, Families and Education

3.3.1 The overall financial forecast of Children, Families and Education shows a full year favourable position of £0.433m. This is a significant change to the forecast position at quarter 2 (Adverse £2.058m). As at quarter 2, national assumptions for the additional demand for Children's Social Care were noted, and Wirral's forecast

reflected that, however, the demand has not materialised at this high rate, and therefore the forecast has been reduced by £0.771m. In addition to this, the increased costs associated with children requiring transport, to ensure social distancing is maintained, has been fully funded by Covid grants, which has reduced the core pressure previously presented by £0.976m. The remainder of the improved position has been through expense slippage as a result of delayed implementation of various contracts for Modernisation and Early Help and Prevention services, as services have been diverted to the Covid-19 response.

3.3.2 The service continues to manage the high placement costs but have an adverse forecast variance at quarter 3 of £0.6m for Looked After Children’s Placements and allowances which included a contingency provision for a 5% increase in demand due to Covid-19 amounting to £0.3m (for the remaining 3 months January to March). This is offset by favourable variances in Early Help and Prevention and Modernisation and Support of £0.384m and £0.425m due to staff being budgeted for higher costs and some project and contracts being delayed due to the current government restrictions. The use of £0.275m reserves to fund project and salary costs also contribute to the position.

3.3.3 It should be noted that the Children’s, Families and Education directorate also monitor the Schools budgets on behalf of the Council, however, these budgets are delegated to schools, who retain control of the expenditure. This has previously been reported as part of the Directorate, but as the scale of the grant (£173.96m) is significant on both the Non-pay and reserves position, it has been segregated from this reporting to improve transparency.

**TABLE 4 2020/21 Children, Families and Education – Service Budget & Forecast**

			<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>(+ Fav, - Adv)</b>		
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Children and Families	48,496	49,172	(676)	-1%	Adverse
Early Help and Prevention	11,772	11,388	384	3%	Favourable
Modernisation and Support	5,032	4,606	425	8%	Favourable
Schools - Core	11,545	11,520	24	0%	
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>76,844</b>	<b>76,686</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	7,238	7,238	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	0	(275)	275	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>84,082</b>	<b>83,649</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>

3.3.4 **Children and Families:** Adverse variance of £0.676m consisting of £0.905m pressure on placements particularly on residential and semi-residential placements. This is mainly due to new, high-cost placements and extensions of others with time

limited funding and rate increases. Placement costs are closely monitored monthly with work ongoing to address the highest cost placements, by driving the costs down to a more sustainable level. This is offset by a £0.373m forecast favourable variance on staffing due to vacancies and to allow for staff who are not at the top of their pay scales.

Placements and allowances also have a contingency for a 5% increase in demand due to Covid-19 amounting to £0.3m (for the remaining 3 months January to March). Also £0.17m adverse variance on Allowances and Inter Agency Adoption fees. The allowances are addressed monthly to make sure the payments are not excessive and are sustainable on a longer-term basis.

- 3.3.5 **Early help & Prevention:** favourable variance forecast £0.384m. This surplus is mostly due to staffing not at the top of their pay scales, on maternity leave and not paying into the pension scheme. There was also a delay in the implementation of the PAUSE program until November 2020. This surplus forecast would have been more favourable, but for demand pressures in Emergency Duty Team meaning additional staffing costs and Agency staff covering vacancies and other duties. A new Emergency Duty Team staffing model, which has the aim of reducing costs, was to be implemented in April 2020 but has been delayed until January 2021.
- 3.3.6 **Modernisation and Support:** The full-year favourable forecast variance of £0.425m is due to staff not at the top of their pay scales, maternity leave and staff not paying into pension scheme across the department. A saving proposal of £0.102m has been included within the 2021/22 budget which will reduce the staff budget accordingly. There are also several contracts to modernise services that will not be fully utilised this year due to timing delays in setting up contracts due to Covid-19 impact on the service.
- 3.3.7 **Schools – core:** The full-year position for 2020-21 is forecast to be balanced as it is expected that services will be delivered within a small favourable variance on Education Psychologist and Special Educational Needs (SEN) Assessment due to staffing vacancies. In Quarter two, it was expected that there would be increased costs associated with children requiring transport, to ensure social distancing is maintained, has been fully funded by Covid grants, which has reduced the core pressure previously presented by £0.976m. Since quarter 2, two services have moved from the Resources Directorate to Schools Core, these are Kingsway PFI scheme and “Step Up to Social Work”.

**TABLE 5 2020/21 Children, Families and Education – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Income	(17,910)	(19,956)	2,046	11%	Favourable
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	39,323	38,522	801	2%	Favourable
Non Pay	30,542	32,569	(2,027)	-7%	Adverse
Cost of Care	24,888	25,551	(663)	-3%	Adverse
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>94,754</b>	<b>96,642</b>	<b>(1,889)</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>76,844</b>	<b>76,686</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	7,238	7,238	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	0	(275)	275	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>84,082</b>	<b>83,649</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>

3.3.8 **Income:** Favourable forecast variance of £2.046m. Children’s service has received grant in the year that was not included in the base budget as it is contingent on expenditure activity in the financial year, this favourable income variance is off set by the expenditure incurred and has no impact on the bottom-line position. Income on Children and Families (£1.396m) is forecast to overachieve mainly due to holding no budget for Adoption Support Fund against in-year activity (£0.482m), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children grant income (£0.194m), additional grant income (£0.324m), which mostly relates to Early Help and Prevention grants from the National Lottery, funding voluntary organisations Community Coaches, additional Troubled Families projects and Holiday Activities and Food Programme grant. Schools core is forecast to overachieve on income (£0.189m) due to the receipt of additional grants in the year which were not originally expected.

3.3.9 **Employees:** Favourable forecast variance of £0.801m. There are surpluses in all areas due to vacancies, staff not at the top of their pay scales although the budget is set assuming that this is the case, maternity leave and staff not paying into the pension scheme reducing the Council’s contribution to the pension scheme.

3.3.10 **Non pay:** Adverse forecast variance of £2.027m. Children and Families have incurred expenditure for grant funded activities that is offset by grant income of £1.8m. This adverse position is due in the main to the expense incurred from the £0.483m from Adoption Support Fund (netted off with Income) and Step up to Social Work £0.720m (grant funded). There is £0.324m of non-pay expenditure being funded through grants reported in income and a £0.125m pressure on Inter Agency Adoption fees.

3.3.11 **Cost of Care:** Cost of care illustrates a forecast adverse variance of £0.663m. This is due to new high cost and extended existing placements, as well as allowances and on Asylum Seeking Children (offset by grant in income line).

3.3.12 **Reserves:** Reserves show a forecast variance of £0.275m. A £0.203m call on reserves is predicted to fund a Capacity Project, encompassing a complete overhaul of the early help branding, language, partner engagement, communications, digital platforms (website and apps development), online self-assessment for early help and reflection tool for own early help plan. There is also an expectation that £0.071m from schools' core will be required as a reserves release to meet unbudgeted pay costs of £0.094m, which is offset by a movement to reserves for as yet unutilised grant income of £0.023m.

**TABLE 6 2020/21 Children, Families and Education – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

	Budget	Forecast	Variance		Adv/Fav
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Schools Block	108,739	108,739	0	0%	
Schools de-delegated	1,744	1,734	10	1%	Favourable
Central School Costs	2,139	2,129	10	0%	Favourable
High Needs	40,116	42,062	(1,946)	-5%	Adverse
Early Years	21,208	21,179	29	0%	
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>173,946</b>	<b>175,843</b>	<b>(1,896)</b>	<b>-1%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
DSG Grant Income	(174,590)	(174,423)	(167)	0%	
Movement on DSG Reserves	644	(1,419)	2,063	320%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	

3.3.13 **Schools Block** - expenditure is forecast to be in line with budget. Any variances against schools' DSG allocations are off set with the school's own balances and not the general DSG reserve. Thus, financial pressures facing schools e.g., excess COVID costs are not reflected in the DSG financial statement but rather in the movement of the overall school balances. The cumulative schools reserve brought forward were £7.9m and it is expected that these will reduce by £0.8m to £7.1m by the end of the financial year.

3.3.14 **De-delegated funds** are a deduction from a school's budget share and are held centrally to fund relevant services. No significant variances are expected for 2020-21

3.3.15 **Central Schools Costs** relate to central functions carried out on behalf of maintained schools and academies e.g., School Admissions. No significant variances are expected for 2020-21.

- 3.3.16 **High Needs Block** – there are significant pressures on High Needs services mainly due to increases in demand and complexity. The demand for Independent School Places is forecast to overspend by £0.9m, Top-Ups to school place funding is forecast to overspend by £0.6m and additional support for resourced provision is expected to overspend by £0.4m.
- 3.3.17 The **Early Years** budget is used to provide Early Education to those 2 yrs. old and 3/4-year-old children who are entitled to receive it free of charge. Local authorities have been required to maintain funding to providers at pre-COVID levels and it is expected that this will be reflected in the funding from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), although the final grant allocation will not be confirmed until summer 2021.
- 3.3.18 **DSG income:** The 2020/21 budget includes an estimate for unpaid Early Years grant from the previous financial year. The actual grant received was £167k less than expected and this has generated a shortfall of income against budget for 2020-21.
- 3.3.19 **DSG reserves:** When the 2020/21 budget was set it was expected that there would be excess funding in the High Needs Block of £0.644m and this was to be transferred into the cumulative DSG reserve at the end of the financial year. Net costs for the financial year are currently forecast to be £1.4m greater than budget thus the year-end reserves position will reflect a usage of the DSG reserve rather than a contribution to reserve. The additional costs are mainly due to pressures in the High Needs Block.
- 3.3.20 The DSG reserve at the beginning of the financial year held a deficit balance of £1.3m and this is forecast to rise to a £2.7m cumulative deficit by the end of the financial year due to the £1.4m in-year forecast draw-down. In line with DfE requirements, Council officers are currently developing a DSG management plan that aims to bring expenditure back in line with funding by year 3 and to recover the deficit by year 5.

## 3.4 Resources

- 3.4.1 The Resources directorate forecasts a favourable budget variance of £2.222m at year-end against a budget of £20.65m. The in-year position is mitigated, in part, by the Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme however, which is reported separately.
- 3.4.2 At quarter 2, the Resource directorate showed an adverse position of £1.3m, which has moved to a favourable position of £2.222m. This has been caused, in large part to vacancies held as part of the recruitment freeze, the pausing of large scale organisational projects, the use of Covid-19 funding for Local Welfare Assistance and delays to business as usual activity, such as training, as a result of staff being diverted to the Covid-19 response.
- 3.4.3 Since quarter 2, two services have moved from the Resources Directorate to Children, Families and Education, these are Kingsway PFI scheme and “Step Up to Social Work”. The Commercial team has been consolidated within Finance & Investment, causing a budget movement from Neighbourhoods, and the Customer

Complaints team has been aligned with similar services in Digital and Improvement, causing a budget movement from Chief Executive Office.

**TABLE 7 2020/21 Resources – Service Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Finance & Investment	1,595	(486)	2,081	130%	Favourable
HR & OD	4,401	3,819	581	13%	Favourable
Digital & Improvement	10,842	9,833	1,009	9%	Favourable
Revenues & Benefits	2,157	3,641	(1,484)	-69%	Adverse
Audit, Risk & Business Continuity	599	565	35	6%	Favourable
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>19,593</b>	<b>17,372</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	1,451	1,451	0	<b>0%</b>	
Movement on Reserves	(394)	(394)	0		
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>20,650</b>	<b>18,428</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>

3.4.3 **Finance & Investment:** There is a forecast favourable variance of £2.081m. Within this forecast are variances in relation to Treasury Activity, income from investment activity has an adverse variance of £1.946m although this is partially mitigated by the reduced costs to borrow for the Capital programme (£0.852m). Lower demand for traded services and a review of the bad debt provision has reduced the in-year need for bad debt, £0.840m. Traded services continue to see reduced demand, generating an adverse variance of £0.11m, although these income losses are partially mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Changes compensation scheme, which is reported separately. This forecast is being offset by temporary vacancies within the service and the utilisation of Covid New Burden funding.

3.4.4 **Human Resources and Organisational Development;** There is a favourable forecast variance of £0.581m, which is mainly related to employee costs from staff vacancies, £0.67m. There are also small non-pay favourable variances, in part, to delays to the training programme as a result of staffing re-assignment to the Covid-19 response. These favourable positions are partially offset by a forecast adverse variance relating to the reduced demand for Traded Services, £0.106m, however this is mitigated, in part, by the national Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme, which is reported separately.

3.4.5 **Digital & Improvement:** There is a favourable variance of £1.0m. The main reason of the favourable variance is slippage to the Change Programme, as a result of staff being realigned to deliver the Covid response. Some strategic change programmes

and projects have been paused or slowed, these include elements of the digital programme such as the development and deployment of the Firmstep Customer Service platform and Member Portal, the Local Plan Programme and the asset consolidation programme. Furthermore the development of the new strategic change programme linked to the Wirral plan has seen delay due to the resourcing, mobilisation and support to Covid response initiatives’.

This has a £0.355m favourable variance in Employment costs and £1.111m in non-pay costs. These are not permanent savings, as the projects are expected to recommence when the environment improves. However, the overall position does have a forecast adverse variance relating to the reduced demand for Traded Services (£0.457m), this is partially mitigated by the national Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme, which is reported separately.

3.4.6 **Revenue & Benefits:** There is an adverse variance forecast of £1.484m. This stems from the decision to pause debt recovery through court summons, £1.7m. When recovery actions are re-instated, some income may be recoverable in future years. Within the service, there is a favourable variance of £0.483m in non-pay costs, and this is as a result of reduced need for supplies and services due to home working and the utilisation of Covid-19 funds to provide Local Welfare Assistance.

**TABLE 8 2020/21 Resources – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv)	%	
Income	(176,512)	(171,904)	(4,609)	-3%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	29,729	29,331	399	1%	Favourable
Non Pay	166,376	159,945	6,432	4%	Favourable
Total Expenditure	<b>196,106</b>	<b>189,275</b>	<b>6,830</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>19,593</b>	<b>17,372</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	1,451	1,451	0	<b>0%</b>	
Movement on Reserves	(394)	(394)	0	<b>0%</b>	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>20,650</b>	<b>18,428</b>	<b>2,222</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>

- 3.4.7 **Income:** Generation of income has been impacted by Covid-19. This has resulted in reduced interest income, court summons fees and a reduction in demand for traded services.
- 3.4.8 **Employees:** The favourable variance is largely driven by staff vacancies as a result of the recruitment freeze, secondment to Public Health Covid-19 duties and additional capitalisation of postholders working on capital projects within the IT, PMO and HR &OD Team (£1.08m). It should be noted that the Finance team are experiencing pressures due to the additional management burden caused by the national funding for Covid-19 (£0.224m) and pension costs for Committee enhancements (£0.447m). the additional expense incurred by the Finance team may be covered by Covid-19 funding streams.
- 3.4.9 **Non Pay:** The favourable variance is largely driven by the reduced costs of financing capital activity due to the lower interest rates in the external market and proactive approach to the phasing and delivery of the capital programme (£0.851), the reduced need for bad debt (£0.840m), the delay to project delivery in Digital & IT (£1.111m), and £0.483m as a result of reduced need for equipment due to home working and the utilisation of Covid-19 funding for Local Welfare Assistance and new burdens.
- 3.4.10 **Resources – Pressures and Savings Statement:** The original savings contained within the Resources directorate related to Treasury Investment income, which had a target budget of £3.1m, inclusive of a savings target of £1.5m. As described in paragraph 3.4.6, a drop in interest rates have made this saving difficult to deliver. A revised approach to the implementation of the Capital Programme has had a positive impact on the revenue cost of capital however and offsets the issue evident against delivery of savings.
- 3.4.11 **Support Services Overheads:** This budget position moved from Quarter 2 (£6.562m) to the current position In Neighbourhoods to reflect the value of contribution of the Public Health monies to the Leisure and Environmental Health.
- 3.4.12 **Movement on Reserves:** The reserves are expected to be utilised as per budget.

### 3.5 Legal & Governance

- 3.5.1 As at the end of December 2020 the forecast for year-end for Legal & Governance is an adverse position of £0.494m against a budget of £5.7m. The key drivers for this adverse position are directly linked to Covid-19 which has delayed the implementation of the new structure in Legal and Governance which has increased reliance on locum support, and income losses in the Registrars service as a result of national guidance in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**TABLE 9 2020/21 Legal & Governance – Service Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Law & Governance	1,770	1,786	(16)	-1%	Adverse
Legal Services	1,314	1,889	(576)	-44%	Adverse
Democratic & Member Services	2,825	2,733	93	3%	Favourable
Coroner Service	680	680	0	0%	
Electoral Service	584	275	309	53%	Favourable
Registrar Service	(226)	78	(304)	-134%	Adverse
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>6,946</b>	<b>7,441</b>	<b>(494)</b>	<b>-7%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	(481)	(481)	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(750)	(750)	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>5,715</b>	<b>6,209</b>	<b>(494)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.5.2 **Law & Governance:** Reporting a forecast of a small adverse variance of £0.016m as locum staffing are covering critical vacant posts.

3.5.3 **Legal Services:** Reporting an overall £0.576m adverse forecast variance. There has been a drop in Licencing income of £0.148m impacted by the current pandemic. There are pressures in staffing where locum staff are covering permanent roles, a forecast adverse variance of £0.459m.

3.5.4 **Democratic & Members Services:** Reporting a £0.093m favourable forecast largely due to vacancy slippage caused by in year delays in the introduction of the new Committee system, these are expected to materialise in the next financial year.

3.5.5 **Coroners Service:** Reporting a balanced budget. Excess death costs caused by Covid-19, are covered by Covid-19 specific funding.

3.5.6 **Electoral Service:** Reporting a £0.309m favourable forecast variance. The lack of election activity in 2020/21 as a result of Covid-19 has meant less need for Employee and Non-Pay costs, which vary with election activity.

3.5.7 **Registrar Service:** Reporting an adverse forecast variance from budget of £0.304m. Reduced income for Registrar services, caused by the national lockdown restrictions, e.g. in respect of weddings, is a main component of the forecast variance. These income losses, in part, are mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Charges income compensation scheme.

**TABLE 10 2020/21 Legal & Governance – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Income	(3,516)	(3,104)	(413)	-12%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	4,121	4,276	(156)	-4%	Adverse
Non Pay	6,342	6,268	74	1%	Favourable
Cost of Care	0	0	0	0%	
Total Expenditure	<b>10,463</b>	<b>10,544</b>	<b>(82)</b>	<b>-1%</b>	Adverse
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>6,946</b>	<b>7,441</b>	<b>(494)</b>	<b>-7%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	(481)	(481)	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(750)	(750)	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>5,715</b>	<b>6,209</b>	<b>(494)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

- 3.5.8 **Income:** Demand for services such as Registrars and Licencing has been significantly impacted by national guidelines instigated as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is, in part, mitigated by the national Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme.
- 3.5.9 **Employees:** This adverse forecast variance is due to the reliance on locum support to cover the vacant posts within the structure. There have been challenges in recruiting to some of the permanent posts, all appointment of locums is subject to a rigorous process to ensure value for money is sought whilst meeting critical organisational needs. However, the overall forecast adverse position has been mitigated by staff vacancies in Electoral Services (lack of elections), and Democratic and Members Services (delay to full restructure implementation and recruitment freeze).
- 3.5.10 **Non Pay:** There is a small favourable forecast variance due to the reduced need for Electoral activity in the current year.
- 3.5.11 **Movement on reserves:** The reserves for Legal & Governance are in place to support a permanent restructure. The Covid-19 situation has caused delays to the restructure and the reserves will be held to ensure the permanent structure can later be implemented.

### 3.5.12 Legal & Governance – Pressures and Savings Statement

No savings targets were highlighted in this area, however there is an expectation that a pressure will transpire for the forthcoming elections called in the next fiscal year, some of this is mitigated by shared costs for the next election (IPCC and the City Region Mayor). It is likely there will be increased costs due to Covid-19 protective measures that will be required.

## 3.6 Regeneration & Place

3.6.1 As at the end of December 2020, the forecast year-end position for Regeneration & Place is a small adverse variance of £0.089m against a budget of £35.6m.

**TABLE 11 2020/21 Regeneration & Place – Service Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Regeneration	25,380	25,786	(406)	-2%	Adverse
Housing	6,714	6,481	233	3%	Favourable
Asset Management & Investment	4,416	4,146	270	6%	Favourable
Planning	827	1,024	(198)	-24%	Adverse
Special Projects	141	129	11	8%	Favourable
Local Plan	1,522	1,522	0	0%	
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>38,999</b>	<b>39,088</b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	(2,261)	(2,261)	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(1,122)	(1,122)	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>35,616</b>	<b>35,705</b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.6.2 **Regeneration:** £0.406m adverse forecast position has as a result of the in-year delay to the strategic restructure for the Regeneration and Place team (£0.225m). In the original plan for this service, it had been agreed to fund growth to ensure a sustainable service could be delivered. In light of the difficulties for the organisation caused by Covid-19, this plan has been rephased to 2021/22, releasing funds to support the wider organisational budget gap. However urgent activity did need to be conducted, and this is being delivered by locum staff, the expense of this shows within this service.

3.6.3 **Housing:** £0.233m favourable forecast variance is evident against a budget of £6.7m. The service is maximising the use of one-off grants for Homelessness activity and are utilising the Better Care Fund more efficiently to offset eligible service expenditure. A Supported Housing favourable variance of £0.153 has been forecast using the current occupancy rates and taken into account an increase in income recovery from minor works carried out by the home adaptation team.

- 3.6.4 **Asset Management & Investment:** Reporting a net £0.270m favourable forecast, which can be broken down into several distinct areas. £0.1m saving against Disabled Access budgets due to the temporary or permanent closure of Council used buildings, with those buildings being used already being Equality Act compliant. £0.295m favourable variance from the premises budget for utility expenditure and £0.141m in maintenance costs for closed council buildings. These favourable variances are partially offset by the impact of the £0.254m adverse forecast variance for Birkenhead Market rent income losses, other small income losses for rental of buildings accounting for the remainder of the variance. The income losses, are in part, mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme.
- 3.6.5 **Chief Planner:** The adverse forecast variance of £0.198m is due to income losses as a result of reduced demand for Planning Applications as a result of Covid-19 and additional pressure from the increased contract/exceedance costs of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. The income losses, are in part, mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme.
- 3.6.6 **Special Projects & Regeneration:** There is a small favourable forecast variance of £0.011m. This is due to projects being put on hold as a consequence of Covid-19.
- 3.6.7 **Local Plan:** Reported balanced position utilising the earmarked reserve.
- 3.6.8 **Movement of Reserves:** This reserve is primarily held for the Local Plan.

**TABLE 12 2020/21 Regeneration & Place – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Income	(10,331)	(10,320)	(11)	0%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	12,052	12,734	(682)	-6%	Adverse
Non Pay	37,279	36,674	604	2%	Favourable
Cost of Care	0	0	0	0%	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>49,331</b>	<b>49,409</b>	<b>(78)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>38,999</b>	<b>39,088</b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	(2,261)	(2,261)	0		
Movement on Reserves	(1,122)	(1,122)	0		
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>35,616</b>	<b>35,705</b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.6.9 **Income:** The directorate is encountering significant income losses in areas such as planning and Birkenhead Market as a result of Covid-19 restrictions, however the overall position is mitigated by improvements in grant funding in Housing.

3.6.10 **Employee:** This adverse variance is due to agency costs covering time sensitive work. The team was subject to a restructure at the beginning of the year, which was paused to enable resources being diverted to the Covid-19 effort. These costs are not expected to be a permanent pressure, as once the team has been fully recruited, there will be reduced need for temporary staffing. The additional expense is mitigated by employing only those required for urgent, time-limited and statutory items.

3.6.11 **Non Pay:** Although the overall favourable variance here is representative of significant project activity paused to enable the Covid response, it should be noted that there an adverse variance in relation to the Transport Levy contained within this area (£0.266m).

### **3.7 Neighbourhoods**

3.7.1 The Neighbourhoods directorate is predicting an adverse budget variance of £12.849m at year-end. This is due to income losses within Leisure Centres, Floral Pavilion, Car Parking and Garden Waste Subscriptions due to temporary closures and suspension of these services from the beginning of the year, due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Garden Waste collections recommenced in May, with subscriptions for

2020/21 being received in August. Income generated from other services affected by Covid-19 has been minimal for the first 3 quarters. The majority of income losses in this directorate are, in part, mitigated by the Sales, Fees and Compensation scheme, which is recorded as a separate and distinct funding stream within this report.

Plans for the phased reopening of Leisure Centres, Libraries and Museums were delayed until the necessary work was carried out to make them Covid secure. The work was completed in some Leisure Centres in September and some sites reopened for a brief period. However subsequent government guidance and restrictions has meant that services were only open for a short period in Quarter 3 and there is uncertainty around whether anything will reopen in the final Quarter. This impacts on income generation across the service, with all forecasts now assuming there will be no Quarter 4 income. The service partially mitigated the losses earlier in the year by maximising income generation from activities that are permitted and there were plans to continue with this in the final quarter. However, at present it is unclear as to whether any activities can recommence before the end of the financial year. The service has worked to achieve some limited savings relating to utilities and premises costs.

Many of the staff have been redeployed onto Covid-19 emergency response functions such as the Food Hub, PPE Distribution and the Covid-19 Helpline, meaning that the costs incurred in Neighbourhoods directorate remain high even though income and core activity has fallen. Work is being undertaken to see if the cost of employment of re-assigned staffing can be funded by Covid-19 funding streams to mitigate these pressures.

Financial projections pre Covid-19 would have anticipated a forecast balanced budget, but Covid-19 has decimated the income possibilities for 2020/21. Total income for the affected areas was budgeted at £15.654m for the year, therefore as the total income shortfall is currently predicted to be in excess of £12m, a reduction of almost 65% is evident in the forecast.

**TABLE 13 2020/21 Neighbourhoods – Service Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Neighbourhood Safety & Transport	2,904	3,181	(276)	-10%	Adverse
Highways and Infrastructure	6,416	8,760	(2,344)	-37%	Adverse
Leisure, Libraries and Customer Engagement	9,640	19,030	(9,390)	-97%	Adverse
Parks and Environment	34,629	35,468	(839)	-2%	Adverse
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>53,590</b>	<b>66,439</b>	<b>(12,849)</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	3,484	3,484	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(1,152)	(1,152)	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>55,922</b>	<b>68,771</b>	<b>(12,849)</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

**3.7.2 Neighbourhood Safety & Transport:** An adverse variance of £0.276m is projected as at Quarter 3. This is mainly due to an under achievement of income within Community Patrol following the loss of several contracts in previous years, resulting in an adverse variance of £0.134m. Employees is projecting an adverse variance of £0.82m due to Community Patrol and Transport Depot. The remaining adverse variance of £0.60m relates to payments to Suppliers. The service has attempted to seek additional income generation opportunities for new clients, however there is an insufficient market for this. The service is also exploring the possibility of utilising Covid-19 funding to mitigate some of the additional costs against employees with Community Patrol. Most of these costs have arisen because of increased pressure on the service due to a rise in footfall and anti-social behaviour within the local area directly related to the ongoing pandemic.

**3.7.3 Highways & Infrastructure:** An adverse variance of £2.344m is projected as at Quarter 3. This is mainly due to a loss of Car Parking income following temporary suspension of charges as directed by Members, however parking charges will be reinstated from January 2021. It is now assumed that there will be no material level of income generated from car parking this year in view of the latest restrictions announced by the Government in January.

At present, Car Parking is projecting an adverse variance of £1.898m. The remaining adverse variance within this area consists of an underachievement of Developer Income (£0.198m) and Inspection income (£0.248m). The service has attempted to mitigate some of these losses through generating additional income (circa £0.1m) from road closures, permits and traffic signals due to an increase in demand for utilities company works.

**3.7.4 Leisure, Libraries and Customer Engagement:** This area covers Leisure Centres, Golf Courses, Libraries, Museums and the Floral Pavilion. All income associated with these services ceased from 23rd March due to Covid-19 restrictions. Government guidance allowed for these services to recommence from the end of July, however planned reopening was delayed so that work could be carried out to make them Covid secure at significant additional costs. The planned remobilisation of these service has been interrupted by the constant changes in government guidance and restrictions in the form of the Tier System and further national lockdowns. This has severely limited income generation opportunities.

As a result of this, the area is projecting an adverse variance of £9.39m. This is predominantly due to loss of income within Leisure Centres (£7.55m) because of their temporary closure. The service has worked to mitigate losses through premises and contracts savings. Work is also being carried out to maximise income generation from Golf, outdoor football, and outdoor exercise classes. There are plans to recommence these services again in accordance with Government guidance.

In future the service may be limited further in the amount of income generated from Leisure Centres as several sites are currently being used as vaccination sites and the Food Hub has recently been reinstated at one site. Additional income may be available from partnership agencies to fund the additional costs of running these centres.

The Floral Pavilion is projecting an adverse variance due to underachievement of income of £2.2m. This assumes that the service will not fully reopen for live shows for the remainder of the financial year. The service has partially mitigated this through savings against Supplies and Third-Party payments to production companies.

A small amount of income is projected relating to the catering offer. There are smaller income losses expected relating to Libraries (£0.177m), One Stop Shops (£0.095m) and Museums (£0.021m), with none of these services projected to achieve any of their income targets this year. Capital projects which were planned to improve income generation in these areas have been delayed due to Covid-19. They are unlikely to recommence this financial year, however there may be plans to continue with them later in 2021/22 subject to review. The Commercial team has been consolidated within Finance & Investment, causing a budget movement from Neighbourhoods.

**3.7.5 Parks & Environment:** An adverse variance of £0.839m is projected as at Quarter 3. This is due to temporary suspension of the Garden Waste Service (£0.540m) caused by Covid-19 as result of workforce prioritisation. The income loss within Waste is partially mitigated through projected favourable variances against payments to the contractor of £0.102m. The other main loss relates to income from football and bowling clubs within Parks (£0.562m), with most of this being front loaded towards the beginning of the spring season when these activities were not permitted. The income loss within Parks is partially mitigated through a projected reduction in Planned Preventative Maintenance work of £0.161m, which has resulted in cost avoidance and contributed towards supporting the pollinator programme.

The Garden Waste service achieved the target of 40,000 subscribers at a reduced rate. Work is underway to attract additional garden waste subscribers for 2020/21 through marketing campaigns. The new direct debit scheme has been implemented, which exceeded the initial target and will help with customer retention in future years. Plans are underway in Parks to reopen their facilities to sports clubs in line with government guidance and some income has been recovered.

3.7.6 **Movement on Reserves:** Full year forecast is in line with budget.

**TABLE 14 2020/21 Neighbourhoods – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Income	(30,282)	(16,704)	(13,578)	-45%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	32,190	32,292	(102)	0%	Adverse
Non Pay	51,682	50,851	831	2%	Favourable
Cost of Care	0	0	0	0%	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>83,872</b>	<b>83,143</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>53,590</b>	<b>66,439</b>	<b>(12,849)</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	3,484	3,484	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	(1,152)	(1,152)	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>55,922</b>	<b>68,771</b>	<b>(12,849)</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.7.7 **Income:** The overall projected adverse position of £12.849m is mainly due to income losses. This relates to Leisure Centres, Floral Pavilion, Car Parking and Garden Waste Subscriptions due to temporary closures and suspension of these services from the beginning of the year, due to the outbreak of Covid-19. The service is attempting to mitigate these losses through a reduction in expenditure against Utilities, Planned Preventative Maintenance and through maximising income generation in other areas as far as possible. These incomes losses are, in part, mitigated by the national Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme, which is recorded separately.

3.7.8 **Employee:** The forecast adverse position is driven by additional staffing costs required for Community Patrol in response to Covid-19.

3.7.9 **Non Pay:** The forecast favourable position is largely driven by reduced costs associated with the reduction of income generating activity.

### 3.8 Chief Executive’s Office

3.8.1 The Chief Executive Office directorate is predicting an adverse budget variance of £0.178 at year-end against a budget of £1.471m. Covid-19 has significantly impacted the ability of Wirral to generate marketing income but has also seen some savings materialising that have reduced the full impact.

**TABLE 15 2020/21 Chief Executive Office –Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b>		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	(+ Fav, - Adv) £000	%	
Chief Executive Office	1,388	1,566	(178)	-13%	Adverse
<b>Directorate Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>(178)</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	83	83	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	0	0	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,471</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>(178)</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.8.2 **Chief Executive Office:** There is a £0.178m forecast adverse variance which is mainly due to £0.238m loss of income in Corporate Marketing, this is mitigated by reduced requirement for non-pay costs associated with income generation. The Customer Complaints team has been aligned with similar services in Digital and Improvement, causing a budget movement from Chief Executive Office

**TABLE 16 2020/21 Chief Executive Office – Subjective Budget & Forecast**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Income	(321)	(63)	(258)	-80%	Adverse
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employee	1,534	1,594	(60)	-4%	Adverse
Non Pay	176	35	141	80%	Favourable
Cost of Care	0	0	0	0%	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,709</b>	<b>1,629</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,566</b>	<b>(178)</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>
Support / Admin Building Overhead	83	83	0	0%	
Movement on Reserves	0	0	0	0%	
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,471</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>(178)</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>Adverse</b>

3.8.3 **Income:** The adverse forecast variance reflects reduced activity in external marketing income expectations from the Communications service, for which demand has reduced in light of Covid-19.

3.8.4 **Employee Expenditure:** The adverse forecast variance is the result of staff secondment into the Corporate Office.

3.8.5 **Non Pay Expenditure:** The favourable variance is driven by the reduced cost associated with Marketing.

3.8.6 **Movement on Reserves:** There are no reserves held by this Directorate.

**TABLE 17 2020/21 Cross Cutting Initiatives**

	<b>Original Saving Proposal</b>	<b>Allocated to Directorates</b>	<b>To Achieve</b>
<b>Savings Initiative</b>	£000	£000	£000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employee - New Council Model	-5,000	-4,427	-573
Employee - Capitalisation of Salaries	-1,550	-1,550	0
Non Pay - Contract Reduction	-4,550	-23	-4,527
Non Pay - Zero Based Budget	-640	-354	-286
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>-11,740</b>	<b>-6,354</b>	<b>-5,386</b>

3.8.7 This table represents the savings value of the budgets required to deliver the organisational balanced position, as agreed at Council in March 2020. All other initiatives are held within the directorate-specific areas.

3.8.8 When a saving is delivered, the budget reduction is reflected in the directorate that has supported the saving.

3.8.9 The original endeavour underpinning the New Council Model required large scale, organisational-wide strategic activity. The Covid-19 pandemic reduced the availability of resources and time to be able to deliver these plans, and as such, are considered to be undeliverable in a sustainable manner and has been restated as a pressure in 2021/22, but work is underway to ensure that savings of this nature are deliverable in future periods.

3.8.10 The allocation of savings to New Council Model represents a temporary salary saving driven by organisational-wide vacancies and the implementation of a recruitment freeze, which started in September. The Senior Leadership Team review, and where appropriate, authorise any recruitment to vacant posts to minimise and control expenditure. Recruitment activity will reduce the value of this saving over time.

3.8.11 The allocation of savings to Capital is complete, and not expected to yield further gains.

3.8.12 The zero-based budget activity represents savings from stationery and mileage, largely driven by the workforce largely working from home.

3.8.13 A large scale review of contract expenditure has taken place, the full saving is limited by both the availability of internal resources to deliver the project and national restrictions imposed due to Covid-19.

**TABLE 18 2020/21 Flexible Use of Capital Receipts**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Variance</b> (+ Fav, - Adv)		<b>Adv/Fav</b>
	£000	£000	£000	%	
<b>Capital Receipts</b>	(4,500)	(1,200)	(3,300)	-73%	Adverse

3.8.14 Until 2022/23, the Council have the option to use the receipts from assets sales to fund revenue expenditure, if it is of a transformational nature, i.e. that it delivers a long term revenue benefit.

3.8.15 In 2021/22, £4.5m of assets sales had been built into financial plans, which would be used to fund the revenue budget as per 3.8.13, however, there has been a further deterioration to the forecast from Quarter 1 as there is a delay in the sale of Arrowe Park Road, Upton which will not be realised in 2020/21. The forecast position at the end of quarter 3 is that £1.2m capital receipts will be realised by year-end, resulting in an adverse variance from budget of £3.3m.

### 3.9 Covid Funding

3.9.1 Covid funding received, or expected to be received, as at Quarter 3 of 2020-21 totals £193.592m, of which £41.1m is for use by the Council, and £7.468m mitigates the income pressures. It should be noted that some funding, specifically £10m Tranche 5 and the £0.483m Lower Tier Services Grant, is for use in 2021/22.

**TABLE 19 NATIONAL COVID-19 ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

<b>Funding Title</b>	<b>Value</b> <b>£</b>
<b>FULLY PASSPORTED FUNDING:</b>	
Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) & Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF)	49,830,250
Local Authority Discretionary Grant Funding	2,637,750
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) - Local Restriction Support Grants	29,576,831
Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)- LRSG Christmas Support Payment (Wet-led Pubs)	115,200
Business Improvement District Funding	21,844
Section 31 Grants - Business Rates Relief	32,029,913
Council Tax Hardship Fund	3,910,992
Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority - LCR Hospitality & Leisure Support Grant	3,480,212

<b>TOTAL FULLY PASSPORTED FUNDING</b>	<b>121,602,992</b>
<b>PARTIALLY PASSPORTED FUNDING:</b>	
Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	453,829
Test & Trace £500 Payment Support Payment Scheme & Administration	309,447
Department for Work & Pensions - Covid Winter Grant Scheme	1,224,617
Care Home Infection Control Fund Round 1	4,743,521
Care Home Infection Control Fund Round 2	4,087,305
Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Adult Social Care	1,167,692
Department of Health & Social Care - Workforce Capacity Fund (Care Home Staff)	900,185
<b>TOTAL PARTIALLY PASSPORTED FUNDING</b>	<b>12,886,596</b>
<b>FUNDING FOR COUNCIL USE:</b>	
Emergency Covid-19 Funding (Tranche 1 to 4)	29,365,836
Test and Trace Service Support	2,733,018
Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund	286,292
Emergency Fund for Rough Sleepers	4,500
BEIS - New Burdens: Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) & Retail Hospitality & Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF)	170,000
BEIS - New Burdens: Local Authority Discretionary Grant Funding (LADGF)	76,500
MHCLG - New Burdens (Council Tax Hardship Fund & Business Rate Reliefs)	44,784
LA Compliance & Enforcement	198,512
DHSC - Test & Trace Contain Outbreak Management Fund Local Covid Alert Level Surge Funding Grant	5,900,468
MHCLG - Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) grant	227,000
Community testing - MRF LCR SMART SILVER	2,137,405
<b>TOTAL FOR COUNCIL USE 2020/21 (Budget)</b>	<b>41,144,315</b>
Sales, Fees & Charges Compensation Receipt (to November 2020)	<b>7,468,347</b>

<b>FUNDING FOR COUNCIL USE (2021/22):</b>	
Emergency Covid-19 Funding 21/22 - Tranche 5	10,006,249
Lower Tier Services grant 21/22	483,995
<b>TOTAL FOR COUNCIL USE 2021/22</b>	<b>10,490,244</b>
<b>TOTAL COVID FUNDING</b>	<b>193,592,494</b>

3.9.2 **Additional Grants:** Since Quarter 2 of 2020/21, anticipated Covid funding has increased by £7.7m, as summarised in the table below, with further detail on the key increases provided in the narrative that follows:

**TABLE 20 2020/21 Covid Funding Changes from Q2 to Q3 2020/21**

	<i>Increase/ (decrease) £</i>
<b>FULLY PASSPORTED FUNDING:</b>	
MHCLG - Local Restriction Support Grants	29,576,831
LCR CA - LCR Hospitality & Leisure Support Grant	3,480,212
BEIS - LRSG Christmas Support Payment (Wet-led Pubs)	115,200
Section 31 Grants - Business Rates Relief	1,913
Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) & Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF)	-11,184,000
Total LCR allocation support for businesses	-30,000,000
<b>FULLY PASSPORTED FUNDING DECREASE</b>	<b>-8,009,844</b>
<b>PARTIALLY PASSPORTED FUNDING:</b>	
DWP - Covid Winter Grant Scheme	1,224,617
Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Adult Social Care	1,167,692
DHSC - Workforce Capacity Fund (Care Home Staff)	900,185
Care Home Infection Control Fund Round 2	1,000
<b>PARTIALLY PASSPORTED FUNDING INCREASE:</b>	<b>3,293,494</b>
<b>FUNDING FOR COUNCIL USE:</b>	
DHSC - Test & Trace Contain Outbreak Management Fund Local Covid Alert Level Surge Funding Grant	2,532,468
Community testing - MRF LCR SMART SILVER	2,137,405
MHCLG - Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) grant	227,000
BEIS - New Burdens: Local Authority Discretionary Grant Funding (LADGF)	76,500
MHCLG - New Burdens (Council Tax Hardship Fund & Business Rate Reliefs)	44,784
Emergency Fund for Rough Sleepers	500
<b>INCREASE IN FUNDING FOR COUNCIL USE</b>	<b>5,018,657</b>
Sales, Fees & Charges Compensation Receipt (to November 2020)	<b>7,468,347</b>

<b>TOTAL COVID FUNDING INCREASE SINCE QUARTER 2 for Financial Year 2020/21</b>	<b>7,770,654</b>
<b>FUNDING FOR COUNCIL USE (2021/22):</b>	
Emergency Covid-19 Funding 21/22 - Tranche 5	10,006,249
Lower Tier Services grant 21/22	483,995
	<b>10,490,244</b>
<b>TOTAL COVID FUNDING INCREASE SINCE QUARTER 2 2020</b>	<b>18,260,898</b>

### 3.9.3 Fully passported funding decrease (£8.0m)

**Key components of the increase in fully passported funding:** Additional Local Restriction Support Grants totalling £29.6m have been made available to support businesses required to close, or which have been severely impacted by local or national restrictions. Further funding of £3.5m has also been received to provide additional support for businesses in the form of the LCR Hospitality & Leisure Support grant. Funding of £0.1m, in the form of Local Restriction Support Grants, for wet-led pubs over the Christmas period has also been made available.

These funding increases are offset by the removal of £30m of LCR support for local businesses, resulting from the changes in the way that funding is being provided, and the formal return of un-utilised Small Business Grant Fund, £11.9m.

### 3.9.4 Partially passported funding increase (£3.3m)

**Covid Winter Grant Scheme (£1.2m):** On Sunday 8 November 2020, the Government package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme will be provided to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. The Council's allocation was £1,224,697.

Funding will be provided from DWP to Councils who will administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This will include some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time.

The Winter Grant Scheme will enable Local Authorities to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals from early December 2020 and covers the period until the end of March 2021.

**Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Adult Social Care (£1.2m):** The Government recently announced a £149 million grant to Local Authorities, ringfenced for lateral flow device testing in adult social care. Wirral's share of this grant is £1,167,692. Local authorities will be required to pass on 80% of the funding to care homes on a per beds basis, with 20% used at the local authority's discretion to support the care sector in delivering additional lateral flow device testing.

**DHSC - Workforce Capacity Fund: Care Home Staff (£0.9m):** As part of a package of £120 million funding, Wirral will receive a further £900,185 to help local authorities to boost adult social care staffing levels. The funding can also be used to provide additional care staff where shortages arise, to support administrative tasks so experienced and skilled staff can focus on providing care and to help existing staff to take on additional hours if they wish, with overtime payments or by covering childcare costs.

### 3.9.5 Increase in funding for Council use (£13m 2020/21 & £10.5m 2021/22)

**Emergency Covid-19 Funding 2021/22 – Tranche 5 (£10m):** Four tranches of the COVID-19 Emergency funding provided in March, April, July and October were un-ringfenced, in that they were to provide a direct response to the COVID-19 emergency but within the discretion of Local Authorities as to where they would direct this funding.

On 17 December 2020, the Secretary of State announced further Tranche 5 funding support for local authorities in financial year 2021 to 2022 of £1.55 billion, of which Wirral's share will be £10,006,249.

**Sales, Fees & Charges compensation (£7.5m):** Claims for compensation for loss of Sales, Fees and Charges income from April to the end of November 2020 of £7.5m have now been submitted and the first claim for the first four months has now been received (£4.4m). The full year forecast for this scheme is £10.7m (Table 1) Further claims will be submitted for the remainder of the year and into 21/22 as the scheme has been extended until June 2021.

**Contain Outbreak Management Fund (£2.5m):** The Contain Outbreak Management Fund has been increased since Quarter 2 following the continuance of local and national lockdown periods. This has resulted in an increase of £2.5m for Wirral to fund activities such as Enforcement, Test & Trace and support for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

**Community testing - MRF LCR SMART SILVER (£2.1m):** This activity is an LCR and Combined authority partnership for asymptomatic testing but with a focus on a new SMART (Systematic, Meaningful, Asymptomatic, Repeated Testing) approach. It's focus is on reducing transmission of COVID 19 and reducing the impact it has on the elderly, the disadvantaged, hard to reach and those most at risk. Wirral's share of funding for this activity is £2,137,405.

**Lower Tier Services grant 21/22 (£0.5m):** As New homes bonus payments will reduce by £285m in 2021/22 in what the government has said will be the scheme's final year, Councils with responsibility for services such as homelessness, planning, recycling and refuse collection and leisure services, will benefit from a new £111m lower tier services grant. Wirral's share of this grant will be £483,995, which is expected to be allocated to fund the increased costs of Waste services resulting from Covid-19.

**Other small grants:** Further funding to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable of £227,000 is anticipated, along with further New Burdens funding from both BEIS

(£76,500) and MHCLG (£44,784) to fund the costs of administering Covid reliefs and grants.

**3.9.6 Additional Funding not yet received or fully confirmed:** Further funding is anticipated in the following areas but remains as yet unconfirmed:

- Wirral Council is expected to receive a share of the £13,851,521 Additional Restrictions Support Grant top-up payment allocated to LCR, with allocations to be confirmed and;
- A further allocation of the Test & Trace £500 Payment Support Scheme is also anticipated from a central scheme totalling £20.4m. This is fund is to provide continued support to those having to self-isolate.
- A further £10m (Tranche 5) was announced in the National Spending Review, this relates specifically to 2021/22

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This is the Quarter 3 budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Council for 2020/21. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The role of the Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.

5.2 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

5.3 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the Council has to set its budget before 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.

5.4 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates

made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 5.5 Consultation must take place in accordance with the Council's duties under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The detailed summary of responses provided are attached in the appendix to this report. It must be borne in mind that this is consultation on the budget proposals, not on the decision to take whatever decision is implied by the adoption of that budget. The consultation process, including the Council's consideration of the responses, is required to comply with the following overarching obligations (unless detailed statutory rules supplant these):
- (a) Consultation must be at a time when proposals are at a formative stage.
  - (b) The proposer must give sufficient reasons for its proposals to allow consultees to understand them and respond to them properly.
  - (c) Consulters must give sufficient time for responses to be made and considered.
  - (d) Responses must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the decision. This is the same whether or not a public body was required to consult or chooses to do so. This is because all of those rules are aspects of an overriding requirement for 'fairness'. The process must be substantively fair and have the appearance of fairness. The setting of the budget and council tax by Members involves their consideration of choices.
- 5.6 When considering options, Members must bear in mind their fiduciary duty to the council taxpayers of Wirral. Members must have adequate evidence on which to base their decisions on the level of quality at which services should be provided.
- 5.7 Where a service is provided pursuant to a statutory duty, it would not be lawful to fail to discharge it properly or abandon it, and where there is discretion as to how it is to be discharged, that discretion should be exercised reasonably.
- 5.8 The report sets out the relevant considerations for Members to consider during their deliberations and Members are reminded of the need to ignore irrelevant considerations. Members have a duty to seek to ensure that the Council acts lawfully. Members must not come to a decision which no reasonable authority could come to; balancing the nature, quality and level of services which they consider should be provided, against the costs of providing such services.
- 5.9 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to its decision.
- 5.10 The public sector equality duty is that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 5.11 Any decision made in the exercise of any function is potentially open to challenge if the duty has been disregarded. The duty applies both to Full Council when setting the budget and to Committees when considering particular decisions.

- 5.12 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees may not act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.13 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.
- 5.14 Members are also individually reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to this meeting. Members who are two months or more in arrears with their Council Tax must declare this to the meeting and must not vote on budget recommendations, as to do otherwise can be a criminal offence.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

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

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:
1. Senior Leadership / Directorate Teams regularly reviewing the financial position.
  2. Availability of General Fund Balances.
  3. Review of existing services and service provision.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

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

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. This report has no impact for equality implications at this stage, however any associated actions may require an assessment.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report on financial performance.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) Guidance  
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) Guidance  
Local Authority Discretionary Grant Funding Guidance  
MHCLG - Local Restriction Support Grants Guidance  
BEIS - LRSG Christmas Support Payment (Wet-led Pubs) Guidance  
Business Improvement District Funding Guidance  
Section 31 Grants - Business Rates Relief Guidance  
Council Tax Hardship Fund Guidance  
LCR CA - LCR Hospitality & Leisure Support Grant Guidance  
DWP - Covid Winter Grant Scheme Guidance  
Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing in Adult Social Care Guidance  
DHSC - Workforce Capacity Fund (Care Home Staff) Guidance  
Care Home Infection Control Fund Round 2 Guidance  
Sales, Fees & Charges Compensation Guidance  
DHSC - Test & Trace Contain Outbreak Management Fund Local Covid Alert Level Surge  
Funding Grant Guidance  
Community testing Guidance  
Lower Tier Services grant Guidance  
MHCLG - Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) grant Guidance  
BEIS - New Burdens: Local Authority Discretionary Grant Funding (LADGF) Guidance  
MHCLG - New Burdens (Council Tax Hardship Fund & Business Rate Reliefs) Guidance  
Emergency Fund for Rough Sleepers Guidance

### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>7 October 2020</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>3 November 2020</b>

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 67 CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER THREE 2020/21

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, provided an update on the progress of the Capital Programme 2020/21 at the end of December 2020. The report recommended that the Committee agree the revised 2020/21 Capital Programme of £86.0 million which took account of re-profiling, virements, additional funding requirements and grant variations identified since the Capital Programme was formally agreed on 2 March 2020.

Shaer Halewood reported upon one change to paragraph 3.8.3 in the report, in that the Capital Receipts flexibilities had now been extended until 31 March 2025 which could be used to support expenditure that was 'Transformational' in nature.

In response to a Member's comment, Shaer Halewood stated that she would need to investigate further in respect of the virement of funds from Beechwood Leisure Centre to West Kirby Sailing School.

On a motion by the Chair seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was -

#### **A. RECOMMENDED –**

**(1) to Council the approval of additional funding for the schemes referred to in section 3.5 in the report, as follows:**

- **Birkenhead Park World Heritage Project Team - £0.085m (over a three year period)**
- **Connecting Wirral Waters - Detailed Design - £0.610m (over a two year period)**

**(2) to Council the approval of the revised Capital Programme of £86.0million for 2020-21, including the virements referred to in Appendix 3 in the report.**

**B. Resolved – That this Committee agrees that the outcome of the on-going review and reprofiling of the Capital Programme is reported to Members in the next quarterly capital monitoring report.**

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 3 2020/21</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the progress of the Capital Programme 2020/21 at the end of December 2020. It recommends that Committee agree the revised 2020/21 Capital Programme of £86.0 million which takes account of re-profiling, virements, additional funding requirements and grant variations identified since the Capital Programme was formally agreed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020.

This matter is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1 The Committee recommends to Council the approval of additional funding for the schemes referred to in section 3.5 in this report.
- 2 The Committee recommends to Council the approval of the revised Capital Programme of £86.0 million for 2020-21, including the virements referred to in Appendix 3 in this report.
- 3 The Committee agrees that the outcome of the on-going review and reprofiling of the Capital Programme is reported to members in the next quarterly capital monitoring report.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Capital Programme enables decisions to be taken faster, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control in Wirral Council.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other reporting frequencies could be considered, but quarterly reporting is a standard practice.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 3.1 Capital Programme 2020/21 Position by Directorate

**Table 1: Wirral Council 2020/21 Full Year Capital Budget and Forecast Position**

Programme	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Adult Care & Health	7.550	0.991	(6.56)	-87%
Children, Families & Education	5.500	3.614	(1.89)	-34%
Cross Cutting Initiatives	5.500	17.470	11.97	218%
Neighbourhoods	22.625	34.304	11.68	52%
Regeneration & Place	54.354	26.871	(27.48)	-51%
Resources	8.314	2.754	(5.56)	-67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103.843</b>	<b>86.004</b>	<b>(17.84)</b>	<b>-17%</b>

NB: items of significant scheme variation are included below.

#### Capital Programme 2020/21 Position by Committee

**Table 2: Wirral Council 2020/21 Full Year Capital Budget and Forecast Position**

Programme	Budget £m	Forecast £m	Variance £m	Variance %
Adult Social Care & Health	7.550	0.991	(6.56)	-87%
Children, Young People & Education	5.500	3.614	(1.89)	-34%
Economy, Regeneration & Development	60.362	40.972	(19.39)	-32%
Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport	21.851	32.805	10.95	50%
Housing	7.806	6.123	(1.68)	-22%
Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure	0.774	1.499	0.72	94%
<b>Total</b>	<b>103.843</b>	<b>86.004</b>	<b>(17.84)</b>	<b>-17%</b>

- 3.1.1 Table 1 provides an update on the 2020/21 capital Programme. A number of significant variations have arisen since the programme was agreed in March 2020. These include the re-profiling of expenditure into and out of the 2020/21 financial year, inclusion of additional grant funded schemes, variations to spend forecasts and the inclusion of potential new capital schemes that are seeking funding via this report. Further detail is provided below.
- 3.1.2 Given the budgetary pressures that the Council faces, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak, a review of the programme continues to try and identify schemes that may no longer be financially viable, essential or deliverable. This review has resulted in scheme reductions totalling £5.81 million and the reprofiling of budget into future years of £61.56 million. It is anticipated that further reductions and/or deferrals of budget will be made as the review continues. Such deferrals will reduce the borrowing costs incurred during 2020/21 (the effects of which are included within the Quarter 3 revenue monitoring) and also delays the resultant MRP charges into future years.
- 3.1.3 Appendix 1 of this report categorises the movement in the forecast programme.

## **3.2 Reprofiling of expenditure**

- 3.2.1 Since the approval of the Capital Programme a number of schemes have had reprofiled budget into 2020/21 from 2019/20.
- 3.2.2 A major influence on the programme has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with schemes being delayed or deferred due to resource constraint and workload reassessment. In light of the enhanced and extreme financial pressures the Authority finds itself facing as a result of the COVID response, a review of the Capital Programme is under way to identify which schemes can either be delayed, deferred or even withdrawn to reduce the ongoing financial commitments that result from the programme.
- 3.2.3 Those schemes that have encountered significant delays as a result of COVID and/or other operational reasons are included with the items of significant variations, summarised in Appendix 2 of this report. A review of the profiling of expenditure within the Capital Programme is continuing and is likely to lead to a further reduction in anticipated spend for the year.

## **3.4 Grant Funded Schemes**

- 3.4.1 The Authority has been successful in its application for grant funding to enable the following schemes to take place. There is no request for new Council funding to be considered as part of these schemes. In the event of any notable grant awards being achieved in the future, the relevant schemes will be introduced into the capital programme via the regular monitoring reports.
- 3.4.2 **Future High Streets Fund - £24.581 million (over a four-year period)**  
The Council has been successful in its application for funding from the 'Future High Streets Fund'. Investment will support areas to recover from the pandemic and help transform underused town centres into vibrant places to live, work and shop. It will enable the delivery of ambitious regeneration plans and fund new local projects such

as improvements to transport infrastructure, new homes and the transformation of underused spaces. £24.6 million has been awarded to the Authority to support the delivery of 186 new homes, road safety improvements and a permanent new space for the historic market in Birkenhead.

#### **3.4.3 Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Funding - £0.561 million**

Additional DFG grant is to help support local authorities to deliver more home adaptations for those people with disabilities who qualify for a DFG.

#### **3.4.4 Town Fund - Birkenhead - £1.000 million**

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) Grant to fund a government programme with the ambition of creating jobs and building stronger and more resilient local economies and communities.

### **3.5 Recommendations to Full Council: Approval for Funding**

#### **3.5.1 Birkenhead Park World Heritage Project Team (£0.085m over a three-year period)**

The World Heritage project team currently consists of two employees with projected annual costs of £0.085 million currently funded from the Heritage Project Reserve. A lottery bid was submitted in Feb 2020 and if accepted, phase 1 funding would have been confirmed in June 2020. The delay in securing the grant has meant that the remaining funding in the reserve is being used to fund the remaining salary costs of the project team for 2020/21. The £0.085 million is required as Wirral's contribution to draw £0.395 million lottery funds. Eligibility to capitalise these costs has been researched. Capitalisation of salaries is on the basis that the posts are purely dedicated to the project and result in the enhancement of a designated asset.

Inclusion of this bid into the Capital programme is subject to the outcome of the Lottery Funding bid being successful.

#### **3.5.2 Connecting Wirral Waters-Detailed Design (£0.610m over a two-year period)**

The Connecting Wirral Waters scheme seeks £0.610 million to undertake detailed design work and surveys to support the full business case development. As part of the development of the business case the cost estimate needs to be refined to provide assurance to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), who are the accountable body for the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) which the council are seeking to utilise to deliver the scheme. The current cost estimate for the scheme through the Outline Business Case is £11.1million of external investment into the borough with the opportunity in the future to claw back some of the capital design costs from the LCRCA in the future.

The scheme will help to connect two areas of regeneration within Birkenhead, at Hind Street in the south and Wirral Waters to the north of the scheme. The scheme has the opportunity for wider benefits to the borough, it will open up parcels of land that have previously been isolated due to the nature of the railway cutting and create regeneration opportunities that will help to transform the town centre. Avison Young

have currently been commissioned as part of the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework to develop the economic case for regeneration of these plots along the corridor.

### 3.6 Other Scheme Matters

#### 3.6.1 MHCLG Capitalisation Directive - £24.45m over a two-year period

The Council applied to the MHCLG for a capitalisation directive known also as 'Exceptional Financial Support.' This would allow the Council to charge to capital additional COVID-19 related costs. Under normal accounting convention such costs would be a revenue item, but the exceptional COVID-19 circumstances have required us to seek capitalisation.

The Ministry have indicated that they are content to approve a capitalisation direction up to a maximum value of £14.8m for 2020/21, subject to conditions. The Policy and Resources Committee as part of the 2021/22 Budget Report, includes a recommendation to Full Council that:

The Council proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February 2021.

### 3.7 Virements

Appendix 3 of this report lists the budget virements have been proposed where schemes have been identified as not requiring the full budget allocation as originally expected. It is proposed that this resource be reallocated to schemes that require additional resource to fully complete the works.

### 3.8 Capital Funding Requirements

Table 3: Financing the Capital Programme 2020/21

Source of Financing	Original Programme £m	Revised Programme £m
Borrowing	55.62	52.89
Grants	28.43	31.81
Capital Receipts	4.50	1.20
Revenue/Reserves	0.02	0.00
Enterprise Zone NNDR Uplift	15.28	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>103.84</b>	<b>86.00</b>

- 3.8.1 Any re-profiling that reduces borrowing will produce one-off revenue savings. A permanent saving only occurs if schemes cease, otherwise the full budget will be required in 2021/22 when the re-profiled expenditure is incurred.

3.8.2 The Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) last year announced a 1% increase in the rate of borrowing. In recent years, the Council has minimised the use of PWLB borrowing as short-term market loans offer lower rates, this could have led to increased costs of approximately £0.5m per annum if borrowing were financed from PWLB. The rate increase has now been reversed but a number of restrictions have been placed upon Local Authorities. These would prevent or limit access to PWLB borrowing in any year where the council seeks to use capital expenditure for any scheme with a primarily yield/return objective.

### Capital Receipts

3.8.3 In accordance with the Capital Receipts flexibilities introduced by the Government capital receipts generated between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2022 can be used to support expenditure that is 'Transformational' in nature.

3.8.4 Within the Capital Programme for 2020/21 is the scope for use of up to £1.2 million of capital receipts to fund expenditure that meets the conditions of the flexible receipts allowance. The costs are being managed through revenue monitoring as this is more appropriate for operational reasons but will be reported as capital at year end.

3.8.5 Application of receipts to fund such expenditure is predicated on the realisation of the receipts within this financial year. If the anticipated receipts do not come to fruition, this will cause a subsequent pressure in the revenue budget as the costs will need to remain within the revenue budget for funding, rather than via capital receipts. In 2020/21 there has been a deterioration of the capital receipts forecast, from an original £4.5 million to a forecast as at quarter 3 of £1.2 million.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This is the Quarter 3 budget monitoring report that provides information on the forecast outturn and progress against the capital programme. The Council has systems for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Committees, the financial position is reported monthly at each Directorate Management Team and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year.

4.2 The revenue impact of the additional borrowing required to fund all new bids is:

**Table 4: Additional financing costs to fund new bids**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Additional revenue cost	0.012	0.029	0.036	0.037

4.3 It is estimated that these costs will peak in 2050/51 at £0.042 million reflecting the fact that the principal repayment associated with debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision) increases over the expected life of the asset funded from borrowing.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

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

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

- (i) Senior Leadership / Directorate Teams regularly reviewing the financial position.
- (ii) Availability of General Fund Balances.
- (iii) Where possible, reprofiling of 2020/21 projected Capital expenditure

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

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

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No because this report is essentially a monitoring report on financial performance.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Capital bids are welcomed that support the Council's Climate Emergency Plan that was compiled following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in May 2019. Within the existing capital programme there are projects that positively contribute to environmental issues.

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## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 Movement between previously approved Capital Budget and Forecast Position
- Appendix 2 Summary of Significant Programme Variations in Quarter 3
- Appendix 3 Proposed Virements

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Capital Programme incorporates financing from agreed business cases and funding from external grant agreement documents.

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Budget Council – 2020/21 Capital Programme</b>	<b>2nd March 2020</b>
<b>2019/20 Capital Outturn</b>	<b>27th July 2020</b>
<b>2020/21 Quarter 1 Capital Financial Monitoring</b>	<b>27th July 2020</b>
<b>2020/21 Quarter 2 Capital Financial Monitoring</b>	<b>11th November 2020</b>

## Appendix 1

### Movement between previously approved Capital Budget and Forecast Position

<u>Programme</u>	Budget £m	Reprofiling from 19-20 £m	Additional Grant £m	Funding Adjustments £m	New Bids £m	Scheme Reduction £m	Reprofiling to Future Yrs £m	Forecast £m
Adult Care & Health	7.55	1.39	-	-	-	(0.77)	(7.18)	0.99
Children, Families & Education	5.50	1.87	0.85	1.41	0.24	-	(6.26)	3.61
Cross Cutting Initiatives	5.50	0.00	-	11.97	-	-	-	17.47
Neighbourhoods	22.63	9.32	7.80	0.03	0.59	(0.07)	(6.00)	34.30
Regeneration & Place	54.35	5.71	5.87	0.49	0.94	(0.12)	(40.38)	26.87
Resources	8.31	1.03	-	-	-	(4.85)	(1.74)	2.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>103.84</b>	<b>19.33</b>	<b>14.52</b>	<b>13.90</b>	<b>1.78</b>	<b>(5.81)</b>	<b>(61.56)</b>	<b>86.00</b>

## Appendix 2

### Summary of Significant Programme Variations in Quarter 3

Area	Scheme	Original Programme £m	Forecast Q2 £m	Forecast Q3 £m	Variance from Q2 £m	Comment
<b>Adult Care and Health</b>	Extra Care Housing	2.60	2.60	0.14	(2.46)	Slippage due to delays in Housing 21 scheme as a result of Covid-19, scheme now merged with Learning Disability extra care housing.
	Learning Disability extra care housing	3.00	3.00	0.00	(3.00)	Slippage due to delays in Housing 21 scheme as a result of Covid-19, scheme now merged with Extra Care Housing.
<b>Children, Families &amp; Education</b>	Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities	0.00	0.85	0.05	(0.80)	Works on Foxfield Special School due to commence in 21-22 due to Covid-19
<b>Cross Cutting Initiatives</b>	MHCLG Capitalisation Directive	0.00	0.00	14.80	14.80	Please refer to point 3.6 of this report
	Transformational Capitalisation	4.50	4.50	1.20	(3.30)	A deterioration to the forecast of receipts achievable in 2020/21, with some rephased into 2021/22.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Original Programme £m</b>	<b>Forecast Q2 £m</b>	<b>Forecast Q3 £m</b>	<b>Variance from Q2 £m</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	Connecting Wirral Waters: Detailed Design	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.31	New scheme
	Moreton Sandbrook Drainage	0.29	0.29	0.01	(0.28)	Virements, please see list of virements in Appendix 3 of this report.
	Parks Machinery	1.32	0.66	0.00	(0.66)	Covid-19 resulted in suppliers on lockdown resulting in ordering being delayed.
<b>Regeneration &amp; Place</b>	Health & Safety - Condition Surveys	5.00	0.80	0.30	(0.50)	Unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19 and the knock-on effect to both the construction and project teams.
	Leisure Health & Safety Compliance	1.00	1.00	0.15	(0.85)	Unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19 and the knock-on effect to both the construction and project teams.
	New Ferry Rangers Community Clubhouse	0.80	0.80	0.15	(0.65)	Slippage, due to tender January 2021.
	Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grant	6.34	10.50	5.04	(5.46)	Slippage and new funding.
	Town Fund B'head	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	New funding, please refer to paragraph 3.4.3 of this report for further details.
<b>Resources</b>	ERP	7.00	7.00	1.40	(5.60)	Slippage and original budget revised in line with tenders received.

## Appendix 3

### Proposed Virements

Area	Scheme	Proposed Virement £m	Proposed Reallocation
Adult Care and Health	Assistive Technology	0.191	Telecare & Telehealth Ecosystem
Adult Care and Health	Learning Disability extra care housing	3.000	Extra Care Housing
Neighbourhoods	Frankby Cemetery, burial sections	0.200	Cemetery Extension & Improvements
Neighbourhoods	Moreton Sandbrook Drainage	0.050	Aids to navigation
Neighbourhoods	Moreton Sandbrook Drainage	0.010	West Kirby Marine Lake Study
Children, Families & Education	School Conditiona Allocation	0.022	Eastham Youth Hub
Regeneration & Place	Heswall Day Centre (part only)	0.070	Pensby Wood
Regeneration & Place	Home Improvements	0.074	Beaufort Rd Clearance
Regeneration & Place	New House Building Programme	0.231	Beaufort Rd Clearance
Regeneration & Place	Pool cover energy	0.070	West Kirby Sailing Centre
Regeneration & Place	Beechwood Leisure Centre	0.310	West Kirby Sailing Centre
Regeneration & Place	Home Improvements	0.150	Clearance
Regeneration & Place	Restore Empty Homes	0.100	Empty Property grant scheme
Regeneration & Place	Health & Safety	0.042	Bebington Library

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 68 BUDGET 2020/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23 – 2025/26

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report which was part of the Council's formal annual budget process, as set out in the constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced budget. The report presented details of the annual budget for 2021/22 and the key elements contributing towards the preparation of the budget and set out recommendations on the budget and council tax for 2021/22. The report provided an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period from 2022/23 to 2025/26 previously reported to the Committee on 18 December 2020.

The report contained several appendices, some of which were required to be published as part of the statutory annual budget process and others which provided the Committee with relevant financial information relating to next year's budget and future years' financial assumptions. These assumptions would change, and any changes would be reported through the usual governance process for budget monitoring within the Committee system.

Included with the appendices was also the detailed Schools Budget for 2021/22.

The 2021/22 budget had been compiled using the figures in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 as the final figures had not, at the time of the agenda publication, been received. Shaer Halewood confirmed that there had been no changes to the final settlement figures.

Shaer Halewood drew the Committee's attention to two errors within the report, the first being in appendix 1, 'Pressures', in that under the 'Neighbourhoods' heading, the 'Waste Development Fund' should refer to pressures on the waste service. The second was at paragraph 3.75 in the report, in that the level of Earmarked reserves were expected to be £29m and not £57m.

With regard to the precepts from other precepting bodies, referred to in appendix 9, Shaer Halewood confirmed that the vote to be taken at Council would be on the Wirral Council Tax element only.

Shaer Halewood then responded to a number of comments from Members and clarified that there was now a forecast surplus of £1m for the 2021/22 budget, which was included within the body of the report and gave a breakdown of this amount. The £4m for potential EVR's was included within the £29m earmarked reserves figure. Fees and charges had a total increase of £230,000, for cemeteries and crematorium charges to offset some of the cost of the introduction of webcasting at the crematoria and music licences. She had taken a prudent approach with the budget formulation as there were no guarantees that the government compensation scheme would be extended beyond June, even though social distancing measure could be in place for

some time affecting the Council's income, including from leisure related activities, gyms etc.

The Chair then invited Councillor Wendy Clements to comment on the Schools Budget. Councillor Clements welcomed the proposed budget of £299.487m Dedicated Schools Grant, an increase of some £24.5m over the previous year's, and which the Schools Forum had agreed to. Councillor Clements responded to a number of comments from Members and welcomed the work that schools had achieved during this difficult year, remaining open to vulnerable children to the children of key workers.

The Chair then moved, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, the recommendations as set out within the report, but with important changes to be inserted at recommendation 2, as follows:

'Recommend to Council a Revenue Budget of £329.4m but which differs from the proposals included within the public budget consultation as shown at Appendix 4 in that:

(a) The following proposals are removed from the list

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Reduce the subsidy to the Hive Youth Centre from £400k to £300k, instead of £200k, in 2021/22 only - | £100,000 |
| 2. Stopping School Crossing Patrols -   | £276,300 |
| 3. Closure of Public Conveniences -   | £142,000 |
| 4. 3 weekly collection of general rubbish -   | £180,000 |
| 5. Close Europa Pools -   | £640,000 |
| 6. Review of 4 Golf Courses -   | £273,000 |
| 7. Review of Museums Service -  | £327,500 |
| 8. Delay the ceasing of support for Community Alarms -  | £200,000 |

Total changes to the 2021/22 draft budget - £2,138,000

(b) The budget gap that this would create is then met by the inclusion of the following proposals:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Savings from efficiencies at the Williamson Art Gallery -  | £90,000  |
| 2. Savings from closing the Fun Pool only at Europa -   | £250,000 |
| 3. Provision of additional catering across multi-site and new in-house catering offer at West Kirby - | £35,000  |
| 4. Charging for a range of new and existing Environmental Services -                                  |          |

	£144,000
5. Additional savings from workforce efficiencies -	£150,000
6. Reduction in pressure for pay increases for low paid workers -	£236,000
7. Freezing of the Merseytravel Levy for 2021/22 -	£439,000
8. Funding for the Hive from local businesses -	£100,000
9. Fund the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme from Covid-19 funding –	£200,000
10. Climate Emergency Budget Balance -	£100,000
11. Request to bring forward various asset sales -	£394,000

Total alternative budget options found - £2,138,000

The Chair and Labour Members then responded to a number of comments from other Members on the proposed budget options.

Shaer Halewood clarified that there were a range of assets on the Council's surplus asset list, all within the Borough, which could be brought forward to be sold and that they would come before the relevant Policy and Service Committee and then to this Committee if they were of a value over £100,000.

At 8pm the Chair adjourned the meeting to enable discussions within Groups to take place on the proposals.

The Committee resumed at 8.35pm.

The Chair invited Shaer Halewood to give her opinion, as Section 151 Officer, to the validity of the proposed budget. Shaer Halewood confirmed that all the proposals were all legal and achievable for a balanced budget to be set for 1 April, 2021.

Some Members expressed full support for the proposals and others commented that they could agree with many of the proposals but that there were elements which they believed could be improved upon.

Philip McCourt, Director of Law and Governance, then explained how the voting would proceed and that a separate vote would be taken on part 2 of the recommendation, the Labour proposal, and then a vote on parts 3 to 5 of the recommendation.

Part 1 of the recommendation was agreed by assent.

A vote was conducted on part 2 of the recommendation, and it was carried (8:8) (One abstention) on the Chair's casting vote.

A vote was then conducted on parts 3 to 5 of the recommendation, with the removal of 3 (g) (i) part 2 'Golf provision', as this was now no longer a budget saving (see part (a) 6 of the proposals). The vote was carried (17:0) and it was therefore -

**A. Resolved – That the Committee:**

- (1) Notes and considers the response to the financial proposals forming a draft budget for the purposes of public consultation (minute 32 – 18 December, 2020 refers), available between 21 December 2020 and 29 January 2021, set out as:

Appendix 1 Pressures

Appendix 2 Savings Proposals

Appendix 3 Five Year Medium Term Financial Plan

Appendix 4 Proposals included within public budget consultation.

Appendix 5 Policy & Service Committee Savings Proposals Feedback

Appendix 6 Public Consultation Responses

Appendix 10 Report of the s.151 officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

Appendix 12 The estimated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant

**B. RECOMMENDED –**

- (2) ((8:8) (One abstention) carried on the Chair's casting vote)

That Council adopt a Revenue Budget of £329.4m but which differs from the proposals included within the public budget consultation as shown at Appendix 4 in that:

(a) The following proposals are removed from the list

1. Reduce the subsidy to the Hive Youth Centre from £400k to £300k, instead of £200k, in 2021/22 only -	£100,000
2. Stopping School Crossing Patrols -	£276,300
3. Closure of Public Conveniences -	£142,000
4. Three weekly collection of general rubbish -	£180,000
5. Close Europa Pools -	£640,000
6. Review of 4 Golf Courses -	£273,000
7. Review of Museums Service -	£327,500
8. Delay the ceasing of support for Community Alarms -	£200,000

Total changes to the 2021/22 draft budget -  
£2,138,000

(b) The budget gap that this would create is then met by the inclusion of the following proposals:

1. Savings from efficiencies at the Williamson Art Gallery -	£90,000
2. Savings from closing the Fun Pool only at Europa -	£250,000

3. Provision of additional catering across multi-site and new in-house catering offer at West Kirby -	£ 35,000
4. Charging for a range of new and existing Environmental Services -	£144,000
5. Additional savings from workforce efficiencies -	£150,000
6. Reduction in pressure for pay increases for low paid workers -	£236,000
7. Freezing of the Merseytravel Levy for 2021/22 -	£439,000
8. Funding for the Hive from local businesses -	£100,000
9. Fund the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme from Covid-19 funding -	£200,000
10. Climate Emergency Budget Balance -	£100,000
11. Request to bring forward various asset sales -	£394,000
<b>Total alternative budget options found -</b>	<b>£2,138,000</b>

Producing a revised set of Budget Proposals, consisting of:

<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Value</u>
1. Reduce the subsidy to the Hive Youth Centre from £400k to £300k, (instead of £200k in 2021/22 only)	£100,000
2. Modernisation & Social Care combined: Staff Efficiency Savings	£102,000
3. Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate	£350,000
4. Additional and increased parking charges: Whole scale car parking review	£1,000,000
5. Reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of roadside verges and all Parks and Open Spaces	£250,000
6. Amenity space and grass verge maintenance cessation	£100,000
7. Contract Efficiency Savings with BIFFA	£ 75,000
8. Income generated from establishing targeted and discretionary environmental enforcement	£150,000
9. Culture and Visitor Economy savings	£620,000
10. Pause re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre	£322,000
11. Royden Park Commercial Development - Phase 1	£80,000
12. Birkenhead Market Restructure	£240,000
13. Budget Allocation for DDA	£200,000
14. Delay the ceasing of support for Community Alarms	£200,000
15. Wirral Evolutions review of day services for people with Learning Disabilities	£500,000
16. Suspension of individual Member Ward Budgets	£250,000
17. One Stop Shop Service Reduction	£98,000

18. Restructure of Revenues & Benefits	£150,000
19. Business Change Service Reduction	£670,000
20. New Staffing Structure in IT Services	£618,000
21. Centralised Print Process	£157,000
22. Business Support Unit - Staffing Reduction	£237,000
23. Hardship fund and reduction in bad debt provision	£1,000,000
24. Contract Management & Commissioning	£350,000
25. Apprenticeships	£148,000
26. Traded Services Review	£270,000
27. Savings from efficiencies at the Williamson Art Gallery	£90,000
28. Savings from closing the Fun Pool only at Europa	£250,000
29. Provision of additional catering across multi-site and new in-house catering offer at West Kirby	£ 35,000
30. Charging for a range of new and existing Environmental Services	£144,000
31. Additional savings from workforce efficiencies	£150,000
32. Reduction in pressure for pay increases for low paid workers	£236,000
33. Freezing of the Merseytravel Levy for 2021/22 -	£439,000
34. Funding for the Hive from local businesses -	£100,000
35. Fund the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme from Covid-19 funding	£200,000
36. Climate Emergency Budget Balance	£100,000
37. Request to bring forward various asset sales -	£394,000

(3) (17:0)

That Council:

- a) Adopt the summary Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) set out as Appendix 3 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Financial Resilience Plan (MTFS) set out as Appendix 11.
- b) Adopt the fees and charges set out as Appendix 7, with delegated authority being granted:
  - (i) to the Section 151 Officer to update the Council's Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2021.
  - (ii) to the relevant Director with portfolio, in consultation with the relevant Committee's Chair and Group Spokespersons, to vary existing fees and charges.

- c) **Approve the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2021/22 set out as Appendix 8.**
  - d) **Set and maintain the level of General Fund Balances the higher of**
    - (i) **£10.7m of general fund; or**
    - (ii) **3% of the Council's new revenue budget,****to be based on a locally determined assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future in accordance with the report of the s.151 Officer (Appendix 10).**
  - e) **Proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February 2021.**
  - f) **Approve the 2021/22 Schools Budget of £299.487m.**
  - g) **Authorise, in respect of the Budget Proposals, that:**
    - (i) **the relevant Committee receiving the further work being undertaken in respect of:**
      - (1) **car parking charges;**
      - (2) **enforcement costs recovery; and**
      - (3) **grass cutting and re-wilding****to develop and implement proposals in line with the agreed Budget; and**
    - (ii) **the Director with portfolio to undertake such actions as they consider are necessary to implement the agreed Budget and consequential proposals developed as part of the formulation process and update Committees accordingly.**
- (4) That Council (subject to a separate vote at Council):**
- a) **sets the Band D Council Tax at £1,663.27 for the Wirral Borough Council element of the Council Tax, representing a general increase of 1.99% and 3.00% ringfenced increase to Adult Social Care, and the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 of £156,677,700 as detailed in Appendix 9;**
  - b) **notes that the additional precepts from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority remain in estimated form and delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer to implement any variation to the overall council tax arising from the final notification of the precepts.**
- C. Resolved – That the Committee -**
- (5) **Delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons of the Policy & Resources**

**Committee, to do anything necessary to give effect to the proposals contained in this report and address any funding changes, if any, arising from the final Local Government Finance Settlement once agreed by Parliament.**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>BUDGET 2021/22 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2022/23-2025/26</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (S151 OFFICER)</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report is part of the Council's formal annual budget process, as set out in the constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced budget. This report presents details of the annual budget for 2021/22 and the key elements contributing towards the preparation of the budget and set out recommendation on the budget and council tax for 2021/11. The report provides an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period from 2022/23 to 2025/26 previously reported to the Committee on 18 December 2020.

The report contains several appendices, some that are required to be published as part of the statutory annual budget process and others that provide the Committee with relevant financial information relating to next year budget and future years financial assumptions. These assumptions will change, and any changes will be reported through the usual governance process for budget monitoring within the Committee system.

The 2021/21 budget has been compiled using the figures in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 as the final figures will not be published until 10 February 2021. Any changes to the final settlement that impact on the assumptions included within the 2021/22 budget report will be reported verbally to the Committee at the meeting.

This is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Note and consider the response to the financial proposals forming a draft budget for the purposes of public consultation (minute 32/20-21), available between 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021, set out as:
  - Appendix 1 Pressures
  - Appendix 2 Savings Proposals
  - Appendix 3 Five Year Medium Term Financial Plan
  - Appendix 4 Proposals included within public budget consultation.
  - Appendix 5 Policy & Service Committee Savings Proposals Feedback
  - Appendix 6 Public Consultation Responses
  - Appendix 10 Report of the s.151 officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
  - Appendix 12 The estimated position for the Dedicated Schools Grant
2. Recommend to Council a Revenue Budget, subject to the Local Government Finance Settlement to be issued by HM Treasury of £329.4m
3. Accordingly recommend that Council:
  - a) Adopt the summary Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) set out as Appendix 3 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Financial Resilience Plan (MTFS) set out as Appendix 11.
  - b) Adopt the fees and charges set out as Appendix 7, with delegated authority being granted:
    - (i) to the Section 151 Officer to update the Council's Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2021.
    - (ii) to the relevant Director with portfolio, in consultation with the relevant Committee's Chair and Group Spokespersons, to vary existing fees and charges.
  - c) Approve the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2021/22 set out as Appendix 8.
  - d) Set and maintain the level of General Fund Balances the higher of
    - (i) £10.7m of general fund
    - (ii) 3% of the Council's new revenue budget, to be based on a locally determined assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future in accordance with the report of the s.151 Officer (Appendix 10).

- e) The Council proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February 2021
  - f) Approve the 2021/22 Schools Budget of £299.487m
  - g) Authorise, in respect of the Budget Proposals, that:
    - (i) the relevant Committee receiving the further work being undertaken in respect of:
      - (1) car parking charges;
      - (2) golf provision;
      - (3) enforcement costs recovery; and
      - (4) grass cutting and re-wildingto develop and implement proposals in line with the agreed Budget.
    - (ii) the Director with portfolio undertake such actions as they consider are necessary to implement the agreed Budget and consequential proposals developed as part of the formulation process and update Committees accordingly.
4. Recommend (subject to a separate vote at Council) that Council:
- a) Sets the Band D Council Tax at £1,663.27 for the Wirral Borough Council element of the Council Tax, representing a general increase of 1.99% and 3.00% ringfenced increase to Adult Social Care, and the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 of £156,677,700 as detailed in Appendix 9.
  - b) Notes that the additional precepts from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority remain in estimated form and delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer to implement any variation to the overall council tax arising from the final notification of the precepts.
5. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons of the Policy & Resources Committee, to do anything necessary to give effect to the proposals contained in this report and address any funding changes, if any, arising from the final Local Government Finance Settlement once agreed by Parliament.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 Policy and Resources Committee is required to recommend a Budget to the Council for its meeting on 1 March 2021. The Council has to set a budget for 2021/22 by 11 March by law. The issues detailed in this report support the recommendations to be in a position to recommend a Budget proposal.
- 1.2 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council's Budget calculations and the adequacy of the General Fund Balances and Reserves.
- 1.3 The MTFP supports the delivery of the Wirral Plan and is key to ensuring the Council is financially stable. Progress against the MTFP is monitored by the relevant Committees and reported to Policy & Resources Committee throughout each year, as part of routine financial management, to ensure that plans are on track and any necessary corrective action is taken at the earliest opportunity.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget in March each year for the following financial year and this report sets out proposals and initiatives that increase income or reduce expenditure to assist in decisions regarding budget setting. The Committee could choose alternative options to delivering a balanced budget before the budget is finalised in March 2021.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **Impact of the National Context**

- 3.1 In September 2019, the Government announced the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21 budgets, in the form of a single year Spending Round. A multi-year Spending Review was expected to follow in 2020, however the economic uncertainty caused by the Covid pandemic has caused the Government to halt its long-term Comprehensive Spending Review and a single year Spending Round was announced on 25 November 2020. Local authorities received the formal notification of the provisional impact of the review on 17 December 2020.
- 3.2 The impact of the assumption in the provisional settlement was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 20 January 2021. Consultation took place on the provisional settlement and closed on 16 January 2021. The final 2021/22 settlement is to be laid before the House of Commons for its approval on 10 February 2021.

#### **2021/22 Budget**

- 3.3 A balanced budget for 2020/21 was approved on 2 March 2020, following identified savings of £29.85m to bridge the 2020/21 gap. The Covid pandemic caused delays to the delivery of these savings initiatives, which has had an impact on future years assumptions.

- 3.4 On 18 December 2020, a range of proposals, contributing to the 2021/22 draft budget were published as part of the public budget consultation process. The draft budget, at that time was presenting a balanced position for 2021/22 based on a number of assumptions.
- 3.5 As the final local government finance settlement will not be published until 10 February 2021, this report still contains the assumptions from the provisional settlement. Once published, where the final settlement impacts on the assumptions laid out in the report, there will be a verbal update provided to the Committee at the meeting.
- 3.6 Achieving this balanced position for 2021/22 remains dependent on the financial position of the Council remaining stable throughout the year. Factors such as changes to demand for services, the as yet unknown longer-term impact of Covid-19 and the economic outlook present risks to this position of stability.
- 3.7 Following the approval of the 2021/22 budget, the monitoring of the budget will take place via the relevant committees throughout the year to ensure a balanced forecast can be reported at the end of 2021/22. Where budgets are at risk of reporting an adverse position, the Committee's will be required to take action to ensure they can be brought back in line.
- 3.8 Following some changes to assumptions and estimates used for the purposes of public consultation on 18 December, the 2021/22 budget now presents a £1m surplus.
- 3.9 The changes relate to a reduction in pressures having received the final figures from the Merseytravel levy, clarification of the cost of the pay increase for employees earning under £24k, and permanent workforce savings that can be included in 21/22. There has also been a removal of a £93k saving from the Review of 4 Golf Courses saving that was part of the public consultation as one golf course is linked to a development agreement. A temporary capital receipt has also been included for Right to Buy sales.

The budget for 2021/22 is now calculated as follows:

**Table 1 – 2021/21 Budget**

	<b>21-22</b>
	<b>£m</b>
<b>Funding</b>	
Council Tax	(156.6)
Business Rates	(138.3)
Other	(35.5)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(330.4)</b>
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	
Baseline	304.7
Pressures/Investments	49.4
Savings	(24.6)
<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>	<b>329.4</b>
<b>Budget Surplus</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>

## Funding

- 3.10 The Council's main source of funding is made up of Income from Council Tax and Business Rates. The statutory calculation for Council Tax for 2021/22 is included within Appendix 9. The Business Rates calculations include business rate relief as set out in the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy included within Appendix 8. The total business rate funding is made up of:
- Business rate income and Section 31 grants of £85.1m
  - Government top-up grant of £34.5m
  - Better Care Fund Grant of £18.8m
- 3.11 Other sources of funding include the Social Care grant of £14.6m, which includes an increase of £3.34m from the previous year. This grant is ring-fenced to expenditure for Adults and Childrens Social Care. It is as yet unallocated and will be kept aside and drawn down in year for eligible expenditure. Details of as yet expected new additional in-year pressures pertaining to the use of this grant are highlighted in the section on pressures.
- 3.12 Included with the other sources of funding is:
- New Homes Bonus of £0.2m
  - Lower Tier Services Grant of £0.5m
  - Government Tranche 5 Covid-19 Emergency Funding Grant of £10m
- 3.13 In October 2020, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the request for exceptional financial support (capitalisation directive) from the Ministry of Housing,

Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to enable a balanced budget to be reported for 2020/21 and 2021/22. The Ministry have indicated that they are minded to approve a capitalisation direction up to a maximum value of £10.7m for 2021/22, subject to conditions.

- 3.14 A recommendation has been included in this report that the Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Full Council to accept this conditional offer. The sum is included within the Other Sources of Funding as, in accepting the conditional offer, a robust assumption is made that this support, if required, will be available.
- 3.15 As previously reported, the capitalisation directive can only cover expenditure and pressures that are as a result of the indirect impact of Covid-19 e.g. savings not being able to be made, and cannot be used for usual annual pressures such as demographic growth, contract inflation and levies.
- 3.16 To support the Councils response to the pandemic, the Council has been provided with, to date, just under £200m additional funding from Government. Of this, £122m has been fully passported over to third parties, £13m has been partially passported and £59m has been available for the Council to use in providing its response. This funding is forecast to be fully spent and is not forecast to overspend.

### **Baseline Budget Requirement**

- 3.17 At its Budget Council on 2 March 2020, the budget for 2020/21 of £304.7m was approved. No permanent changes have been made to this position in year and therefore this presents the starting position for the 2021/22 budget.

### **Pressures/Investments**

- 3.18 A full list of the pressures by Directorate for 2021/22 is included within Appendix 1. The main areas are summarised below:
- Local data anticipates the continuing growth in Older Peoples demographic of around 3% per annum, whilst demographic growth in adults with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health issues is around 1% over the next five years (however, it should be noted that these estimates are based upon pre-Covid19 data). The key activities being undertaken to mitigate this growth revolve around developing solutions which support individuals to remain independent for longer, and therefore require less intensive, less expensive support. This has positive outcomes for the individuals and the services that support them. The Council is currently investing in and developing alternative care models, such as Extra Care housing and investment in assistive technology but these activities require capital investment and will take a number of years to be fully implemented. As such, demand-related expenditure will remain an issue for the foreseeable future.
  - In addition to this, Adult Social Care provided essential support throughout the Covid pandemic, with significant assistance from one off Government grants. Going forward there is an increased risk of, potentially significant, growth in demand for care services as the impact of Covid-19 and the periods of lockdown are realised. Higher cost of care fees are anticipated as care providers continue to face higher charges from increased PPE, greater infection control measures

and higher insurance costs, as well as an increased focus on their employees workforce pay and conditions. Wirral Council has already committed to helping providers pay the Real Living Wage to all their employees.

- Children and Families is experiencing significant expenditure pressure due to growth in the number of children requiring care and the costs associated with the complexity of their needs when they need residential care. There is also a general increase in demand for children social care both in number and complexity. This includes children with complex and special needs, children at risk of harm and children who need to be cared for by the council including those who need residential care.
- Early intervention activity is designed to prevent children entering the Children social care system, which has positive outcomes for children and families and is less costly to the Council. However, there is a specific pressure in the residential care market which requires the council to intervene. Proposals are in development with Liverpool City Region to provide a child-focussed, long term sustainable residential portfolio, where outcomes and resourcing can be managed. This is currently in the feasibility stage and will require £1m of capital funding. The positive impact of these proposals are expected to begin to materialise in 2021/22, and have a long lasting positive impact in future years.
- Medium and long term demand for services which support vulnerable people are likely to be negatively impacted by Covid. Both the virus and the measures to tackle it have had a more severe impact on vulnerable groups, including older people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and those living in deprived areas. Covid is therefore amplifying social and health inequalities. Covid is adding complexity to existing physical and mental health, and this will increase the need for complex care, accelerate previously independent people into social care, and impact vulnerable families.
- It is as yet not known when Council facilities will be able to fully re-open following the lifting of Covid restrictions. This has an impact on the value of income the Council is able to generate from functions such as Leisure and Culture. The Government Compensation Scheme for Sales, Fees and Charges has been extended for an additional 3 months to the end of June 2021 and this will result in a proportion of the assumed income deficit being recovered. However, no information has been received past that date so an assumption has been made for uncollectable income. If the scheme is extended further, this will reduce this pressure in-year.
- Within the last 12 months, many services have been brought together within the newly created Neighbourhood Services Directorate, bringing together these services to drive efficiencies and realign service provision and deliver objectives of the Wirral Plan. This approach, will help to secure the best future for our residents, inspired to achieve community prosperity, and level up inequalities, through our excellent people and services.
- When the budget was set in 2020/21, a number of savings proposals were agreed to meet the gap. Some proposals have not been achieved as a result of the Council responding to and the impact of Covid-19:

- Staff due to deliver savings have been committed and redirected to supporting the emergency response to the pandemic.
  - The requirement for additional support provided for the Children and Adult Social care sector.
  - Drop in the interest rate and economic markets have not resulted in anticipated gains.
  - The fragility of the market and inability for suppliers to renegotiate contracts.
- Many of these savings have materialised in 2021/22 under different headings to reflect the changes to the way they will be achieved from next year.

## **Savings/Income**

3.19 A full list of the savings and income by Directorate for 2021/22 is included within Appendix 2. These include the savings that were published as part of the budget consultation on 22 December 2020 and savings and income items that were already included as part of the MTFP and did not require consultation and/or had previously been agreed elsewhere. The main areas are summarised below:

- An assumption of new income from regeneration activities commencing during the year from Council Tax and Business Rates
- Income receivable from the Wirral Growth Company, the Council's Joint Venture Company, as a result of work commencing on agreed projects
- An assumption of compensation from the Government Scheme up to June 2021 for Sales, Fees and Charges losses
- Savings ongoing preventative activities within Children and Families to reduce Demand in children social care and the number of children looked after and avoid future years cost e.g. Semi-Independent Living, the DRIVE programme designed to tackle domestic abuse, the social worker in schools programme and PAUSE
- Savings and cost avoidance activities with Adult Care and Health relating to reviews of Care Packages to promote independence and smarter use of technology to increase independence, including Extra Care Housing
- Savings related to the recognition of the ongoing change in working as a result of Covid-19 e.g. reduced building costs of temporary closure, reduced transport costs of staff travel and reduced costs of general office supplies and services.

## **Budget Consultation**

3.20 At its meeting on 18 December 2020, the Policy and Resources Committee approved the 'Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 - Proposals for Consultation' to begin public consultation from 21 December 2020 to 29 January 2021. The consultation was primarily conducted through the council's "Have Your Say" online portal. It included:

- A “Budget Booklet” outlining budget options.
- An online questionnaire with specific questions to capture people’s views about the budget options.
- An ideas board for residents to post their ‘ideas’ and suggestions about the council budget.
- Respondents were able to request paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version – and additional time (one week) was made available for those responding via this.
- ‘Virtual’ Public Events were held with the Leader of the Council responding to stakeholders’ questions. One of these was held each for residents, young people and council staff.
- A guestbook for stakeholders to add a list of questions they would like to ask at the events.
- A council staff Facebook page, internal email and newsletters, and direct liaison with managers.
- Individuals and groups were also able to provide feedback directly to the project team, Councillors, MPs and Senior Officers.
- A budget-specific email inbox was set up for people to obtain further information/submit questions about the consultation.

3.21 The online ‘Have your say’ portal resulted in the following activity:

- 2,715 completed questionnaires
- 236 “ideas” added to the Ideas Board
- 74 questions.

3.22 95.6% of respondents were Wirral residents with the remaining 4.4% mainly from Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool. There was a relatively even spread of responses from the four Wirral constituencies.

3.23 Full details of the responses can be found in the Appendix 6, however, key themes which emerged can be categorised into workforce, leisure and tourism, refuse collection, revenue generation, children’s services including The Hive, parking and arts and culture, while most comments were categorised predominantly into three themes: Children’s Services including The Hive, Arts and Culture (in particular noting retention of the Williamson Art Gallery) and Refuse Collection.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

3.24 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a key document in ensuring the Council can achieve the outcomes of the 2025 Wirral Plan. It spans a 5-year timeframe and sets out the Council’s strategic direction with regards to its financial ambition to ensure that all financial resources are aligned to its priorities.

3.25 The MTFS has two main elements – to provide an overview of the approach to ensuring financial sustainability for the period; and includes the Financial Resilience Plan which identifies how the Councils expenditure and income will be managed to ensure the Council’s financial sustainability can be routinely monitored.

- 3.26 The MTFS is a key document to achieving financial sustainability for the future and is intrinsic to the exceptional financial support from MHCLG. The Ministry will want to be assured that the MTFS reflects the Council future ambition and supports the achievement of the outcome of the Wirral Plan by aligning resources to priorities.
- 3.27 The MTFS focuses on the improvement of the lives of Wirral residents by delivering and investing in key public services and regeneration. It also recognises the need to respond to the financial challenges in a planned way through examination of four inter-related areas:
- Boosting economic growth
  - Driving income generation
  - Managing service demand
  - Identifying efficiencies
- 3.28 The expected outcomes of the MTFS are:
- A balanced budget and a financially sustainable future.
  - Strong alignment of Wirral financial resources to its key outcomes, as set out in the Wirral Plan.
  - Vital services continue to be delivered.
- 3.29 Within the MTFS, there are a series of strategic themes:
- **Empowering our Communities:** by enabling and supporting our communities, we can deliver more cost efficient and valued services.
  - **Driving Income Generation:** by looking to introduce new income streams and optimising the income streams already in place.
  - **Managing Service Demand:** by tackling the cause of demand through prevention and understanding how demand starts is key to managing it.
  - **Identifying Efficiencies:** by examining our process, practice and policy, we can deliver services efficiently and effectively, whilst ensuring our residents are at the centre of all decisions.
  - **The Change Programme:** by implementing strategic change via a new way for how the Council operates which will ensure value for money and improved quality of services for residents.
  - **Boosting Economic Growth:** by regenerating the Borough through providing new investment and working with trusted partners to generate future income flows.
- 3.30 The Financial Resilience Plan sets out how the other strategies outlined are underpinned by strong financial policy, practice and management of financial instruments. The plan looks to build appropriate reserves and general funds, optimise the capital programme, and maximise treasury investment income. This plan includes the Capital Programme, Investment and Treasury Strategy, Reserves strategy, General Fund management and the budget process.

- 3.31 The Capital Programme continues to invest in both existing operational assets and as mentioned the development of large infrastructure projects in partnership with key partners.
- 3.32 Strategic recovery is vital in the aftermath of Covid-19 and the strategic plans will all be reviewed to ensure they are still valid, responding to the Wirral plan and Local Plan and are deliverable.
- 3.33 The delivery of the MTFS will be via the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which is a key part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The MTFP is the financial model that includes the assumptions of funding, pressures and savings over the 5 years. Updates on the MTFP are reported to the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee on a quarterly basis. Proposals to be included in the MTFP for future years savings will be, where appropriate, passed through the relevant Policy and Services Committees for approval before being ratified by the P&R Committee to be included within the following years budget.
- 3.34 The MTFS and Financial Resilience Plan can be found at Appendix 11.

### **Future Years assumptions**

- 3.35 The expected Government Fair Funding Review has been delayed to 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. The Business Rates Retention Scheme, for which Wirral is currently participating in a pilot scheme which allows 100% business rates retention, was due to change in 2021/22, however it has been confirmed that the current arrangement will remain in place for 2021/22; future years application remains uncertain. The publishing of the green paper on adult social care and the future of Public Health England may also have an impact on future years funding once known.
- 3.36 In 2022/23, the MTFP presents a small budget surplus of £0.8m. The Council is assumed to see a rise in costs (£8.5m) during that year, however, the outcomes of the Change Programme, once approved, should start to materialise and mitigate any in-year pressures. Any surplus arising at the end of each financial year will be recommended to be used to increase the Council's General Fund Balances.
- 3.37 For 2023/24, the MTFP presents a balanced budget however many things will change between now and year 3. The MTFP will, as described be regularly updated and reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will take a view and any action as necessary to ensure a continuous balanced 5 year MTFS.
- 3.38 In 2024/25 and 2025/26, the MTFP currently presents budget surplus positions of £7.7m and £15.7m respectively. The estimates should be considered prudently, as the longer the period of time, the greater uncertainty there is in estimating demand, funding and budget requirements. Both years include flat rate demand for social care, inflationary funding increases and the continued implementation of savings activity.
- 3.39 The Council has worked in recent years to identify further opportunities to increase income and growth through capital investment. The Capital Programme can act as a

catalyst to accelerate the pace and scale of regeneration and growth in the borough. This encourages market confidence, demand and growth from developers, inward investors and local businesses that will boost the revenue potential through direct income and/or future increased business rate receipts. Recent spending review announcements have identified opportunities to either fund these programmes at a lower cost, or fund new programmes, which may not have been manageable within the current Capital Programme.

- 3.40 The Regeneration and Place Directorate has over £5bn of potential regeneration projects in the pipeline projected to deliver over 21,000 new homes and over 970,000sqm commercial floorspace, alongside significant public realm and environmental enhancements and the large-scale creation of new jobs. Working with Peel Land and Property, some 1,000 new homes are being developed at Wirral Waters on brownfield sites.
- 3.41 The regeneration pipeline reflects the Local Plan Development Strategy and supports the delivery of the 2025 Wirral Plan 2025 and Local Plan priorities through a focus on sustainable approaches to new development; enhancing green infrastructure and active travel routes; creating vibrant mixed-use town centres; delivering new homes; securing skills development and employment opportunities for residents; and creating the right environment for indigenous and new businesses to grow.
- 3.42 To support the regeneration of Birkenhead Town Centre, the Council has secured £24.6m through the Future High Streets Fund. The funding will complement the work being progressed through the Wirral Growth Company and will support the delivery of high quality homes, improved accessibility into the town centre and a new modern facility for Birkenhead Market. This will ensure future income flows into the Council from Council Tax and Business Rates.
- 3.43 The Council is developing a series of masterplans for key regeneration areas, to provide a framework for future investment and sustainable growth. A Liscard Masterplan is being developed to set out a new vision for the sustainable future of Liscard, providing a more diverse offer with the community at its core. A masterplan for New Brighton has been commissioned, to harness New Brighton's potential as a special place to live, visit and do business, and to identify potential opportunities for enhancement, and is intending to develop a masterplan for West Kirby to support its future sustainability.
- 3.44 Activities related to the Council's Regeneration Programme are estimated to generate around £50m gross income flow from Council Tax and Business Rates over the next 15 Years.
- 3.45 The delivery of these schemes is integral to our efforts to address existing social and health inequalities within the borough. This is particularly significant in the aftermath of COVID-19. Places such as Wirral, with existing economic and health inequalities, have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Additionally, the long-lasting effect of measures to tackle COVID-19 (e.g. business curfews and temporary closures) will impact on our community and economy increasing demand for local services and the financial resilience of the borough. This requires an enhanced focus

on regeneration to mitigate these as well as identifying opportunities to respond to a new way of working and living as a result of the pandemic.

### **Performance of the MTFs during Covid-19 Pandemic**

3.46 Both the financial and non-financial difficulties of managing a response to a pandemic situation are well reported, and assessing the performance of the MTFs within the past year has been challenging. In the development of the MTFs the Council has updated the financial position, based on the latest information available. An exercise as part of the budget setting process and quarterly revenue reports is undertaken to review all the assumptions. Particular consideration has been given to future year pressures emerging from Covid-19.

3.47 However, all of the strategic plans outlined above have considered the opportunities thrown up by such a world-changing event, including:

- **Boosting Economic Growth:** Distributing the Small business grants has expanded contact with a larger range of businesses. New funding has been identified to support the long-term regeneration programme.
- **Empowering our Communities:** the humanitarian effort in supporting Covid-19, has created stronger links and networks with community partners. Their ability to deliver this service in a difficult environment has accelerated some community wealth building activity.
- **Driving Income Generation:** the increased demand for UK holidays has led to a new income stream identified to be brought forward for camper vans.
- **Identifying Efficiencies:** our workforce has embraced agile working, and this has led to permanent savings in office-based expense.

### **Recovery Programme**

3.48 The nature of the pandemic means that we will require an ongoing containment approach to Covid-19 for at least the next 18 months and we will need to organise operationally to live with Covid in the longer term. We therefore need to ensure a resilient, continuing approach to Covid as well as the wider efforts to recover from the broader impact of the pandemic and its subsequent negative impacts such as increased demand for services and inequalities. Plans are in place to respond to the outbreak on an ongoing basis (e.g. outbreak hub, testing and vaccination) as well as to reorganise our services following the emergency response which includes organisational preparedness and safety as well as our longer term use of assets and our staffing resources.

3.49 A programme to lead this work brings together operational leads from across the business to:

- Ensure the safe remobilisation of services, assets and operations following lockdown and the effective delivery of services through relevant tiers.
- Guide operational plans for working safely in a Covid secure environment.
- Work with partners to develop system wide recovery and place-based initiatives to recover our economy and communities.

- Ongoing resources will also be required to continue to address the pandemic locally as well as supporting residents and businesses to recover from the indirect health and economic consequences of Covid.

## Council Tax

- 3.50 Policy and Resources Committee agreed the Council Tax Base for use in 2021/22 on 11 November 2020. The number of properties is adjusted for the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTRS) and other Council Tax Discounts, Exemptions and Disabled Relief and then converted to a Band D figure which is multiplied by the Collection Rate to give the Council Tax Base.

**Table 2: Wirral Council Tax Band D calculation 2021/22**

Band	Properties 2021	Changes due to LCTRS discounts, exemptions	Revised property equivalent	Ratio to Band D	Net Band D equivalent
A	60,563	(24,896.3)	35,666.7	6/9	23,778
B	32,626	(7,413.6)	25,212.4	7/9	19,610
C	27,506	(4,057.2)	23,448.8	8/9	20,843
D	13,437	(1,542.0)	11,895.0	9/9	11,895
E	8,378	(757.3)	7,620.7	11/9	9,314
F	4,326	(324.4)	4001.6	13/9	5,780
G	3,156	(225.8)	2,930.2	15/9	4,884
H	274	(37.5)	236.5	18/9	474
Band A Disabled		(4.3)	64.7	5/9	36
Total	150,266	-39,258.4	111,076.6		96,614
Collection Rate					x 97.50%
Adjusted Council Tax Base					94,198.6

- 3.51 The increase in the Council Tax-Base from 2020/21 to 2021/22, coupled with general inflationary increases and allowances for the Adult Social Care precept, is expected to result in increased Council Tax income of approximately £6.1m million in 2021/22. Wirral's share of Council Tax after the non-collection allowance is applied is expected to be £156.6m. This amount has been reflected in the 2021/22 Budget.
- 3.52 In terms of inflationary increases, the Government announced in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement that General Council Tax can increase by 1.99%. The Referendum threshold for general Council Tax increases is set at 2% (the same as 2020/21) for 2021/22. The calculation of the Referendum 'trigger' amount is a comparison between overall Band D levels for 2020/21 and 2021/22 and includes levies.
- 3.53 The recent provisional Local Government Finance Settlement included permission to include a 3% Adult Social Care Precept in 2021/22, over and above the inflationary

increase of up to 1.99%. If agreed, this generates an additional £4.4m funding for the Council in 2021/22.

- 3.54 The decision on the level of Council Tax is made by Council in March. The current proposal for 2021/22 assumes that general Council Tax will increase by 4.99%, representing the inflationary increase of 1.99% plus the Adult Social Care Precept of 3%.

### **Setting the council tax levels**

- 3.55 In setting the Council Tax the Council is required to have regard to the various determinations set out in the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Council must calculate a Council Tax requirement, set out the total amount of Council Tax for the different categories of dwellings and determine that the Council Tax for 2021/22 is not excessive and that a Referendum is not necessary.
- 3.56 The Statutory Calculations form part of the Policy & Resource Committee recommendation to Council in respect of the Council element of the Council Tax bill. Any agreed increase will be considered against the principles determined by the Secretary of State under the Act (as amended) in determining whether a Referendum is required. This compares the Band D Council Tax for 2021/22 with that for 2020/21 for the Council's basic amount of Council Tax. The statutory calculations are contained in Appendix 9.
- 3.57 The precepts to the Council, issued by the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 will be added to the Council element to set the Council Tax for Wirral for 2021/22 once known. If this information is available before the publishing date for Budget Council, this will be included as a separate report within the Council papers agenda. In 2021/22 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) will continue to levy a precept for the LCR CA Mayoral precept.

### **Business rates**

- 3.58 Business Rates are payable by businesses based on the rateable value of the premises they occupy, which is calculated according to how much rent the premises would achieve if rented out. Valuations are carried out by the Valuation Office Agency on a five-year cycle and the latest valuation list applies from 2017. The Council is responsible for calculating actual rates bills and for collecting rates and use the rateable value in working out how much a business will have to pay. The actual rates bill is calculated by applying the rate multiplier (a rate in the pound) to the rateable value and then deducting any reliefs that are applicable.

- 3.59 Whilst presenting opportunities, the localisation of Business Rates brings additional risks to the Council's financial position because of its complexity and volatility. The forecast income to the Council has to be reflected in the Council Budget. The amount received may fluctuate due to a number of reasons including:
- Appeals against rating decisions. Dealt with by the Valuation Office Agency and can be large and backdated a number of years;
  - Changes in liability relating to changes in occupancy;
  - Changes in building use;
  - Alterations to buildings size and layout;
  - Demolitions and new builds;
  - Actions to avoid full liability including empty property / charitable reliefs;
  - Assessment of bad and doubtful debts.
- 3.60 Policy and Resources Committee are asked to approve the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2021/22 which remains unchanged from 2020/21. A copy of the updated Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is included at Appendix 8.
- 3.61 The surplus/deficit in 2020/21 being allocated to Wirral Council is 99% and to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is 1%. This reflects the operation of the LCR Business Rate Pilot Scheme. A declaration of an estimated surplus or deficit for the 2020/21 financial year together with a forecast for 2021/22 had to be submitted to the Government by 31 January 2021. The forecast Business Rates income for 2021/22 shows that the receipts to the Council will increase by £0.569 million from the 2020/21 levels.
- 3.62 Since April 2013 the Government has implemented changes to reliefs and also capped the Rates increase at below the inflation rate. To compensate local authorities for these decisions the Government has allocated Councils a series of Section 31 Grants. These are calculated as part of the National Non Domestic Rates 1 return which is submitted to MHCLG by 31st January each year plus any supplementary grants awarded in year should government introduce new rating policy changes.
- 3.63 The amounts collected for business rates and council tax during 2021/22 are expected to reduce by £10.5m as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on residents and businesses. To mitigate the full impact of this, the Government have allowed Council's to spread the deficit over 3 years. This is currently presenting as a pressure on the 21/22 – 23/24 budgets however the Government have also announced that 75% of these losses will be funded which releases a significant proportion of that pressure.
- 3.64 As part of the spending review, an extension to the Council Tax Support Grant was agreed. The grant is un-ringfenced but is expected to be used to 'to enable Councils to continue reducing council tax bills for those least able to pay, including households financially hard hit by the pandemic' The grant can also be used to offset

the cost of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Wirral's allocation for 2021/22 is £3.9m and will be fully allocated to the areas described above

### Schools Budgets

- 3.65 The Schools Funding Allocations were issued by the Department for Education on 17th December 2020. The format of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is unchanged with Local Authority allocations determined by the National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools, High Needs and Early Years.
- 3.66 The proposed allocation of the DSG was presented to and considered by School's Forum on 19<sup>th</sup> January. The detailed budget proposal is in Appendix 12.

**Table 3 Budget Allocation for Schools DSG**

	<b>2021-22 Budget £</b>
Schools Block	230,289,800
Central School Services Block	3,613,100
High Needs Block	43,940,000
Early Years Block	21,644,200
<b>TOTAL BEFORE CONTRIBUTION TO RESERVE</b>	<b>299,487,100</b>
Contribution to Reserves (High Needs)	2,683,100
<b>TOTAL AFTER CONTRIBUTION TO RESERVE</b>	<b>302,170,200</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
DSG	300,710,700
Council (PFI Affordability Gap)	1,459,500
<b>NET TOTAL FOR HIGH NEEDS BLOCK</b>	<b>302,170,200</b>

3.67 School's Forum resolved to:

- Agree the net increase in the current cost element of the Central School Services block to be used to off-set the reduction in historic cost element.
- Agree the transfer of the surplus High Needs funding for 2021-22 to the DSG reserve to offset the deficit position.

### Levies and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

- 3.68 There is a statutory requirement to agree the levies for 2021/22 before 12 February 2021 in respect of transport and waste. The allocation mechanism for both bodies means that there will be variations for individual authorities as the Waste Levy reflects relative tonnages and the Transport Levy reflects relative populations.
- 3.69 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority considered the recommendations from the Merseytravel Committee on 22 January 2021. In overall terms the Transport Levy has remained the same as 2020/21. Wirral's share of the costs

decreased by c £0.05m to £22.1m. This is due to changes in distribution between 2020/21 and 2021/22 as a result of population changes.

- 3.70 The Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority met on 5 February 2021 to agree the final Levy for 2021/22. The Levy agreed for the Council is £17.6m, representing an increase of £0.2m (1.4%) on the 2020/21 charge of £17.4m. In addition to the 2021/22 levy increase, an additional temporary cost will be incurred as a result of traffic management at Household Waste Recycling Sites of £1m. This is not predicted to continue past 2021/22 and will be funded from the Lower Tier Services Grant and Covid-19 Emergency Grant.

### **Level of General Fund Balances**

- 3.71 The level of General Fund Balances and reserves are key components of the Council's financial management and sustainability. Both need to be maintained at sufficient levels to ensure that unforeseen financial pressures can be met without jeopardising the viability of the Council.
- 3.72 The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of General Fund balances, Local Authorities with strong General Reserves have seen greater financial sustainability.
- 3.73 Grant Thornton, the external auditors, have recommended that Wirral Council look to build on General Fund balances to improve the Council's financial resilience.
- 3.74 The Council has a statutory duty to determine the level of General Fund Balances and Reserves it maintains before it decides on the level of Council Tax. The level of balances should be based on the Council's own specific circumstances. The financial future for the Council continues to be challenging and a number of major uncertainties remain. In determining the appropriate level of reserves, the Section 151 Officer has assessed a number of factors. This takes account of the strategic, operational and financial risk factors facing the Council. This approach is supported by Grant Thornton (the Council's external Auditors) and by Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the professional body which issues the guidance in this area.

**Table 4 Summary of the Assessed Level of General Fund Balances**

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Assessed at February 2020	10.7	10.7

£10.7m of general fund balances represents around 3% of the Council's new revenue budget. A level which supports medium term financial resilience would be

at 5% or £15m and it is advised that action is taken to increase general fund balances to this level as soon as practically possible.

### **Review of Earmarked Reserves**

- 3.75 Resources set aside for specific purposes as Earmarked Reserves should be established and used in accordance with the purposes intended. The levels of Earmarked Reserves have been reviewed and the anticipated level of Earmarked reserves at the end of 2021/22 is expected to be around £57m. The main reserves that make up this amount are:

**Table 5 Earmarked Reserves**

Insurance Fund (for self-insurance)	£10.8m
Schools Balances (only allowed to be used by schools)	£6.9m
Business Rates Equalisation	£4.7m
Housing Benefit	£1.9m
Public Health & Better Care Fund	£1.3m

### **One Off Funding**

- 3.76 In recent years, Wirral Council has used the temporary government initiative, called Flexible Use of Capital Receipts to fund transformational revenue change in Wirral Council. This is coming to an end in 2022
- 3.77 Reducing reliance on one-off funding for revenue expenditure is a key principle of Financial Resilience. Using one-off funds only presents a pressure in the following year as one-off funds are temporary and permanent alternatives will be required to ensure the Council can remain financially sustainable.
- 3.78 One-off funds should only be used to support one-off temporary expenditure or where there is a robust plan for their replacement to a permanent solution in the following year.

### **Robustness of the Estimates**

- 3.79 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority's Chief Financial Officer (the Section 151 Officer) is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council's Budget calculations and the adequacy of the General Fund Balances and Reserves.
- 3.80 Appendix 10 sets out the requirements and the actions taken by the Council in relation to the Robustness of both the Revenue Estimates and the Capital Programme. It contains an assessment of the key issues in relation to demonstrating how the legal requirements have been met.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The financial implications of the 2021/22 budget are included fully within the main body of the report and associated recommendations.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The role of the Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 5.2 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.3 Section 30(6) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that the Council has to set its budget before 11th March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set.
- 5.4 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 5.5 A duty is placed on a precepting authority to issue a precept for any financial year before March 1<sup>st</sup> in the preceding financial year. This duty is directory only, however, and a precept issued later than that will not be invalid solely for that reason.
- 5.6 Consultation must take place in accordance with the Council's duties under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The detailed summary of responses provided are attached in the appendix to this report. It must be borne in mind that this is consultation on the budget proposals, not on the decision to take whatever decision is implied by the adoption of that budget. The consultation process, including the Council's consideration of the responses, is required to comply with the following overarching obligations (unless detailed statutory rules supplant these):
- Consultation must be at a time when proposals are at a formative stage.
  - The proposer must give sufficient reasons for its proposals to allow consultees to understand them and respond to them properly.
  - Consulters must give sufficient time for responses to be made and considered.
  - Responses must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the decision.

- 5.7 This is the same whether or not a public body was required to consult or chooses to do so. This is because all of those rules are aspects of an overriding requirement for 'fairness'. The process must be substantively fair and have the appearance of fairness. The setting of the budget and council tax by Members involves their consideration of choices.
- 5.8 When considering options, Members must bear in mind their fiduciary duty to the council taxpayers of Wirral. Members must have adequate evidence on which to base their decisions on the level of quality at which services should be provided.
- 5.9 Where a service is provided pursuant to a statutory duty, it would not be lawful to fail to discharge it properly or abandon it, and where there is discretion as to how it is to be discharged, that discretion should be exercised reasonably.
- 5.10 The report sets out the relevant considerations for Members to consider during their deliberations and Members are reminded of the need to ignore irrelevant considerations. Members have a duty to seek to ensure that the Council acts lawfully. Members must not come to a decision which no reasonable authority could come to; balancing the nature, quality and level of services which they consider should be provided, against the costs of providing such services.
- 5.11 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to its decision.
- 5.12 The public sector equality duty is that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010; (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- 5.13 Any decision made in the exercise of any function is potentially open to challenge if the duty has been disregarded. The duty applies both to Full Council when setting the budget and to Policy and Resources Committee when considering particular decisions.
- 5.14 Once a budget is in place, Council has delegated responsibility to the Policy and Services Committees to implement it. The Committees may not act contrary to the Budget without consent of Council other than in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of the Constitution.
- 5.15 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.
- 5.16 Members are also individually reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to this meeting. Members who are two months or more in

arrears with their Council Tax must declare this to the meeting and must not vote on budget recommendations, as to do otherwise can be a criminal offence.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are no additional resource requirements directly from this report, however the implications for the proposals included within the 2021/22 budget and MTFP will be assessed at the time of implementation.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Council's ability to close the funding gap is highly dependent on the accuracy of assumptions used for Government funding and levies from other bodies, as well as demand estimates for Council services. As the Local Government Finance Settlement only covers one year, the uncertainty around future funding over the MTFP period remains high.
- 7.2 A key risk to the Council's financial plans is that funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the MTFP is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.
- 7.3 Under the system of retained Business Rates, Authorities benefit from a share of any increased revenues but are liable for at least a share of any falls in income (subject to safety net triggers) and any non-collection. This includes reductions arising from appeals relating to past years which partially fall on the Authority. These risks are mitigated through a combination of the operation of the Collection Fund, General Fund Balances and a Business Rates Equalisation Reserve.
- 7.4 The budget for 2021/22 is reliant on the generation of future capital receipts, which is sensitive to the fluctuations in the property market and changes in land values. If planned disposals do not take place or can only be achieved at reduced prices, this will create a funding pressure for which further mitigation would need to be sought.
- 7.5 There is also a risk that agreed savings will not be delivered or will be delayed. Progress on delivery of agreed savings will be monitored using Budget Monitoring reports presented to Policy and Service Committees.
- 7.6 The consultation process itself may identify risks that savings will not be delivered. The Service Committees and Officers will work closely together to mitigate these items through the Budget Process.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Views were sought on the Council's future budget and spending priorities, through an extensive programme of community and stakeholder consultation, from 17 December 2020 to 27 January 2021.
- 8.2 Service Committees have discussed and provided feedback to Policy & Resources Committee on the Budget proposals and are detailed in Appendix 5.
- 8.3 The Council has also worked with staff and Trade Unions where required to ensure obligations in relation to statutory staff consultation is delivered appropriately and within agreed guidelines.
- 8.4 The Director of Resources has regularly briefed Trade Unions on the budget position and the potential impact and implications. Service leads supported by HR and Finance, have met with Trade Unions regularly over recent weeks to consult them about the budget proposals and to share relevant information. The Trade Unions have confirmed their opposition to the proposed service closures and impact on staff and have reiterated their position of no compulsory redundancies. Consultation will continue in relation to implementation and impact of decisions taken as appropriate.
- 8.5 Any financial proposals agreed by Policy and Resources Committee that require specific consultation, the Council will commence appropriate consultation directly with any service users and stakeholders who are affected and will feedback their views before final decisions are taken.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 It is recognised that some of the developing proposals could have equality implications. Any implications will be considered and any negative impacts will be mitigated where possible.
- 9.2 Equality implications will be assessed during planning, decision and implementation stages and will be recognised as an ongoing responsibility. Equality issues will be a conscious consideration and an integral part of the process.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 No direct implications. The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Pressures
- Appendix 2 - Savings
- Appendix 3 – Five Year Medium Term Financial Plan
- Appendix 4 – Proposals included within public budget consultation
- Appendix 5 - Service Committee Savings Proposals Feedback
- Appendix 6 – Feedback from Public Consultation
- Appendix 7 - Sales Fees and Charges
- Appendix 8 – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- Appendix 9 – Council Tax Statutory Calculations
- Appendix 10 – Chief Officer Statement on Robustness of both the Revenue Estimates and the Capital Programme.
- Appendix 11 - Medium Term Financial Strategy and Financial Resilience Plan
- Appendix 12 – DSG Schools Budgets

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2021/22 Budget Transition Process (Policy and Resources Committee 7 October 2020)
- Government Spending Review - Impact of Wirral Budget 2021/22 (Policy and Resources Committee 20 January 2021)
- Letter from MHCLG on exceptional financial support 2 February 2021

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy & Resources Committee	7 October 2020
Council	19 October 2020
Policy & Resources Committee	18 December 2020
Policy & Resources Committee	20 January 2021

## Appendix 1 – Pressures

<b>Wirral Council MTFP</b>	
	<b>21-22</b>
<b>PRESSURES</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Place</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Birkenhead Market Income	0.1
Regeneration Restructure	0.2
Homelessness	1.0
Planning Fees & Charges Shortfall	0.1
Destination Marketing Match funding	0.1
<b>Resources</b>	<b>1.6</b>
Fees and Charges Shortfall	1.6
<b>Legal &amp; Governance</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Fees and Charges Shortfall	0.1
Regeneration legal fees	0.2
<b>Chief Executive's Office</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>9.8</b>
Highways and Transport Fees & Charges	1.1
Culture and Leisure Fees & Charges	6.0
Waste Development Fund	1.0
Waste contract inflation	0.3
Waste Levy	1.4
<b>Childrens</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Modernisation Team Salary	0.1
Sen Transport	1.0
Residential placements price inflation	0.5
Independent Foster Care price inflation	0.1
Allowances inflation	0.3
PFI inflation	0.1
2020/21 Unachieved saving - Children Looked After	1.3
EYEs system	0.0
Youth remand cost	0.1
<b>Adult Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>14.9</b>
2020/21 Unachieved saving - Housing ECH (£0.5m)	0.2
2020/21 Unachieved saving - Care Package Review	2.3
2020/21 Unachieved saving - Wirral Evolutions	0.3
Demographic Growth (OP & LD)	2.4
Care Cost demand pressures	3.0

Specialist Fee rate increases	0.3
Contract Increases (WCFT & CWP)	0.5
Real Living wage	5.9
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>17.7</b>
2020/21 Unachieved savings - Lobo Financing	1.0
2020/21 Unachieved savings - Cash Flow Investments	0.7
2020/21 Unachieved savings - New Council Model	5.0
2020/21 Unachieved savings - Zero Based Budget	0.6
2020/21 Unachieved savings - Contract Target Savings	4.6
Pay & Pensions	0.4
End of 4 Year Pay Deal	0.7
Ask us Wirral	0.1
ERP revenue costs	0.1
Capital Financing	1.3
Social Care Grant reserve for 2021/22 pressures	3.3
<b>Total Pressures/Investments</b>	<b>49.4</b>

## Appendix 2 – Savings

	<b>21-22</b>
<b>SAVINGS</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Place</b>	<b>(3.2)</b>
Culture and Visitor Economy savings	(0.6)
Cease support for Community Alarms	(0.5)
Birkenhead Market Restructure	(0.2)
Budget Allocation for DDA	(0.2)
New income from Regeneration Projects	(0.2)
Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation - Planning	(0.0)
Wirral Growth Company Joint Venture income	(1.4)
<b>Resources</b>	<b>(4.4)</b>
Business Change Service Reduction	(0.7)
Review of Traded Services	(0.3)
Alternative funding for PFI	(0.3)
Bad debt write-off reduction	(1.0)
New staffing structure in IT Services	(0.6)
Business Support Unit Staffing Reduction	(0.2)
Wide Area Network savings	(0.2)
Restructure of Revenues & Benefits	(0.2)
Centralised Print Process	(0.2)
Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation	(0.8)
<b>Legal &amp; Governance</b>	<b>(0.3)</b>
Suspension of Individual Member Ward budgets	(0.3)
<b>Chief Executive's Office</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>(7.9)</b>
LED savings	(1.3)
Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation - Highways	(0.4)
Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation - Leisure	(2.0)
Additional and Increased car parking charges	(1.0)
Targeted & discretionary Environmental enforcement	(0.2)
Royden Park Commercial Development	(0.1)
Reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of verges	(0.3)
Amenity Space maintenance cessation	(0.1)
Stopping School Crossing Patrols	(0.3)
Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate	(0.4)
Closure of Public Conveniences	(0.1)
3 Weekly collection of general rubbish	(0.2)
Contract efficiency savings with BIFFA	(0.1)
Ongoing temporary Library Covid-19 efficiencies	(0.1)

Ongoing temporary Leisure Covid-19 efficiencies	(0.1)
Closure of Europa Pools	(0.6)
Review of Museums Service	(0.3)
Review of 4 Golf Courses	(0.2)
Pause re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre	(0.3)
<b>Children, Families and Education</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>
Semi-independent living	(0.5)
Pause Programme	(0.6)
Modernisation & Social Care staff efficiencies	(0.1)
Childrens containing demand pressure mitigation	(1.0)
Explore reduction in Youth Provision	(0.2)
YOS	(0.0)
<b>Adult Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>(4.5)</b>
Adult Care & Health demand mitigations	(3.8)
Change initiatives	(0.2)
Wirral Evolutions review day services for people with LD	(0.5)
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>(2.0)</b>
Workforce remodelling	(0.2)
Continuation of agile working	(0.5)
Apprenticeships First strategy	(0.1)
One Stop Shop Service Reduction	(0.1)
Continue temporary building closure due to Covid-19	(0.8)
Contract Management & commissioning	(0.4)
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>

## Appendix 3 – Five Year MTFP

<b>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN</b>					
	<b>21-22</b>	<b>22-23</b>	<b>23-24</b>	<b>24-25</b>	<b>25-26</b>
<b>BUDGET GAP OVERVIEW</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>20-21 Budget Requirement / Baseline</b>	<b>304.7</b>	<b>329.4</b>	<b>316.6</b>	<b>316.9</b>	<b>319.3</b>
<b>Pressures:</b>					
Regeneration & Place	1.4	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.4
Resources	1.6	-	-	-	-
Legal & Governance	0.3	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhoods	9.8	(6.6)	2.3	0.5	0.5
Children's	3.5	2.7	2.2	2.2	1.8
Adult Care & Health	14.9	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2
Corporate	17.7	3.1	4.2	3.8	3.2
<b>Total Pressures/Investments</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Savings:</b>					
Regeneration & Place	(3.2)	(2.7)	(1.9)	(0.6)	(3.4)
Resources	(4.4)	(1.9)	0.5	(0.4)	(1.1)
Legal & Governance	(0.3)	0.1	-	-	-
Neighbourhoods	(7.9)	(2.1)	(0.9)	(0.4)	(0.3)
Children's	(2.4)	(4.4)	(1.6)	(1.5)	-
Adult Care & Health	(4.5)	(4.0)	(5.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)
Corporate	(2.0)	(4.9)	(6.3)	(3.8)	(4.1)
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>	<b>(20.0)</b>	<b>(15.1)</b>	<b>(10.7)</b>	<b>(12.8)</b>
<b>Total Budget Requirement</b>	<b>329.4</b>	<b>316.6</b>	<b>316.9</b>	<b>319.3</b>	<b>318.6</b>
<b>Funded By :</b>					
<b><u>National Non Domestic Rates:</u></b>					
Business Rates Income	(72.3)	(73.4)	(74.6)	(75.9)	(77.1)
Business Rates Section 31 Grant	(12.8)	(13.0)	(13.2)	(13.4)	(13.7)
Top-Up Grant	(34.5)	(35.1)	(35.7)	(36.2)	(36.8)
Better Care Fund (BCF)	(18.8)	(19.1)	(19.4)	(19.7)	(20.0)
<b>Business Rates</b>	<b>(138.3)</b>	<b>(140.6)</b>	<b>(142.9)</b>	<b>(145.2)</b>	<b>(147.6)</b>
<b><u>Council Tax:</u></b>					
Council Tax base position	(153.3)	(156.6)	(161.1)	(165.7)	(170.5)
Annual increase in number of properties	(0.4)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(1.5)	(1.6)
Inflation	(3.0)	(3.1)	(3.2)	(3.2)	(3.4)

<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>(156.6)</b>	<b>(161.2)</b>	<b>(165.8)</b>	<b>(170.5)</b>	<b>(175.4)</b>
Collection Fund shortfall	1.0	1.9	3.0	-	-
New Homes Bonus	(0.2)	(0.1)	-	-	-
Social Care Support Grant	(14.6)	(11.3)	(11.3)	(11.3)	(11.3)
Capital Receipts	(0.6)	(6.2)		-	-
Lower Tier Services Funding	(0.5)				
Tranche 5 Covid-19 Funding	(10.0)				
Exceptional Financial Support	(10.6)				
<b>Total other funding</b>	<b>(35.5)</b>	<b>(15.6)</b>	<b>(8.2)</b>	<b>(11.3)</b>	<b>(11.3)</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(330.4)</b>	<b>(317.4)</b>	<b>(316.9)</b>	<b>(327.0)</b>	<b>(334.3)</b>
<b>Total Budget (Surplus)/Gap</b>	<b>(1.0)</b>	<b>(0.8)</b>	<b>(0.0)</b>	<b>(7.7)</b>	<b>(15.7)</b>

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## Appendix 4 – Proposals including within the Public Budget Consultation

<b>Children, Young People &amp; Education Committee</b>		
<p>Children’s Services in Wirral have made considerable improvements in recent years after being rated “inadequate” back in 2016. The improvements are in part because the authority made the decision to invest in the service and because of the hard work and dedication of those who work there.</p> <p>A family’s history should not and will not impact on the ambition of children in Wirral. We are focussed on breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and low ambition, raising the aspirations of every child in Wirral – regardless of where they live or their background. Our job is to encourage, and inspire, and we are relentless in pursuit of that goal. We will enable families to bring up children in safe, happy and secure environments.</p>		
OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Explore reduction in Youth Provision	£200,000	Activities for young people can help with educational outcomes and prevent child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and anti-social behaviour. We are looking at exploring a reduction in Youth Provision, which would result in a <b>potential saving of £200,000</b>
Modernisation & Social Care combined: Staff Efficiency Savings	£102,000	Children's Services includes preventative and support services that are both statutory and non-statutory and which support each other and are closely integrated. Their work includes ensuring vulnerable children who are being harmed or abused are protected and kept safe and families get the help they need. We are looking at combining the Modernisation & Social Care offer, which would result in a <b>potential saving of £102,000</b>
<b>Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee</b>		
<p>As a council we are supporting active travel networks that work for all, increased recycling and reduction in the overall collected general waste (non-recycling) per household. We are focused on increased our own energy efficiency in Council-owned buildings and look to increase in the number of wildflower verges in Wirral.</p> <p>The council’s budget situation means all services which are not legally required to be provided are being reviewed to find savings. It may be that not all the options being put forward will be taken up, but it is vital we look at everything we do to ensure the council is fit for the future.</p>		

OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate	£350,000	To carry out a fundamental review of the newly created Neighbourhood Services Directorate, to drive efficiencies and realign service provision and deliver the objectives of the Wirral Plan. The existing Directorate provides a wide range of services and functions, some of which are statutory. However, there is a need to bring services together in order to sharpen focus and develop a blended and combined approach to create and protect an environment our residents can be proud of. The review will generate better, more focused and aligned Neighbourhood Services to residents, as services are brought together to provide joined-up service provision. It is expected this could lead to a <b>potential saving of £350,000.</b>
Additional and increased parking charges: Whole scale car parking review	£1,000,000	It is vital the council maximises its income where possible to ensure frontline services can be delivered. Furthermore, parking charges can help control car use in busy locations, contributing to the council's climate emergency declaration outcomes by encouraging active travel and public transport alternative transport modes, and potentially help address inequality across the borough by not unduly benefitting car owners. It is proposed that a wide ranging and review of car parking charges looking at the options to increase parking charges and add charges where appropriate. It is anticipated this would provide <b>additional income to the council of £1,000,000.</b>
Stopping School Crossing Patrols	£276,300	The School Crossing Patrol Service is not a statutory council function – i.e. the council is not legally obliged to provide this service. By ceasing the School Crossing Patrol Service the council <b>would save £276,300.</b>
Reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of roadside verges and all Parks and Open Spaces	£250,000	A reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of roadside verges and all parks and open spaces would mean changes such as on roadside verges a reduction in the cutting and maintenance schedule, only edge cuts would be carried out at suitable grass panels/verges which are over 200sqm. Operators would only cut around pathways and alongside roads leaving the middle/centre to grow long. There would also be a significant enlargement of the wildflower meadows. For all parks and open spaces

		across the borough there would be reduction in the grass cutting frequencies and where appropriate and possible at the grass interface with suitable boundaries for example areas of woodland the grass would be allowed to grow and effectively re-wild or be cut at a much reduced capacity. This option could lead to a <b>saving of £250,000</b> .
Amenity space and grass verge maintenance cessation	£100,000	Ceasing maintenance (grass cutting and litter removal) at 45 amenity green spaces and 85 grass verge sites, possibly planting of trees, re-wilding or where appropriate creating new allotments. Sites have been identified where reduced maintenance would have the least impact on the local area. Stopping amenity space and grass verge maintenance could lead to <b>savings of £100,000</b> .
Closure of Public Conveniences	£142,000	The council maintains nine public convenience sites at mainly in coastal areas. These include Harrison Drive New Brighton, Moreton Common, Moreton Cross, West Kirby Marine Lake, West Kirby Concourse (outside), Parade Gardens Hoylake, Meols Parade, New Ferry and Thornton Hough. Closure of these would lead to a <b>saving of £142,000</b> .
3 weekly collection of general rubbish	£180,000	Reducing the collection frequency of green general rubbish bins from once every two weeks, to once every three weeks while maintaining the grey recycling bin collection at every two weeks. This proposal could lead to a requirement to collect additional packaging (e.g. plastic pots, tubs and trays, tetra pack type cartons and aerosol cans) to be permitted in the grey recycling bin and/or a separate food collection to deal with the reduction in general waste disposal capacity. The option could mean a <b>saving of £180,000</b> .
Contract Efficiency Savings with BIFFA	£75,000	The refuse collection and street cleansing contract the Council has with Biffa has been in place for over 10 years and following a contract extension will run until 2027. Over the course of the contract a significant amount of efficiencies have been taken, particularly at the time of the extension. However, a specific requirement of the terms of the extension was for both parties to pursue further efficiencies. It is estimated this could result in a <b>saving of £75,000</b> .

Income generated from establishing targeted and discretionary environmental enforcement	£150,000	The Council's Enforcement Policy was amended to remove the zero-tolerance approach but it is possible to re-establish this robust approach. Environmental crime has increased during the Covid-19 lockdown. The return to zero tolerance would involve education and engagement with residents and targeted to high profile locations where there has been significant anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Establishing targeted and discretionary environmental enforcement could lead to an <b>income of £150,000.</b>
<b>Tourism, Communities, Culture &amp; Leisure Committee</b>		
<p>The culture and visitor economy is a valuable source of income to the Wirral economy, however, supporting it is not a legal duty of the council. The work we do helps support local employers to succeed, to win more business and grow – creating more jobs and opportunities for local people. We will help make sure our residents have the skills and education they need to secure their best possible futures.</p> <p>We aim to develop strategic facility plan for Wirral that is fit-for-purpose - right activities in the right places that are accessible and meet the needs and aspirations of the people they serve.</p>		
OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Culture and Visitor Economy savings	£620,000	<p>A major reduction in the council's culture and visitor economy service achieved through staff savings and deleting the events budget. A small resource would remain within the regeneration team to deliver the culture elements of the regeneration programme, plus marketing resource will be re-allocated to the corporate communication team to manage the upkeep of visitor economy website and marketing, including involvement in the Liverpool City Region joint work on visitor economy.</p> <p><b>Savings of £620,000</b> could be achieved in the council budget by reducing this service.</p>
Close Europa Pools	£640,000	<p>Birkenhead is about to undergo major regeneration which will include looking at the best options for future leisure provision. The saving which would be achieved by closure of Europa Pools – which requires one of the highest levels of support of the borough's leisure centres, <b>would be £640,000.</b></p>

Pause re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre	£322,000	Some of our leisure centres are being used for Covid vaccinations, while refurbishment can only be done while they are closed. Woodchurch is one of the smaller Leisure Centres with one of the lower levels of usage with the second highest level of financial support. Delaying the re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre would <b>save the council £322,000.</b>
Review of 4 Golf Courses	£273,000	The Council operates four golf professional courses, which is a non-statutory service and there are a number of private courses throughout the Borough. In recent years, significant work has been undertaken to identify alternative delivery models for golf provision, however none of these solutions were pursued. Interest remains from private sector operators to run and operate Council owned courses under a lease arrangement. A review of options around the provision of council owned courses will be carried out. Potential closure/transfer of council operated golf courses could <b>save £273,000</b>
Review of Museums Service	£327,500	This option is for a full review of the council's museum service provision which includes the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum. A separate exercise would be required to establish the residual cost of maintaining any buildings mothballed by this proposal and a decision taken as to what to do with the historic collections. Retaining the collections will attract an annual maintenance cost of approximately £50,000 per annum. Closure of the museums service would <b>save £327,500</b> from the council budget per year.
Royden Park Commercial Development - Phase 1	£80,000	This proposal would develop elements of Royden Park with income generating services, providing significant environmental and social outcomes. The main element is a high ropes aerial park which will be situated adjacent to the new overspill car park. An external partner will be sought to fund, design, plan, construct, and operate the park on a turnover share/lease agreement. Phase 1 will include a self serve dog wash unit be in partnership with the local 'friends of' group and funded via lottery grant. This option could see <b>income to the council of £80,000.</b>

### Economy Regeneration & Development Committee

Our plans for economic growth are about encouraging inclusive growth, where the benefits are felt by every resident, creating opportunities for local people, and inspiring ambition. Prosperous communities are happier, healthier and better places to live. People want the chance to get a good job, and live in a nice home on a clean, safe street. A successful local economy – built on these inclusive principles – helps deliver that. Attracting investment to our borough creates good jobs for our residents. It helps people improve their skills, improve their prospects and raise the aspirations of their whole family. It's about helping everyone in the borough to become better off and live more comfortably.

The work we do helps support local employers to succeed, to win more business and grow – creating more jobs and opportunities for local people. We will help make sure our residents have the skills and education they need to secure their best possible futures. We work side-by-side with the independent traders who keep our high-streets alive, helping them adapt to modern trends.

OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Birkenhead Market Restructure	£240,000	Restructuring staffing arrangements to better serve delivery will ensure Birkenhead Market can drive forward its redevelopment. It is proposed staffing is reduced over 2/3 years in tandem with the development and relocation of the market to the temporary site. A restructure of Birkenhead Market could result in <b>savings of £240,000</b> .
Budget Allocation for DDA	£200,000	The majority of public buildings within the Authority's portfolio are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. As a result the works allocated to the budget for building works in relation to people with a disability accessing council buildings over the last few years has greatly reduced. If future works are required these will be covered by the general building code. The removal of this budget will not have any detrimental effect on access to council building for people with a disability as any unforeseen works will be covered within the property code. This proposal could <b>save £200,000</b> .

### Housing Committee

For most people, the thing which is most important to them is what they see when they open their front door. They want to see a clean street, which is well maintained and attractive. They want to live in a place which is free of anti-social behaviour and crime, and to be able to take an active role in making their community a better place to live.

Our job is to help make this happen. The everyday services people want the most – street cleaning, tackling dog-fouling, road

maintenance, streetlights, grass-cutting – will be delivered to the best possible standard. Almost as importantly, we will be responsive: if a resident asks us something, we will answer – quickly, clearly and with empathy. We'll also tackle the growing problem of rough sleeping and homelessness. In Wirral, people will never have to spend a second night outside. We will redouble our efforts in working with these vulnerable people and we will keep them safe. We will ensure people have a good standard of housing.

OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Cease Support for Community Alarms	£500,000	The Community Alarm Service offers a low level support service to aid independent living and reduces the burden on social care and health services. The option proposes the removal of an annual programme of support used to meet the shortfall for low income and older people households, which could result in a <b>saving of £500,000</b>

**Adult Care and Health Committee**

In Wirral we want all our residents to have a good quality of life. Good health and wellbeing is key to this and achieving that is more than about health services. A good start in life, education, decent work and housing, the environment in which we live and strong and supportive relationships all play a part.

We're proud of our reputation that people tell their story once, to one healthcare professional, and they will design a personalised care package to meet those needs. Our system is easier to access, it is better value, and it provides better care.

Wirral is a place where older people are treated with dignity and respect, and where having a disability is never a barrier to leading a full and fulfilling life. We are an accessible borough, which welcomes diversity and champions inclusion and social cohesion. Where people need extra help to stay healthy, we commission outstanding services to help people live more healthily.

OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Wirral Evolutions review of day services for people with Learning Disabilities	£500,000	This option relates to a service review with the aim of modernising the current operating model and reduce the associated operating costs of delivering day services for people with Learning Disabilities. The review's aim is to manage the cost of current provision by service changes that could lead to <b>savings of £500,000</b>

**Policy and Resources Committee**

The Policy & Resources Committee oversees all the council committees and its membership includes chairs of the other key committees on the council which oversee specific service areas. Options for savings specifically overseen by the P&R

Committee include Resources & Law/Governance Directorates and Council-wide options.		
OPTION	VALUE	NARRATIVE
Suspension of individual Member Ward Budgets	£250,000	Individual councillors in each ward in Wirral are able to allocate a share of the “ward member budgets” to support local objectives. The funds are allocated to local community organisations, charities, statutory bodies, and businesses to improve the well-being of the local area, its environment or economy. It is proposed to suspend this for the next financial year which will <b>save £250,000</b> .
One Stop Shop Service Reduction	£98,000	Wirral’s One Stop Shop Network has reduced its staffing in recent years in line with a reduction in visitors. Since 2015/16 visitor numbers have reduced by over 40% across the network. This has coincided with an increase in e-citizen accounts which enable residents to access Council services online through mywirral.gov. A further One Stop Shop reduction could lead to a <b>saving of £98,000</b> .
Restructure of Revenues & Benefits	£150,000	A review of the Revenues and Benefits service to identify savings through a new staffing structure. Efficiencies will be generated by reconfiguring teams within the service and staff reduction will be managed through natural wastage and deleting vacant posts. These efficiencies will be delivered through restructuring teams to optimise resources and there will be no direct impact on service provision. It could achieve a <b>saving of £150,000</b>
Business Change Service Reduction	£670,000	The Programme Management Office is responsible for defining, resourcing and implementing business change through a team of project management professionals deployed across the business. The team has also been providing significant capacity to the Council’s Covid 19 emergency response and recovery. This option would reduce the service budget by 15% resulting in reduced capacity to deliver business change. The proposed <b>saving under this option would be £670,000</b> .
New Staffing Structure in IT Services	£618,000	Digital (IT Services) provides a number of services for Council including: Support and security of the IT infrastructure and all Council applications,

		management of the Council's data both physical and electronic formats, Records Management and Archives. This option provides a cost saving through a reduction of staff across Digital (IT Services) to contribute to the financial challenges currently being faced, and could result in a <b>saving of £618,000</b>
Centralised Print Process	£157,000	The Council currently has a managed print contract which provides the majority of printers across the council (approximately 200 devices). The option would remove all printers from across the Council and create a centralised print service to support any printing requirements. This centralised print service would be created by merging the Print Services team (currently a traded service) with Distribution Services. This could result in a <b>saving of £157,000</b> .
Business Support Unit - Staffing Reduction	£237,000	The Business Support Unit provides a number of services for the council including: postal services, support of the revenues and benefit system, front desk services for some buildings, management of customer feedback and management of p-cards, mobile phones and travel loans. This option would reduce cost through reduction of staff across the Business Support Unit (BSU) resulting in a <b>saving of £237,000</b>
Hardship fund and reduction in bad debt provision	£1,000,000	As part of the government's support for Covid-19, Wirral received £3.9m Hardship Fund to support council tax payers. It has been used to credit working age Local Council Tax Support claimants with a discount on their 2020/21 Council Tax bill. As at 31st August 2020, £1.5m of the fund has been used, and is available to claim up to the end of March 2021, when the remaining balance will then be known. It is proposed to use the remaining balance to clear old outstanding Council Tax arrears. This will reduce the bad debt provision requirement, and therefore improve the estimated year end Council Tax position. It will <b>save the council £1,000,000</b>
Contract Management & Commissioning	£350,000	This option proposes reviewing the Council's commissioning and contract management model over the next 18 months in line with approaches that have been adopted in other authorities. LGA

		research/benchmarking have been considered and applied to Wirral's context and budget. It could result in a <b>saving of £350,000</b>
Apprenticeships	£148,000	This option proposes moving the Council's workforce strategy towards an Apprenticeship first model. This would mean that as new vacancies arise, there is a strong emphasis on using apprenticeships to fill these. This could lead to <b>savings of £148,000</b>
Traded Services Review	£270,000	A review is currently being undertaken to assess the effectiveness of Council delivered traded services to ensure they provide value for money. This option represents a target to deliver improved commercial activity, which could be realised through a variety of different approaches including cost efficiencies, modifying or ceasing services or marketing services in a revised manner, for example with package deals to improve take-up rates. This could result in a <b>saving of £270,000</b>



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## Appendix 5

### Service Committee's Budget Consultation Report Minute extracts for Policy and Resources Committee

#### **Adult Social Care and Health Committee – Monday 18 January 2021**

Graham Hodgkinson, Director of Care and Health introduced the report of the Director of Resources and outlined that the report formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process and gave the Adult Social Care and Health Committee opportunity to comment on the proposals that fall within its remit, which would enable those comments to be presented for consideration by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in February 2021.

The report included a savings proposal through a service review of the day services for people with Learning Disabilities provided by Wirral Evolutions. The review's aim was to manage the cost of current provision through service changes with potential savings of £500,000.

Members felt that there was no need to further comment on the proposals whilst the public consultation was ongoing, and the comments the Committee made on the budget options at the previous meeting were still pertinent and should still be considered.

#### **Resolved – That**

**the resolutions agreed under Minute Item 19 at the previous meeting of the Adult Social Care and Health Committee on the budget options be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee as part of the budget consultation. (see resolutions for minute 19 from meeting held on 19 November 2020 below)**

#### **Resolutions for Minute 19 from Adult Social Care and Health Committee – Thursday 19 November 2020:**

##### ***Resolved: That***

***(1) Adult Care and Health Committee wishes to protect services where a reduction in budget would lead to more costly demand pressures occurring subsequently.***

***(2) Adult Care and Health Services will contribute significantly to savings over the next 5yrs by aspiring to delivering it's services efficiently, to a high standard and in a way that ensures people can be independent for as long as possible.***

***(3) Committee has considered all of the options and wishes to proceed with;***

***Budget Option 2- £500,00 saving from Wirral Evolutions***

***Budget Option 3- Strength based assessments as well as all of the in-year savings to be re-profiled into 21/22***

***For the reasons stated above, them being that cuts impacting on the quality of services will lead to greater costs in future years.***

***(4) We therefore reject;***

***Budget Option 1- Rationalising contracts to the voluntary community and faith sector.***

***Budget option 4- Discontinuing paying the real living wage fee rate to care providers.***

***Budget option 5- Reduction of NHS care providers- Social care contracts.***

***Budget option 6- Adult social care staffing reduction***

***Budget option 7- Public Health staffing reduction.***

***(5) Committee believes steps should be taken that will ensure a more effective operation of the shared aids and adaptation services with a view to a co-ordinated and improved services.***

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## **Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee – Thursday 21 January 2021**

This report formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process, as set out in the Constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2021/22. Policy and Resources Committee had to recommend a 2021/22 balanced budget proposal to the Council for its meeting in March 2021, and this Committee had been given 6 proposals to consider.

Gail Mooney described the work so far including a consultation which had been launched on 21 December 2020 and closed on 22 January. This had included an online portal and surveys. Almost 13,000 people had accessed the portal and about 2,600 surveys had been completed. Part of registering comments was to provide a postcode which would allow an analysis of responses by area. Many ideas and questions had been suggested and all would be considered. There had also been question and answer sessions and petitions were expected. Policy and Resources Committee on 17 February would have full details of what had been received and a summary. Officers explained that the short municipal year caused by the Covid-19

pandemic made the timescales very short, and the costs on the Council of the pandemic had created a budget deficit which needed to be covered.

Members expressed strong concerns and frustration that there were options provided that had not previously been >to this Committee for consideration.

Each proposal was then discussed and comments included:

#### Culture and Business Economy Savings

These had been agreed in November and Members had no issues with them.

#### Close Europa Pools

Members were informed that the element of Europa Pools which was more expensive to operate was the fun pool, and there had been many requests to keep the competitive pool open as it was the only one in the borough with a grandstand and a movable floor.

Financial figures were not available which made an informed decision impossible.

There would be an effect on ability to exercise which could impact on the Leisure Strategy, where Sport England would be undertaking a detailed needs analysis.

Europa Pools was not included in the latest business plan for the redevelopment of Birkenhead but remained as an option.

There were capital works needed at the fun pool to bring it up to standard.

#### Pause re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre

The delay was likely to be until April 2022.

There were worries that it could be regarded as 'mothballed' and the delay would be used to justify permanent closure, but Members were informed that there were plans at the site for developments including new 3G football pitches and the improvement of existing grass pitches. The pool was in good condition.

This was another element that would impact on opportunities for exercise following the pandemic, which had benefits regarding physical and mental health and activity.

#### Review of 4 Golf Courses

Since the development of the initial savings option based on the provision of all golf as a non-statutory service, it had transpired that Hoylake Golf Course could not be included in the review as there was a Development Agreement in place until December 2022. Furthermore, the course is committed as a support facility and practice course for the 2023 Open Championship.

In 2020 Environment Scrutiny Committee had considered the future of golf courses in detail connected with call-in of a decision and had put forward proposals. Some of these were being implemented including plans, delayed by the pandemic, to develop Arrowe Park with improved Clubhouse and a sports village, and the recruitment of a head greenkeeper.

Brackenwood was important due to archaeological finds.

There may be opportunity to generate income around the Open Championship in 2023.

Courses were being surveyed to see what was involved in bringing them up to a good standard.

There had been a surge in play after the first lockdown.

Golf was important to the Leisure Strategy and the courses were important for introducing new people to golf.

#### Review of Museums Service

Members were informed that £212,000 of the proposed savings of £327,000 related to the Williamson. Initial savings were based on the inclusion of the Priory and Tramway Museum however these were subsequently removed.

The Williamson had recently had lighting upgraded and was a hub of cultural activities.

Artwork could be sold to generate funds however the museum had accredited museum status and could apply for specific funding pots which may not be available if it were to sell off artwork and so may not be available to the Council. Closing could actually create a negative effect on future budgets.

Members had received many letters and emails opposing the closure of the Williamson as people found relaxation, solace and socialising there.

The venue could be marketed for corporate business use.

It was a hub of the community with international connotations.

When the pandemic ends Members would want a Wirral worth living in and the Williamson was part of that – a jewel in the crown.

There may be legal covenants preventing any other use however further investigatory work with Legal services would be required to establish the extent of this.

#### Royden Park Commercial Development - Phase 1

It was unclear whether the income generated by the high ropes activity planned for Royden Park would affect the budget of this Committee.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That Policy and Resources Committee in February 2021 consider the comments on the budget proposals which fall under the remit of the Tourism, Communities and Leisure Committee.**

## **Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee – Tuesday 26 January 2021**

The report of the Director of Resources formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process, as set out in the Constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2021/22. Policy and Resources Committee had to recommend a 2021/22 balanced Budget proposal to the Council for its meeting in March 2021. The Committee was asked to consider and provide feedback on Budget proposals.

The Director of Law and Governance advised that it was helpful for the public to understand that the process this year differed from other years. He stated that this municipal year was truncated, and things had gone through at speed. The normal budget consideration had not happened because of the timescales required. Members of the Committee had received the options by way of workshops and the Committee's suggestion then went to Policy and Resources Committee.

The public consultation was underway, and the final settlement figure central Government had not been received so the figures were estimates based on experience. The Director for Regeneration and Place stated that the budget looked to capitalise on National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax projections. Initiatives such as integrating Birkenhead Market would assist with this as would the proposals around the disability access budget. All Council offices are compliant, so any future adaptations could be met by the existing budget. The chair commented that anything we want to draw down on in the capital budget can be brought back to committee.

**RESOLVED – That the budget proposals which fall under the remit of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee be presented for consideration to the Policy and Resources Committee in February 2021.**

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## **Housing Committee – Wednesday 27 January 2021**

Alan Evans, Director of Regeneration and Place introduced the report of the Director of Resources and outlined that the report formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process and gave the Housing Committee opportunity to comment on the proposal that falls within its remit, this would enable those comments to be presented for consideration by policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in February 2021.

The report included a savings proposal to Cease support for Community Alarms with a potential saving of £500,000.

The Chair commented that further information had been requested regarding this budget proposal at the workshop on 26 November 2020.

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated that further information had been sought from service providers who were given questionnaires at the same time the public consultation began. He stated it had been hard to get a full response due to staffing issues associated with Covid-19. He also clarified that while this saving was

being considered for the Housing Service, Adult Social Care was looking into digital devices that would perform a similar function at a much lower cost.

Members stated that without further information on the impact that this budget proposal might have on those that currently benefit from it, it was not possible to make informed comments at this meeting.

Members expressed concerns on the effect it would have on vulnerable people.

Lisa Newman, Head of Operational Housing Services clarified that the budget proposal wouldn't remove the ability of residents to have a community alarm; but it would remove the council's contribution to their funding. The service would still be available with responsibility for full payment going to the provider or the resident.

The Director of Regeneration and Housing stated that further information from service providers would be received shortly and would be fed back to Committee Members for comment.

### **Resolved - That**

**Committee notes the report and would like to communicate all concerns raised with the Policy and Resources Committee, and; if information is forthcoming within the relevant timeframe, a workshop be arranged of this committee in the interim.**

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### **Children, Young People & Education Committee – Thursday 28 January 2021**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services, reminded the Committee that due to the current governance arrangements having only been in place since October 2020, there had been insufficient time to enable the usual full budget consultation process, and therefore the complete public consultation response nor the final Local Government finance settlement figure were yet available. However, the item before the Committee was its opportunity to make public comments on the budget proposals, and those comments would be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee, who would then recommend a final budget proposal to Council.

Paul Boyce OBE, Director for Children, Families and Education then introduced the report, which formed part of the budget setting process and included two savings proposals in appendix 1 for consideration. It was reported that the options were arrived at following a review of all council statutory and discretionary services to support children and young people in the borough, and had been put out to public consultation in the context of the significant budget reductions the council was facing.

Members discussed the £200,000 potential saving in youth provision and noted that there had been public interest in this proposal, particularly in relation to The Hive, and queried whether the proposal was a reduction on any previously committed funding. It was confirmed that Wirral Council had provided 3 non-contractual grants of £400,000 per year to The Hive up to 2019/20, in order to give the provider an

opportunity to increase income streams with a view to becoming self-sustainable. A further £400,000 grant had been agreed for the 2020/21 financial year to continue to support The Hive in its efforts to become self-sustainable. Paul Boyce confirmed that the figure of £200,000 within the report had been derived from a service-wide review of youth services funding, and that given the current situation and overall youth provision budget, it was felt that The Hive was the most logical place for the £200,000 savings to be taken from. It was confirmed that there had been no prior commitment to funding for The Hive in the 2021/22 budget.

The Committee further discussed the overall allocation of funding for youth services across the borough and noted that the proposed allocation of funding to The Hive was still significant when compared to similar provisions in other areas. It was queried whether a Service Level Agreement had been agreed with The Hive and if so, whether those contractual agreements had been met in 2020/21. Members acknowledged the ongoing pressure of Covid-19 on such services, and reinforced the view that The Hive delivered a much valued service to the children within the borough.

**RESOLVED – That both the comments made at the Children, Young People and Education Committee budget workshop and during this Committee meeting be considered by Policy & Resources Committee as part of the budget consultation.**

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## **Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee – Monday 01 February 2021**

The report of the Director of Resources formed part of the Council's formal budget setting process, as set out in the Constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2021/22. Policy and Resources Committee had to recommend a 2021/22 balanced Budget proposal to the Council for its meeting in March 2021. It was good practice for service committees to consider and feedback on Budget proposals.

On Friday, 18th December 2020 the Policy and Resources Committee approved the 'Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 - Proposals for Consultation' to begin public consultation on 21 December 21 to 22 January. The consultation was primarily conducted through the council's specialist "Have Your Say" online portal but included many other methods including an online questionnaire; an ideas board for residents to post their 'ideas' and suggestions about the council budget; paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version; 'Virtual' Public Events for residents, young people and council staff; Council staff Facebook page; directly to the project team, Councillors, MPs and Senior Officers; and a specific email inbox. Results included 2,715 completed questionnaires, 236 "ideas" added to the Ideas Board and 74 questions. There was a relatively even spread of responses from the four Wirral constituencies. Full details of the responses were circulated to Members. Most comments were categorised predominantly into three themes: Children's

Services including The Hive, arts and culture (in particular noting retention of the Williamson Art Gallery) and refuse collection.

It was explained that this year the budget consultation process was truncated because of the shorter period of meetings caused by the pandemic, and the budget was under considerable pressure due to various effects linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. The final settlement figures from Government had not been received but the Committee were being asked their views on the options offered although Members had a duty to the whole of borough to set a balanced budget on 2 March.

Budget proposals were:

- Options Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate
- Additional and increased parking charges: Whole scale car parking review
- Stopping School Crossing Patrols
- Reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of roadside verges and all Parks and Open Spaces
- Amenity space and grass verge maintenance cessation
- Closure of Public Conveniences
- 3 weekly collection of general rubbish
- Contract Efficiency Savings with BIFFA
- Income generated from establishing targeted and discretionary environmental enforcement

Members expressed the opinion that they did not want to see many of the options but were forced by the temporary budget situation. They were heartened that the feedback from the consultation showed that the public endorsed the Committee's initial recommendations, including a rejection of both cuts to school crossing patrols and closure of public toilets and that there were positive suggestions such as rewilding that should allow for longer term benefits which were endorsed by the public. They discussed the application and consequences of rewilding in certain areas and acknowledged again that there was potential to reduce expenditure and assist biodiversity by appropriate reductions in grass cutting and maintenance. It was recognised that features such as flower meadows cannot be created without cost. It was agreed that there would need to be consultation between officers, members and local residents about the appropriate treatment of specific small open spaces. It was also suggested that income generating options made at the workshops could be explored in the future utilising experience of officers.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee endorses the feedback from the budget workshops and recommends that the comments made during this meeting be considered by Policy and Resources Committee as part of the budget consultation.**



**Have your say**

# **Wirral Council Budget**

## **Consultation Report**



**Consultation: 21 December 2020 – 22 January 2021**

**Report: 1 February 2021**

## Contents

<b>1.0 Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 Methodology .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2.1 Public Consultation .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1.1 Questionnaire .....	8
2.1.2 Ideas Board .....	8
2.1.3 Public Events .....	8
<b>2.2 Staff Feedback.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.3 Additional Responses .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.4 Analysis of Respondents .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.5 Interpretation of Results.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.6 Communication .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3.0 Results .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1 Questionnaire Results .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1.1 Children, Young People and Education Committee .....	11
3.1.2 Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee .....	12
3.1.3 Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure .....	17
3.1.4 Economy Regeneration & Development Committee .....	20
3.1.5 Housing Committee .....	21
3.1.6 Adult Social Care and Health Committee .....	22
3.1.7 Policy and Resources Committee .....	22
<b>3.2 Ideas Board Results.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.3 Events Feedback.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.4 Staff Feedback.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>4.1 Demographics .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>4.2 Have your say - Site Traffic .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Qualitative Feedback.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# 1.0 Executive Summary

Wirral Council continues to face financial challenges which have been made more severe by the Covid-19 pandemic. Current figures indicate the authority needs to make savings in the region of £16.5m. Failure to make these budget savings will mean the council's expenditure will exceed its income, which is illegal.

At Policy and Resources committee on 18 December 2020 a programme of community and stakeholder consultation was agreed. The objectives of the public consultation were:

- **Understanding:** To enable stakeholders to understand the scale of the budget challenge, and how we are going about overcoming it
- **Engagement:** To enable stakeholders to contribute to the process, and ensure their views are valued and are being considered
- **Support:** To ensure stakeholders support the budget proposals, appreciate the work which has been done to involve them, and understand the reasons for budget decisions

To ensure the budget decision making reflected the views of all stakeholders, including Wirral residents and Council staff, feedback was sought on the budget proposals through a variety of methods. This included opportunities for submission of further ideas on what else the Council could do to bridge the budget gap. The key findings are outlined in this executive summary.

## Online Engagement

- ***Public consultation through the online 'Have your say' portal resulted in 2715 completed questionnaires, 236 "ideas" added to the Ideas Board and 74 questions for the online events.***
- Proposal 1 requested views on pursuing a reduction in Youth Provision, the response was 77% disagreement, 13% agreement, and 9% neutral.
- Proposal 2 requested views on combining Children's Social Care services, the response was 44% disagreement, 35% agreement and 21% neutral.
- Proposal 3 requested views on bringing together services together to develop a new Neighbourhoods model, the response was 63% agreement, 16% disagreement and 21% neutral.
- Proposal 4 requested views on reviewing car parking charges which resulted in a response of 45% agreement, 43% disagreement and 12% neutral.
- Proposal 5 requested views on ceasing the School Crossing Patrol Service, the response was 61% disagreement, 26% agreement and 13% neutral.

- Proposal 6 requested views on pursuing the option of reducing grass cutting frequency and allowing re-wilding, the response was 58% agreement, 30% disagreement and 12% neutral.
- Proposal 7 requested views on pursuing the option of ceasing maintenance on some green spaces and grass verges, the response was 45% agreement, 37% disagreement and 17% neutral.
- Proposal 8 requested views on closing council public conveniences, the response was 73% disagreement, 16% agreement and 12% neutral.
- Proposal 9 requested views on reducing the collection of general rubbish bins to once every three weeks, the responses were 66% disagreement, 26% agreement and 7% neutral.
- Proposal 10 requested views on pursuing efficiencies within the refuse and street cleaning contract held by Biffa. The responses were 51% agreement, 21% disagreement and 28% neutral.
- Proposal 11 requested views on pursuing a zero-tolerance view to Environmental Crime, the response was 74% agreement, 12% disagreement and 15% neutral.
- Proposal 12 requested views on pursuing the option reducing the council's culture and visitor economy service, the response was 43% agreement, 34% disagreement and 23% neutral.
- Proposal 13 requested views on pursuing the option of closing Europa Pools, the response was 52% disagreement, 33% agreement and 14% neutral.
- Proposal 14 requested views on pursuing the option of delaying the re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre, the response was 56% agreement, 27% disagreement and 17% neutral.
- Proposal 15 requested views on pursuing the option of a potential closure or transfer of council operated golf courses, the response was 63% agreement, 23% disagreement and 14% neutral.
- Proposal 16 requested views on whether the council's museum service should be closed, the responses were 71% disagreement, 16% agreement and 13% neutral.
- Proposal 17 requested views on the option of developing income generating services at Royden Park, the responses were 69% agreement, 18% disagreement and 13% neutral.
- Proposal 18 requested views on the option of restructuring staffing at Birkenhead Market, the responses were 65% agreement, 11% disagreement and 24% neutral.
- Proposal 19 requested views on the option to remove the budget for building works in relation to people with disabilities, the responses were 71% agreement, 11% disagreement and 18% neutral.

- Proposal 20 requested views on the option to remove the annual programme of support for the Community Alarm Service, the responses were 67% disagreement, 14% agreement and 19% neutral.
- Proposal 21 requested views on the option to review Wirral Evolutions day services for people with learning disabilities, the responses were 42% disagreement, 30% agreement and 28% neutral.
- Proposal 22 requested views on the option to review 'back office' functions, the responses were 77% agreement, 9% disagreement and 15% neutral.
- Proposal 23 requested views on pursuing the option of using the balance on the Hardship Fund to reduce the bad debt provision, the responses were 59% agreement, 19% disagreement and 22% neutral.
- Proposal 24 requested views on pursuing the option of suspending ward members budgets, the responses were 42% agreement, 38% disagreement and 20% neutral.
- The questionnaire provided the option for respondents to provide further comments on the proposals and additional ideas. Of the 2715 questionnaire respondents 992 completed the comment box. A range of feedback was submitted, and the key themes can be categorised into **workforce** (40%) including senior officer pay, review of Councillor numbers and pay and reduced use of consultants; **leisure and tourism** (25%) including retaining leisure centres including Europa Pools, **refuse collection** (16%) including no reduction in general waste collection frequency and to improve the recycling offer; **revenue generation** (16%) including increased fines and camping opportunities; **Children's Services** (11%) including no cuts to the Hive; **parking** (10%) both for and against charges; and **arts and culture** (10%) including retaining the Williamson Art Gallery.
- The **Ideas Board** generated both **comments** on existing proposals and budget **ideas**. Review identified that 134 (41%) responses were comments and the remaining 194 (59%) were budget ideas.
- Of the **Ideas Board ideas** 88% fell into the categories of either **revenue generation** (44%) including enforcement (16%), parking (15%) and arts and culture (7%) or **savings** (44%) including council workforce pay and structure (42%), refuse collection (13%), council owned assets (6%) and cost sharing with other organisations (6%).
- The **Ideas Board comments** were categorised predominantly into three themes, Children's Services including The Hive (34%) suggesting no cuts to the budget, arts and culture noting retention of the Williamson Art Gallery (21%) and refuse collection (15%) suggesting no reduction in collection frequency.
- Demographic analysis of online responses was carried out; 95.6% of respondents are local residents living within Wirral, 4.4% are from other areas, the main two being Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool. There is a relatively even spread of

responses from the four Wirral constituencies, Birkenhead 29.4%, Wallasey 22.8%, Wirral West 20.4% and Wirral South 23.0%.

### Public Events

- Staff Event: This session generated a mix of suggestions for income, together with feedback around four primary areas, these being cuts to youth services, the closure of council buildings (with a view to save on assets), the current capitalisation bid and the use of external consultants.
- Public Event: This session generated comments and feedback on six primary areas, these being cuts to youth services, closure of Europa Pools, closure of Woodchurch Leisure Centre, the retention of Golf Courses, move to three-weekly bin collections and closure of Williamson Art Gallery.
- Youth Event: This session focussed on cuts to youth services, specifically reduction of budget for The Hive.

### Staff Engagement

- The staff feedback form was completed 101 times. Feedback on the budget proposals focused on a set of key themes including no reduction in frequency of **waste collection** (17%); **workforce** (15%) noting senior officer salary costs, less outsourcing, no cuts to council staff and more staff permitted to take EVR; **art and culture**, retaining the Williamson Gallery (15%); **leisure and tourism** (13%) noting retention of Europa Pools; **school crossing patrols** (9%) being retained.
- Staff also submitted a variety of cost saving ideas, which related to the following key themes, workforce (47%), the council's office estate (7%), car parking charges (7%) and Libraries (6%).

### Additional Responses

- The questionnaire was made available in paper format and as an Easy Read Version. 47 paper copies and 20 easy read copies were received. The responses were incorporated into the questionnaire analysis.
- A number of additional responses including petitions were also submitted using the email address provided. The detail of the feedback is included in Appendix 1.

### Summary

- The budget consultation covered a range of different saving options. When reviewing both staff and public feedback through the range of channels provided, the majority of themes were linked to the budget options and aligned with the scoring on individual proposal questions.

## 2.0 Methodology

The budget consultation enabled stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback on a series of budget options outlined to balance the council's budget, as well as to offer any ideas on other options to enable an effective budget.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee, on 17 February, which will decide on a set of budget proposals to be recommended to the Full Council budget setting meeting, which takes place on 1 March 2021. Full Council will have the final say on the authority's budget for the next year.

The consultation was carried out between 21 December 2020 – 22 January 2021. A number of different methods for residents and staff to contribute to the consultation were provided and can be summarised:

- Online public consultation through the 'Have your say' consultation portal.
- Public Events to allow residents and other stakeholders to ask specific questions about the budget proposals.
- Staff engagement.
- Specific Budget Email Inbox.
- Opportunity for individuals and groups to provide feedback directly to the project team, Councillors, MP's and Senior Officers.

### 2.1 Public Consultation

A key part of the public consultation was carried out using Wirral Council's 'Have your say' consultation portal at [www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk) with a page dedicated to the Budget Consultation. A Budget Booklet, a Frequently Asked Questions Document and an Easy Read Version of the consultation were published on the portal and available for download to provide key information about the consultation.

Three online tools were provided for residents to engage with:

- An online questionnaire – to respond to specific questions about budget proposals.
- An ideas board – for residents to post 'ideas' about the council budget.
- A guestbook for residents to add a list of questions they would like to ask at the events.

Respondents were able to request paper copies of the survey, including an easy read version, or submit additional comments via a dedicated email address, which was published on the 'Have your say' site alongside the online tool.

### **2.1.1 Questionnaire**

The consultation questionnaire was developed in order to enable stakeholders to record their opinions on the budget proposals. In particular, the consultation invited views on:

- A set of questions specific to each budget proposal. These were provided on a Likert scale to ascertain whether respondents agreed, disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed with the proposal.
- To enable further understanding, and in-depth analysis, respondents were invited to provide free text comments to expand on their ideas or concerns.

Following closure of the consultation, the responses to each of the direct questions were collated and the responses included in this report. For the free comment question, a text coding approach was used based on the reoccurring themes. This data was then collated and summarised in the report.

Forty-seven paper and 20 Easy Read questionnaires were submitted. These responses were examined, and the points raised incorporated into the online questionnaire results to ensure the views were represented in the final analysis.

### **2.1.2 Ideas Board**

The Ideas Board function was set up to allow respondents to submit their own ideas about the budget, these could be approved and commented on by other members of the public.

The information provided was reviewed and categorised as it was noted that many of the submissions were comments on the existing proposals. The ideas and comments categories were then coded based on content and a set of themes were identified.

### **2.1.3 Public Events**

Three 'virtual' public events were held to enable those interested in the budget proposals to join an online Q&A. The events were held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January, and included an event for staff, one for residents, and a third for young people.

The events were recorded and links to the videos posted on social media, through the staff Facebook page and sent directly to those requesting copies.

In addition to live questions that were submitted throughout the sessions, questions from the Guestbook were also addressed. For those that did not receive an answer, whether that be due to time or the need for additional information, a written response was sent via email.

## **2.2 Staff Feedback**

Staff were encouraged to provide their views and comments through a number of channels, with those who may be impacted by the proposals, briefed prior to the start of the consultation.

A form was set up on the intranet for staff to provide feedback on proposals, suggest their own ideas for cost savings and ask any questions about the proposals or the budget process. This form was promoted in ExecView (the Chief Executive's newsletter sent to staff by email),

Managers' View (sent to all managers by email), the intranet, on the Wirral Council Staff Facebook group and via individual directorates.

All staff feedback was collated and reviewed. Key comments and ideas were themed to enable effective review. Directorates were provided with staff feedback linked to their staff in order to inform further discussion as required. Budget ideas were also provided for further analysis and review.

An online event was also held on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January where staff had the opportunity to ask the Council Leader, Cllr Janette Williamson, questions about the budget. Nearly 400 members of staff attended the 30-minute event, which was held using Microsoft Teams.

### **2.3 Additional Responses**

Contact details were provided to enable organisations, groups, or special interest groups to submit their responses to the budget proposals. These submissions are included in Appendix one.

### **2.4 Analysis of Respondents**

The Council has provided a range of options for all stakeholders to feed back on the budget proposals and has sought to ensure a range residents and stakeholders were enabled to engage in the consultation.

Respondents to the online tools were provided with the option to provide demographic information about themselves. It must be noted that this is an option and that not all respondents included this information. This data allows the demographic results to be included in this report to enable analysis of the scope of responses and representation from different demographic groups.

### **2.5 Interpretation of Results**

In terms of the results, it is important to note that:

- The public consultation is not representative of the overall population but provides information on the opinion of those residents who engaged.
- For specific tools where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded. All free text questions and ideas that offered respondents the option to provide written feedback could have covered multiple themes. Therefore, with free text responses being categorised using a coding system, some comments will be multi-coded and therefore add up to more than 100 percent.

### **2.6 Communication**

The COVID-19 virus continues to place limitations on engagement with local communities. However, to raise awareness amongst as many residents, stakeholders, and businesses as possible, a full communications campaign, utilising a variety of communications channels was delivered. This included:

- Organic Social Media (mix of platforms)
- Paid for and targeted social media (Facebook)
- Resident Email (inclusion in 4 editions)
- Partner/ Stakeholder E-Newsletters (printable for sharing)
- Councillor Updates (Including narrative to share with constituents)
- Creation of a dedicated Budget email inbox
- Press/ Content Media releases
- Budget updates posted to wirralview.com
- Outreach through established COVID response cells and Champions Network
- Evolving FAQ document
- Presence on wirral.gov
- Posts on Staff Facebook page
- Exec View (Staff Newsletter)
- Shared narrative for regular Workforce, Directorate and Team updates

# 3.0 Results

## 3.1 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was responded to by 2765 people, with 2715 through the online portal, 47 paper copies and 20 Easy Read copies submitted. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

### 3.1.1 Children, Young People and Education Committee

**Q1:** Activities for young people can help with educational outcomes and prevent child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and anti-social behaviour. We are looking at exploring a reduction in Youth Provision, which would result in a potential saving of £200,000.

The responses provided were 77% disagreement overall, (50% strongly), 13% agreement overall, (6% strongly), with 9% neutral.

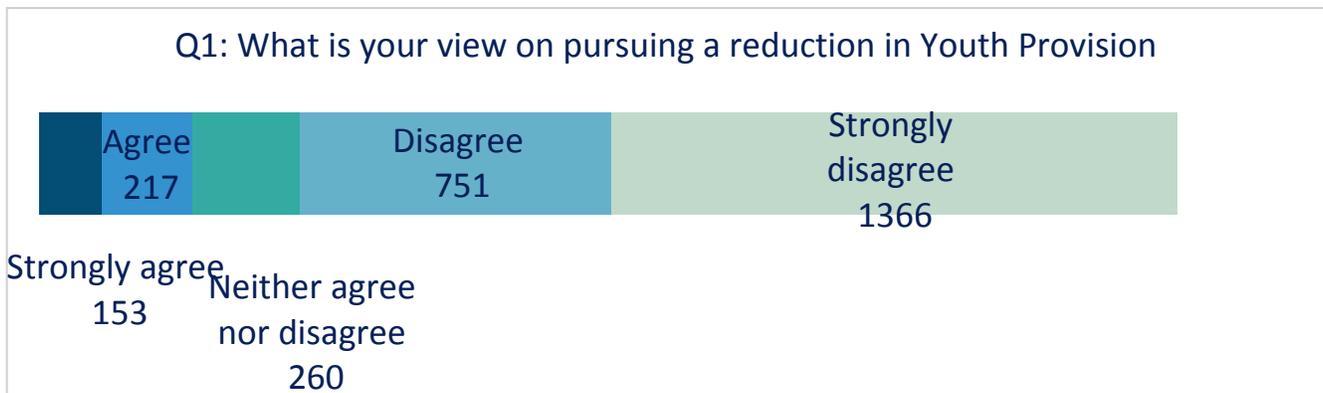


Chart 1: What is your view on pursuing a reduction in Youth Provision.

**Q2:** Children's Services includes preventative and support services that are both statutory and non-statutory – this means some the council must provide, and others the council chooses to because it believes they are valuable. These services support each other and are closely integrated. Their work includes ensuring vulnerable children who are being harmed or abused are protected and kept safe and families get the help they need. We are looking at combining the Modernisation & Social Care offer, which would result in a potential saving of £102,000.

The responses provided were 44% disagreement (27% strongly), 35% agreement (9% strongly) and 21% neither agree or disagree.



Q2: What is your view on combining Children's Social Care Modernisation & Social Care offer

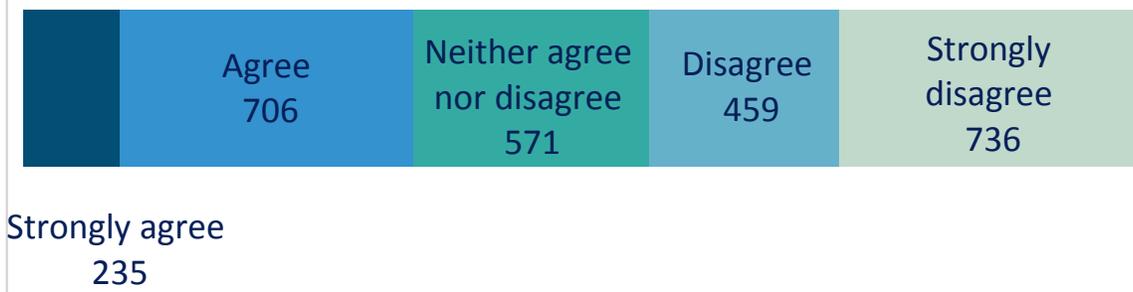


Chart 2: What is your view on combining Children's Social Care Modernisation & Social Care offer?

### 3.1.2 Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee

**Q3:** The existing Directorate provides a wide range of services and functions, some of which are statutory. However, there is an opportunity to bring services together and generate better, more focused and aligned Neighbourhood Services to residents. It is expected this could lead to a potential saving of £350,000.

The responses provided were 63% agreement (19% strongly), 16% disagreement (8% strongly) and 21% neither agree or disagree.

Q3: What is your view on pursuing the option of bringing services together to generate better Neighbourhood Services

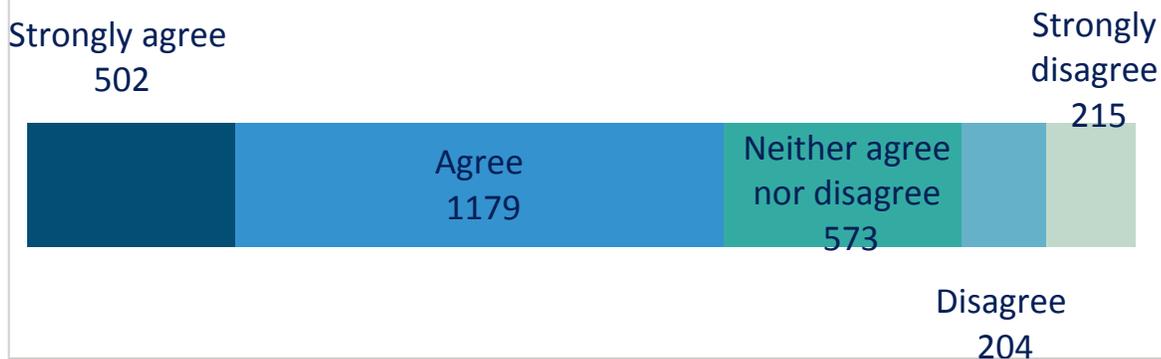


Chart 3: What is your view on pursuing the option of bringing services together to generate better Neighbourhood Services?

**Q4:** It is vital the council maximises its income where possible to ensure frontline services can be delivered. Parking charges can help control car use in busy locations, contributing to the council's climate emergency declaration outcomes by encouraging active travel and public transport alternative transport modes. It is proposed that a wide ranging and review of car parking charges looking at the options to increase parking charges and add charges

where appropriate. It is anticipated this would provide additional income to the council of £1,000,000.

The responses provided were 45% agreement (17% strongly), 43% disagreement (23% strongly) and 12% neither agree or disagree.

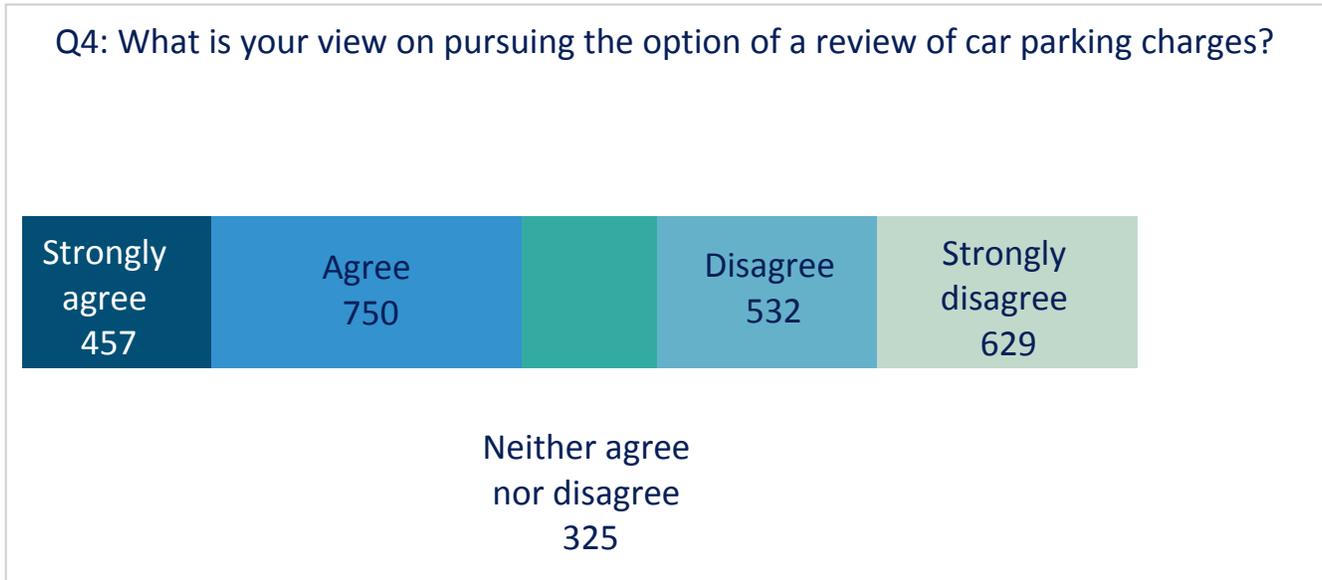


Chart 4: What is your view on pursuing the option of a review of car parking charges?

**Q5:** The School Crossing Patrol Service is not a statutory council function – i.e. the council is not legally obliged to provide this service. By ceasing the School Crossing Patrol Service the council would save £276,300.

The responses provided were 61% disagreement (34% strongly), 26% agreement (9% strongly) and 13% neither agree or disagree.

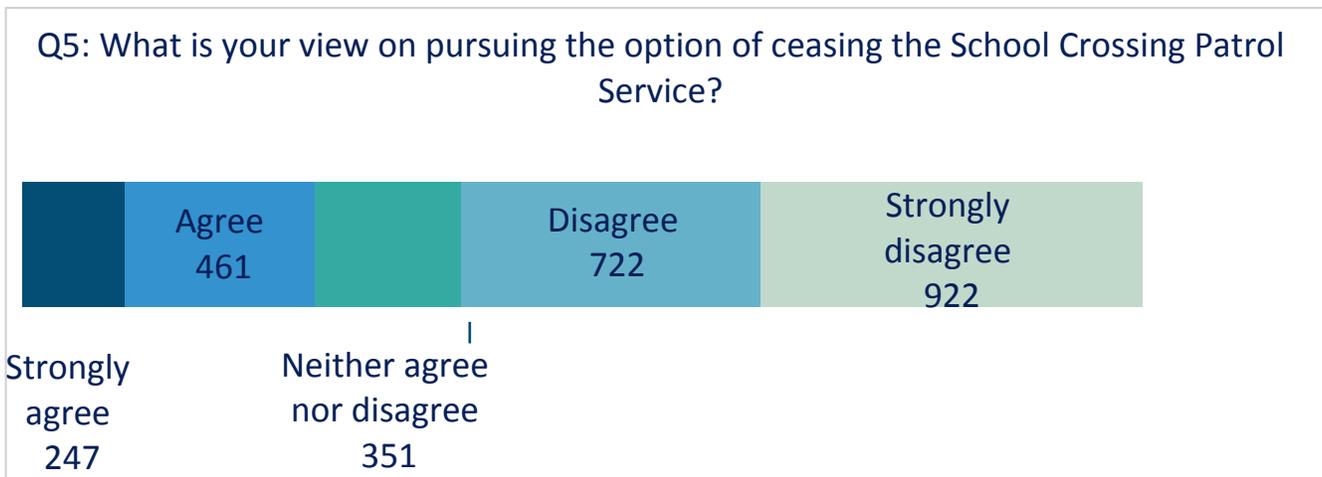


Chart 5: What is your view on pursuing the option of ceasing the School Crossing Patrol Service?



**Q6:** A reduction in grass cutting and maintenance of roadside verges and all parks and open spaces would mean changes such as less frequent cutting, only edge cuts at areas which are over 200 sqm, and operators only cutting around pathways and alongside roads leaving the middle/centre to grow long and enlargement of wildflower meadows. For all parks and open spaces there would be reduction in the grass cutting frequencies and where possible, for example, areas of woodland would be allowed to effectively re-wild or be cut less often. This option could lead to a saving of £250,000.

The responses provided were 58% agreement (24% strongly), 30% disagreement (15% strongly) and 12% neither agree or disagree.

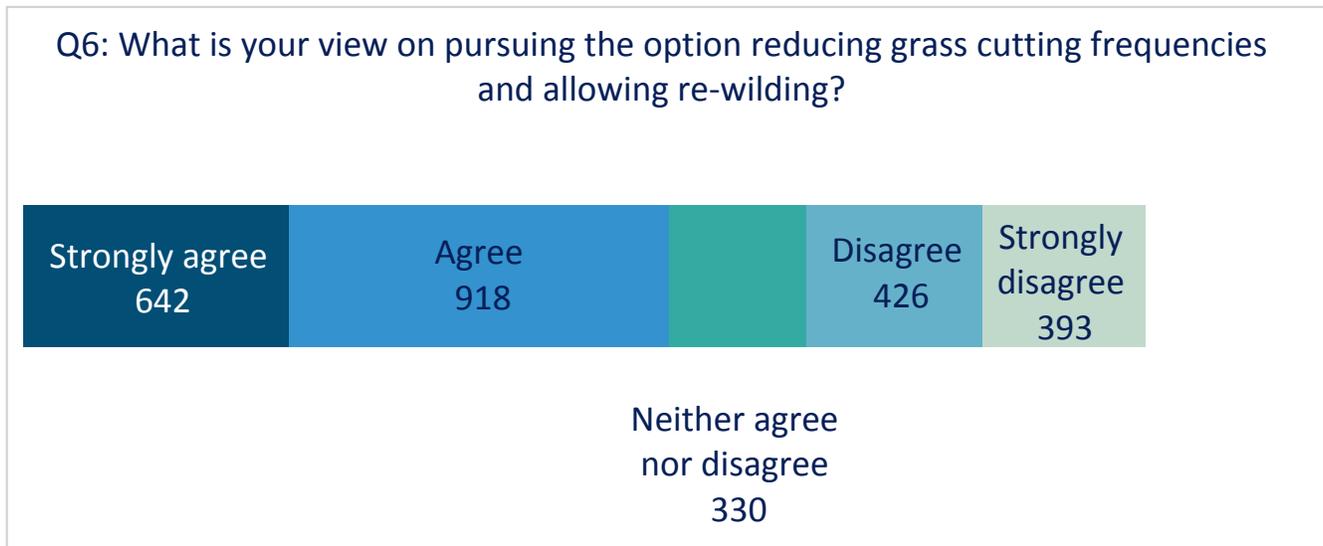


Chart 6: What is your view on pursuing the option reducing grass cutting frequencies and allowing re-wilding?

**Q7:** Ceasing maintenance (grass cutting and litter removal) at 45 amenity green spaces and 85 grass verge sites, possibly planting of trees, rewilding or where appropriate creating new allotments. Sites have been identified where reduced maintenance would have the least impact on the local area. This could lead to savings of £100,000.

The responses provided were 45% agreement (16% strongly), 37% disagreement (16% strongly) and 17% neither agree or disagree.



Q7: What is your view on pursuing the option of ceasing maintenance of 35 amenity green spaces and 85 grass verge sites?

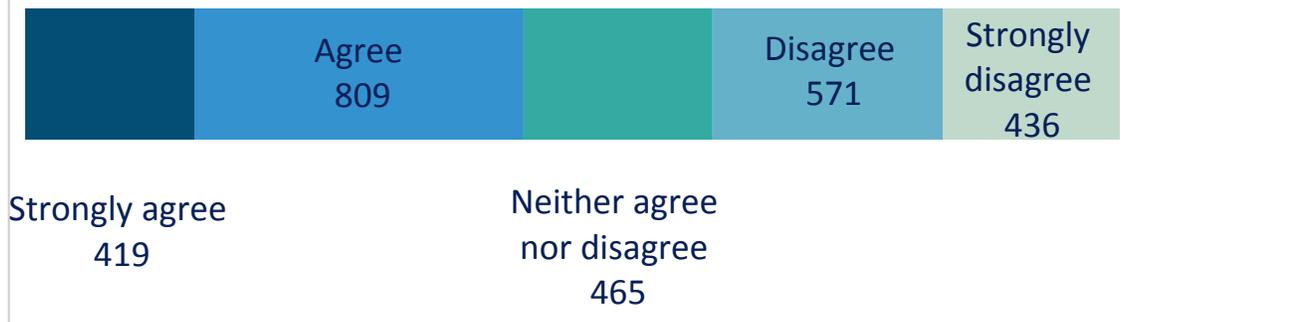


Chart 7: What is your view on pursuing the option of ceasing maintenance of 35 amenity green spaces and 85 grass verge sites?

**Q8:** The council maintains nine public convenience sites at mainly coastal areas. These include Harrison Drive New Brighton, Moreton Common, Moreton Cross, West Kirby Marine Lake, West Kirby Concourse (outside), Parade Gardens Hoylake, Meols Parade, New Ferry and Thornton Hough. Closure of these would lead to a saving of £142,000.

The responses provided were 73% disagreement (42% strongly), 16% agreement (6% strongly) and 12% neither agree or disagree.

Q8: What is your view on pursuing the option of closing council maintained public convenience sites?

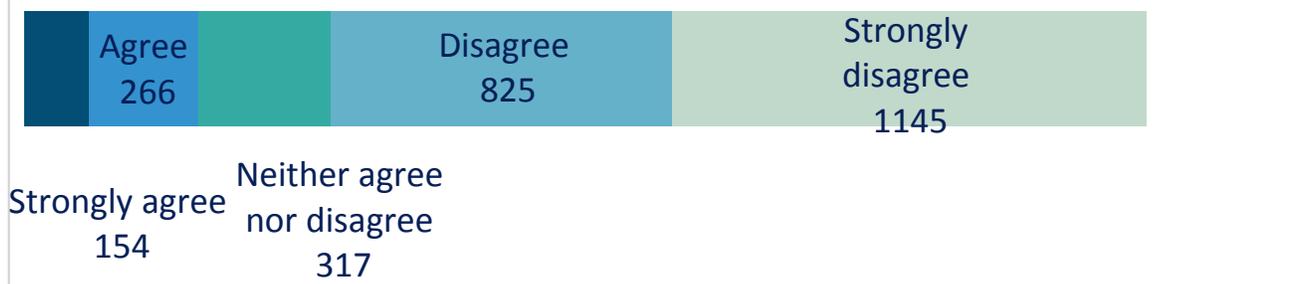


Chart 8: What is your view on pursuing the option of closing council maintained public convenience sites?

**Q9:** Reducing the collection of green general rubbish bins from once every two weeks, to once every three weeks while maintaining the grey recycling bin collection at every two weeks. This proposal could lead to additional packaging (e.g. plastic pots, tubs and trays, tetra pack type cartons and aerosol cans) being permitted in the grey recycling bin and/or a separate food waste collection. The option could mean a saving of £180,000.



The responses provided were 66% disagreement (51% strongly), 26% agreement (10% strongly) and 7% neither agree or disagree.



Chart 9: What is your view on reducing the collection of green general rubbish bins to once every three weeks?

**Q10:** The refuse collection and street cleansing contract the Council has with Biffa has been in place for more than 10 years and was extended to 2027. Over the years a significant amount of efficiencies have been taken, however, a specific requirement of the terms of the contract extension was to pursue further efficiencies. It is estimated this could result in a saving of £75,000.

The responses provided were 51% agreement (18% strongly), 21% disagreement (10% strongly) and 28% neither agree or disagree.



Chart 10: What is your view on pursuing further efficiencies within the refuse and street cleaning contract held by Biffa?

**Q11:** The Council's Enforcement Policy was amended to remove the zero-tolerance approach, but it is possible to re-establish this. Environmental crime has increased during the

Covid-19 lockdown. The return to zero-tolerance would involve education and engagement with residents and be targeted to locations where there has been significant anti-social behaviour and environmental crime and could lead to an income of £150,000.

The responses provided were 74% agreement (38% strongly), 12% disagreement (6% strongly) and 15% neither agree or disagree.



Chart 11: What is your view on pursuing a zero-tolerance approach to Environmental Crime?

### 3.1.3 Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure

**Q12:** A major reduction in the council's culture and visitor economy service could be achieved through staff savings and deleting the events budget. This proposal would leave a small resource remaining within the regeneration team to deliver the culture elements of the regeneration programme, plus marketing resource re-allocated to the corporate communication team to manage the upkeep of visitor economy website and marketing, including involvement in the Liverpool City Region joint work on visitor economy. Savings of £620,000 could be achieved in the council budget by reducing this service.

The responses provided were 43% agreement (15% strongly), 34% disagreement (15% strongly) and 23% neither agree or disagree.



Chart 12: What is your view on pursuing the option of a major reduction in the council's culture & visitor economy service?



**Q13:** Closure of Europa Pools in Birkenhead could lead to considerable savings. The town is about to undergo major regeneration which will include looking at the best options for future leisure provision within the town. The saving which would be achieved by closing Europa Pools is £640,000.

The responses provided were 52% disagreement (33% strongly), 33% agreement (16% strongly) and 14% neither agree or disagree.

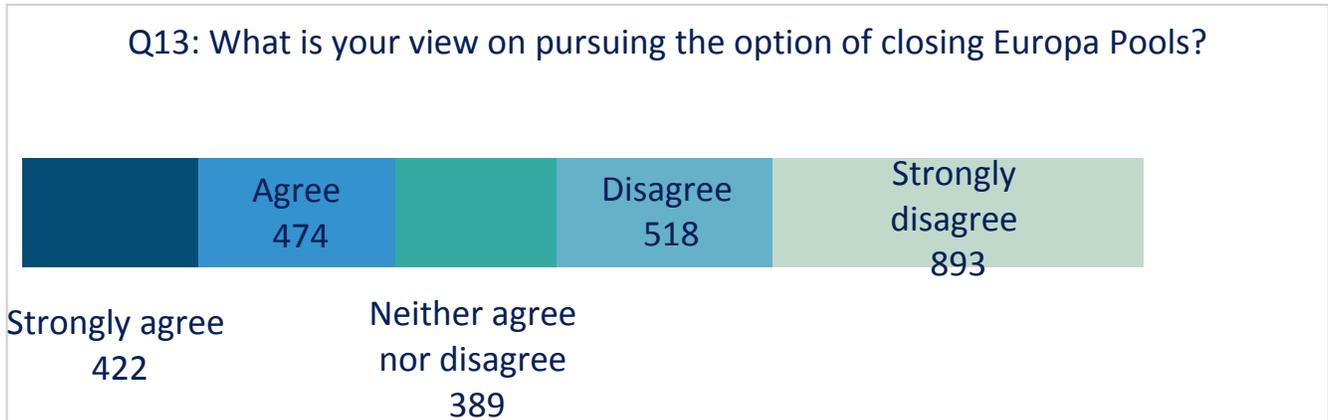


Chart 13: What is your view on pursuing the option of closing Europa Pools?

**Q14:** Some of our leisure centres are being used to support the Covid response, while refurbishment can only be done while centres are closed to the public. Woodchurch is one of Wirral's smaller Leisure Centres with one of the lower levels of usage with the second highest level of financial support. Delaying the re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre could save the council £322,000.

The responses provided were 56% agreement (22% strongly), 27% disagreement (14% strongly) and 17% neither agree or disagree.

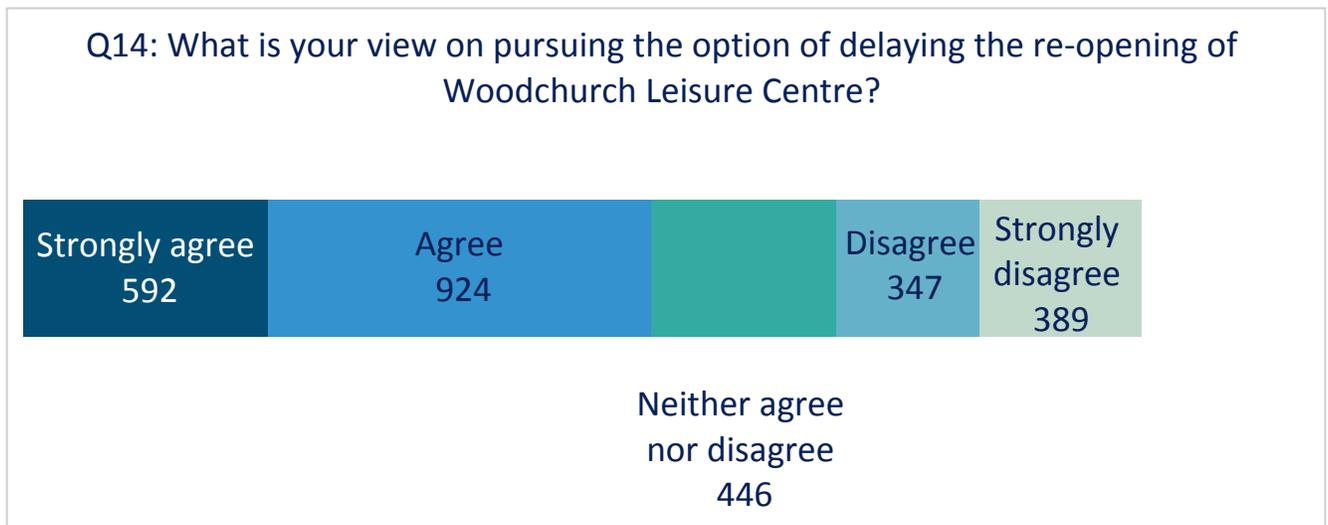


Chart 14: What is your view on pursuing the option of delaying the re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre?

**Q15:** The Council operates four golf professional courses. This is a non-statutory service (the council is not legally required to do this). In addition, there are a number of private courses throughout the Borough. Interest remains from private sector operators to run and operate council-owned courses under a lease arrangement. A review of options around the provision of council-owned courses will be carried out. Potential closure/transfer of council operated golf courses could save £273,000.

The responses provided were 63% agreement (35% strongly), 23% disagreement (15% strongly) and 14% neither agree or disagree.

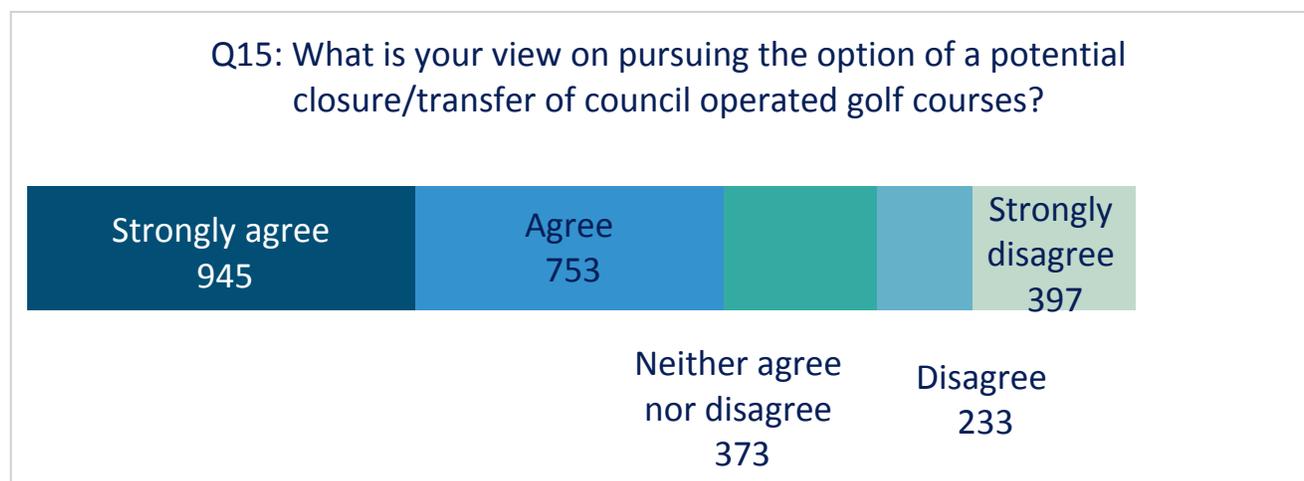


Chart 15: What is your view on pursuing the option of a potential closure/transfer of council operated golf courses?

**Q16:** This option is for a full review of the council’s museum service provision which includes the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum. A separate exercise would be required to establish the cost of maintaining any buildings mothballed by this proposal and a decision taken as to what to do with the historic collections. Retaining the collections will attract an annual maintenance cost of approximately £50,000 per annum. Closure of the museums service could save £327,500 from the council budget per year.

The responses provided were 71% disagreement (46% strongly), 16% disagreement (7% strongly) and 13% neither agree or disagree.



Q16: What is your view on whether the councils museum service should be closed?

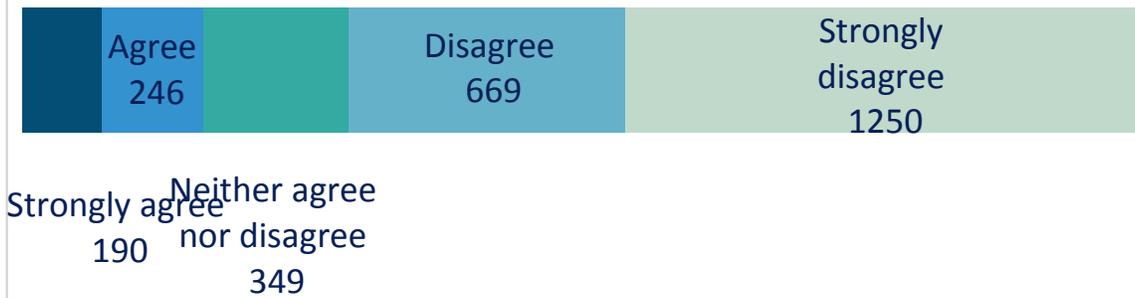


Chart 16: What is your view on whether the council's museum service should be closed?

**Q17:** Develop elements of Royden Park with income generating services, providing significant environmental and social outcomes. The main element is the proposal for a high ropes aerial park located adjacent to the new overspill car park. An external partner will be sought to fund, design, plan, construct and operate the park on a turnover share/lease agreement. This option could see income to the council of £80,000.

The responses provided were 69% agreement (31% strongly), 18% disagreement (10% strongly) and 13% neither agree or disagree.

Q17: What is your view on whether the option of developing income generating services at Royden Park should be pursued?



Chart 17: What is your view on whether the option of developing income generating services at Royden Park should be pursued?

### 3.1.4 Economy Regeneration & Development Committee

**Q18:** Restructuring staffing arrangements to better serve delivery will ensure Birkenhead Market can drive forward its redevelopment. It is proposed staffing is reduced over 2-3 years in tandem with the development and relocation of the market to the temporary site. A restructure of Birkenhead Market could result in savings of £240,000.

The responses provided were 65% agreement (25% strongly), 11% disagreement (5% strongly) and 24% neither agree or disagree.

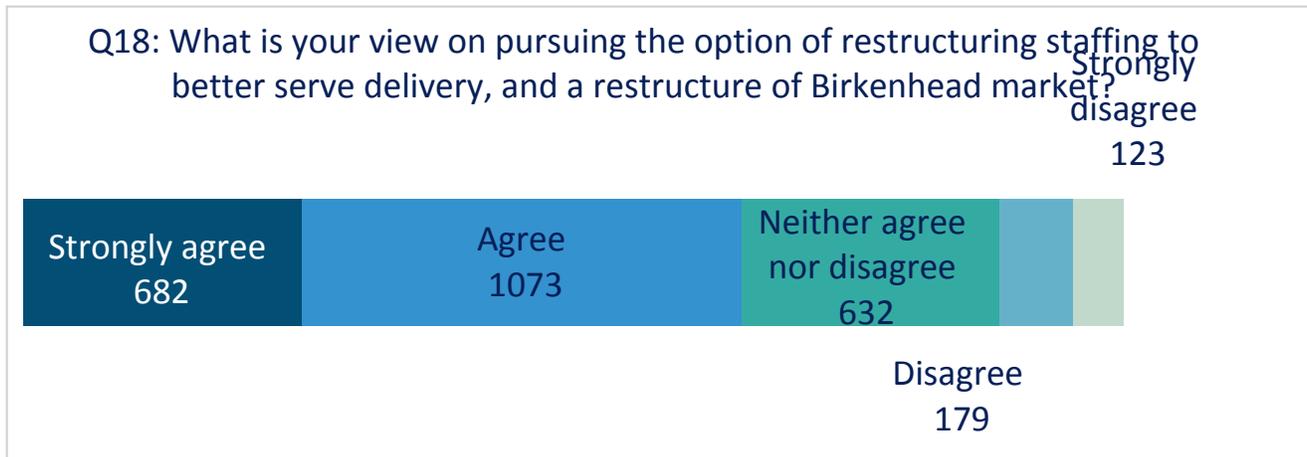


Chart 18: What is your view on pursuing the option of restructuring staffing to better serve delivery, and a restructure of Birkenhead market?

**Q19:** The majority of public buildings owned by the council are Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. As a result, the budget for building works in relation to people with a disability accessing council buildings over the last few years has greatly reduced. If future works are required these can be covered by the general building code. The removal of this budget will not have any detrimental effect on access to council building for people with a disability as any unforeseen works will be covered within the property code. This proposal could save £200,000.

The responses provided were 71% agreement (30% strongly), 11% disagreement (5% strongly) and 18% neither agree or disagree.



Chart 19: What is your view on pursuing the option of removing the budget for building works in relation to people with disabilities?

### 3.1.5 Housing Committee

**Q20:** The Community Alarm Service offers a low-level support service to aid independent living and reduces the burden on social care and health services. The option proposes the



removal of an annual programme of support used to meet the shortfall for low income and older people households, which could result in a saving of £500,000.

The responses provided were 67% disagreement (31% strongly), 14% agreement (6% strongly) and 19% neither agree or disagree.

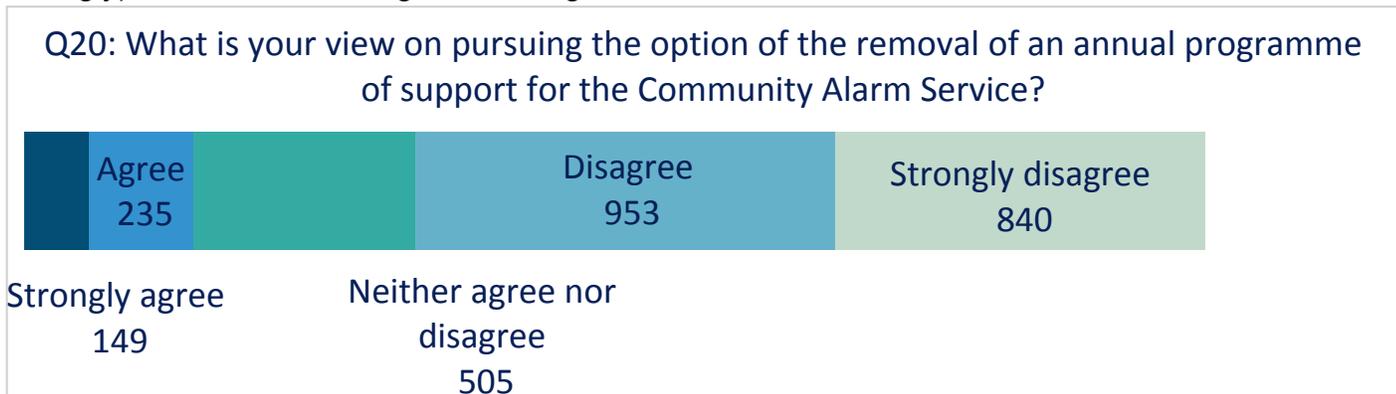


Chart 20: What is your view on pursuing the option of the removal of an annual programme of support for the Community Alarm Service?

### 3.1.6 Adult Social Care and Health Committee

**Q21:** Wirral Evolutions review of day services for people with Learning Disabilities. This option relates to a service review with the aim of modernising the current operating model and reduce the associated operating costs of delivering day services for people with Learning Disabilities. The review’s aim is to manage the cost of current provision by service changes that could lead to savings of £500,000.

The responses provided were 42% disagreement (21% strongly), 30% agreement (9% strongly) and 28% neither agree or disagree.

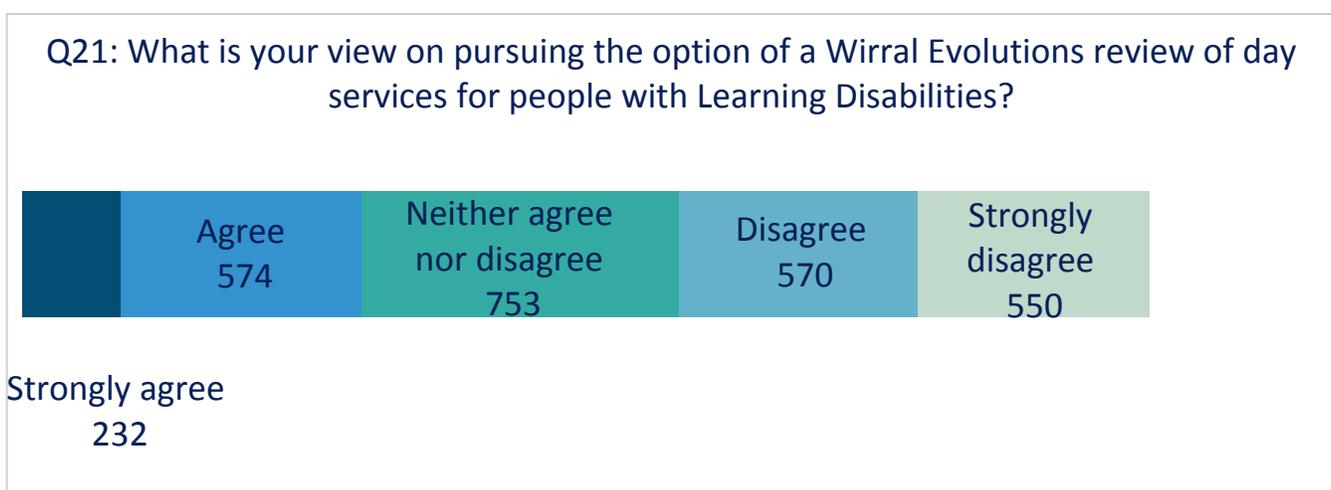


Chart 21: What is your view on pursuing the option of a Wirral Evolutions review of day services for people with Learning Disabilities?

### 3.1.7 Policy and Resources Committee

**Q22:** The council is aiming to become more efficient and is reviewing all "back office" functions to be able to continue to provide high-quality services for residents and businesses in Wirral at the best cost. This will include changes such as a reviewing IT Services, centralised print process, reduced staffing in business support, and changes to contract management. We estimate this could save around £2 - 3m.

The responses provided were 77% agreement (41% strongly), 9% disagreement (4% strongly) and 15% neither agree or disagree.

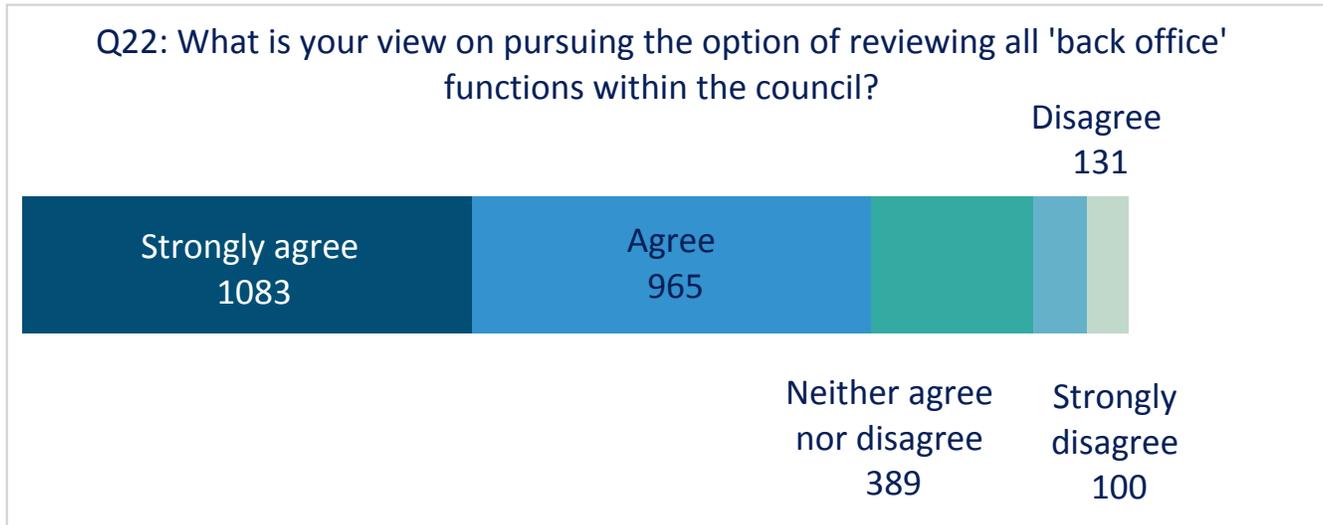


Chart 22: What is your view on pursuing the option of reviewing all 'back office' functions within the council?

**Q23:** As part of the government's support for Covid-19, Wirral received a £3.9m Hardship Fund which has been used to help working age Local Council Tax Support claimants with a discount on their 2020/21 Council Tax bill. By 31st August 2020, £1.5m of the fund had been used, and these funds will be available to claim up to the end of March 2021, when the remaining balance will then be known. It is proposed to use the remaining balance to clear old outstanding Council Tax arrears. This will reduce the bad debt provision requirement, and therefore improve the estimated year end Council Tax position. Changes to the council's hardship fund and bad debt provision could allow for savings of £1m.

The responses provided were 59% agreement (23% strongly), 19% disagreement (10% strongly) and 22% neither agree or disagree.



Q23: What is your view on pursuing the option of using the balance of the Hardship Fund to reduce the bad debt provision?



Chart 23: What is your view on pursuing the option of using the balance of the Hardship Fund to reduce the bad debt provision?

**Q24:** Individual councillors in each ward in Wirral are able to allocate a share of the “ward member budgets” to support local objectives. The funds are allocated to local community organisations, charities, statutory bodies, and businesses to improve the well-being of the local area, its environment or economy. It is proposed to suspend this for the next financial year which will save £250,000.

The responses provided were 42% agreement (18% strongly), 38% disagreement (16% strongly) and 20% neither agree or disagree.

Q24: What is your view on pursuing the option of suspending ward members budgets?



Chart 24: What is your view on pursuing the option of suspending ward members budgets?



**Q25: If you have suggestions for how the council can make additional savings or potential sources of income, please use this space to outline your proposal(s):**

Of those 2715 that responded to the questionnaire via the online portal, 992 completed the comment box.

Comments were reviewed and categorised into themes. The top themes are illustrated in the chart and table.

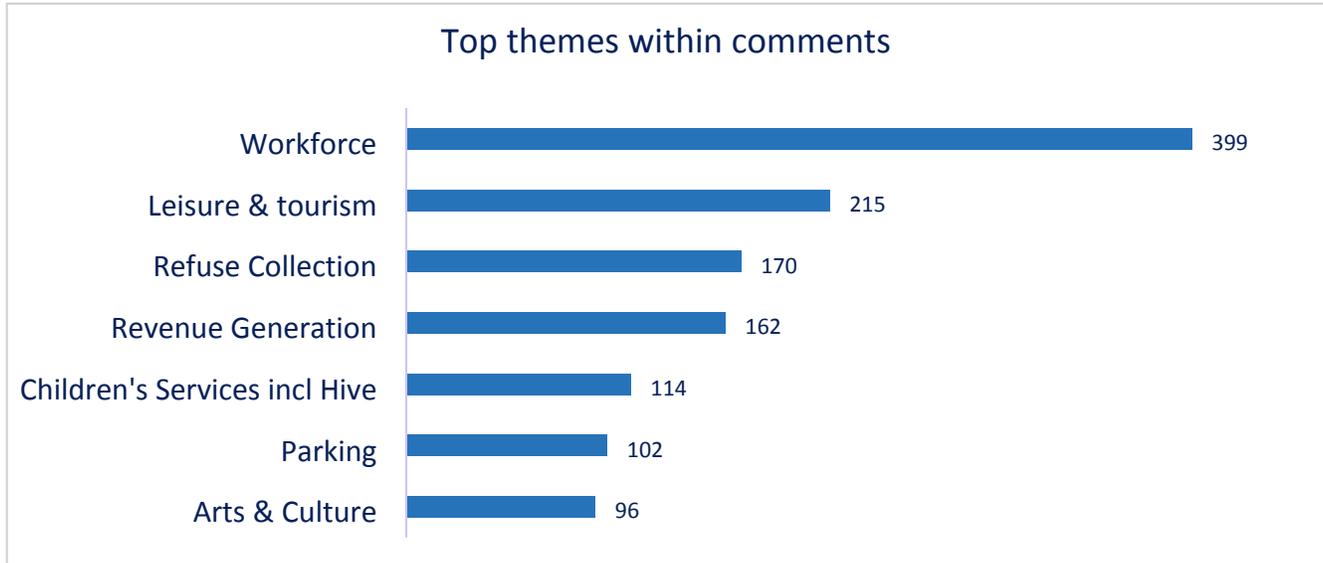


Chart 25: Top themes within comments about additional savings or potential sources of income

Top Themes	Frequency
Workforce	399
Leisure & tourism	215
Refuse Collection	170
Revenue Generation	162
Children's Services including The Hive	114
Parking	102
Arts & Culture including Williamson Art Gallery	96

Table 1: Top themes within comments about additional savings or potential sources of income

**Council Workforce & Structure**

Comment upon the Council's own workforce and structures appeared within 448 (40%) of submissions. The most prevalent comments and suggestions within this theme were that:

- Council Senior Officers take a salary reduction (32% of comments in this category) and/or that the council trims its workforce to become less top-heavy (8%).



- The number of elected members (councillors) are reduced (23%) by at least 1 or more per ward. A pay reduction, or pay freeze was also suggested (5%) and/or a reduction or removal of expense payments (7%).
- The use of fewer Consultants/use of in-house staff for functions currently carried out by consultants (22%)

### **Leisure & Tourism**

215 (22%) of the comments referenced leisure and tourism on the peninsula. The most prevalent comments and suggestions within this theme were:

- Europa Pools to remain (23% of comments in this category).
- Leisure Centres and facilities in general to be retained and/or increased in number (21%).

### **Refuse Collection**

170 (17%) of the comments referenced the proposals with regards to refuse collection. The most prevalent comments and suggestions within this theme were:

- Against 3 weekly general waste collection (55% of comments in this category).
- That a 3 weekly recycling bin (grey bin) collection would be preferable to reducing the general waste collection (9%).
- That an improved waste and recycling offering in general – such as more accessible recycling points for a wider variety of materials, improved access to the household recycling centres (tips) and increased use of services such as the ERIC collection service (9%).

### **Revenue Generation**

162 (16%) of comments included a suggestion for additional revenue generation measures. Those mentioned most frequently were:

- Revenue from increased enforcement of fines such as from Parking, littering, dog fouling (32% of comments in this category).
- Introduction of charges and/or dedicated campsites for camper vans/mobile homes, as well as for campers in general (12%).
- Zero tolerance to fly tipping and increased revenue from resulting fines (11%).

## **Children's Services, including the Hive**

Comments about Children's services in general, and the Hive in particular, appeared in 114 (11%) of comments. The prevalent sentiments were:

- No cuts to Children's Services (59% of comments in this category)
- No cuts to the Hive Service (31%)

## **Parking**

102 (10%) of the submissions included comments about parking. The most prevalent comments and suggestions within this theme were:

- Parking charges to remain or be increased (44% of comments in this category)
- Parking charges to be scrapped or reduced (37%)

## **Arts & Culture**

96 (10%) of the submissions included comments about arts & culture, including the Williamson Art Gallery. The most prevalent comments and suggestions within this theme were:

- The Williamson Art Gallery should be retained (61% of comments in this category), perhaps with some additional revenue generation such as hiring out rooms (7%) or charging entry (4%).
- Museums and galleries in general should be retained (20%).

### 3.2 Ideas Board Results

A total of 328 submissions were made to the online Ideas board. Review of the submissions identified that 134 (41%) of responses were comments on the existing budget proposals. The remaining 194 (59%) submissions contained ideas.

Of the ideas, 88% fell into the categories of either revenue generation (44%) or Savings (44%).

#### Revenue Generation – most frequent categorised ideas

- **Enforcement** 16% of comments in the Revenue Generation category, including use of fines such as from parking/littering/dog fouling/fly tipping/council tax evasion.
- **Parking** 15% – retain or increase parking charges to generate revenue.
- **Arts & Culture** 7% – Generate revenue from the Williamson Art Gallery including by charging for entry, hiring out rooms, gift shop and/or café and fundraising.

#### Savings - most frequent categorised ideas

- **Council Workforce & Structure** 42% of comments in the savings category – including the use in-house staff instead of consultants and outsourced contractors, Council Senior Officers to take a salary reduction and fewer Councillors.
- **Refuse Collection** 13% - including that a 3 weekly recycling bin (grey bin) collection would be preferable to reducing the frequency of general waste collection.
- **Council owned assets** 6% - to where possible sell Council owned buildings in favour of the workforce working from home and carry out minimum spending & maintenance on those that are retained.
- **Cost sharing** 6% - Combining common universal functions, such as HR, with neighbouring councils. Making joint purchases with other councils to benefit from economies of scale.

Of those submissions that contained comments rather than ideas, these comments fell predominantly in the themes:

- **Children's Services including The Hive** 34% - No cuts to The Hive budget (96%).
- **Arts & Culture** 21% - The Williamson Art Gallery should be retained (100%).
- **Refuse Collection** 15% - No reduction in the frequency of general waste collection (90%)

### 3.3 Events Feedback

The virtual Q&A events were broadcast to approximately 620 accounts. The three sessions generated a wide and varied range of questions, opinions and feedback.

Being of a more qualitative data set, and with the added 'live' element, it is more difficult to quantify feedback than that of a written form. However, there were clear themes that emerged from each session, these being:

- **Staff Event:** Income ideas, cuts to youth services, the closure of council buildings and the use of external consultants.
- **Public Event:** Cuts to youth services, closure of Europa Pools, closure of Woodchurch Leisure Centre, retention of Golf Courses, three-weekly bin collections and closure of Williamson Art Gallery.
- **Youth Event:** Focussed predominantly on cuts to youth services.

### 3.4 Staff Feedback

The staff feedback form was completed 101 times with a wide range of views on the budget proposals and budget ideas. These submissions fell predominantly in the themes:

- **Refuse Collection** 17% - No reduction in the frequency of general waste collection (100%).
- **Workforce** 15% - Senior officers should have reduced salaries (25%), more work should be brought in house rather than outsourced (25%), no cuts to council staff (25%) and more staff to be allowed to take EVR (25%).
- **Arts & Culture** 15% - The Williamson Art Gallery should be retained (100%).
- **Leisure & Tourism** 13% - Europa Pools should be retained (100%).
- **Youth Services** 9% - School Crossing Patrols should be retained (100%).

Staff also submitted a variety of cost saving ideas. 47% of these ideas related to the workforce, such as:

- Bringing more work in-house (27%)
- Reducing the number of leaders or managers (22%)
- Continuing the period of unpaid leave over Christmas (6%)

There were also a number of ideas relating to the use of the council's office estate (7%), car parking charges (7%) and the number of libraries (6%).

# 4.0 Demographics and Site Traffic

## 4.1 Demographics

Registration was required to engage in the online Budget Consultation. The registration form included questions regarding demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity and sexual orientation, however not all questions in the registration form were compulsory and respondents could choose to select 'prefer not to say' or skip the question. The demographics results are summarised below.

95.6% of respondents are local residents living within Wirral, 4.4% are from other areas, the main two being Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool. There is a relatively even spread of responses from the four Wirral constituencies. A map of respondents illustrating their location in Wirral is shown below.

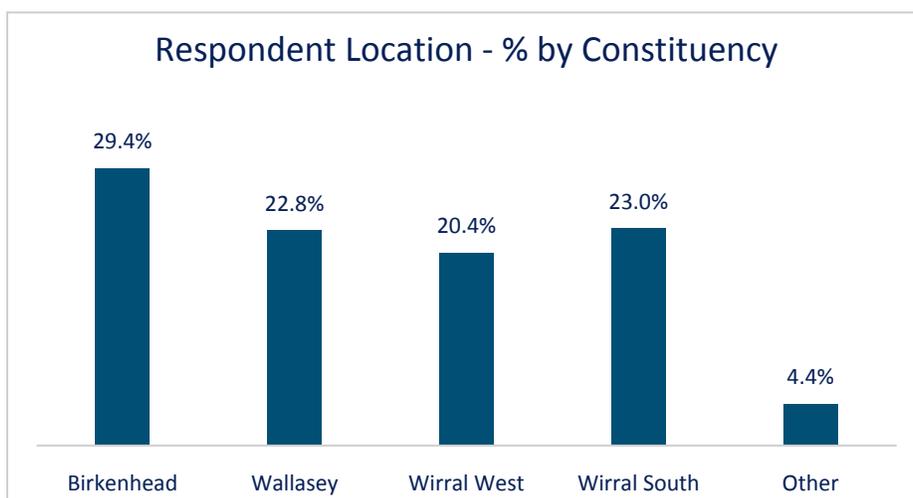
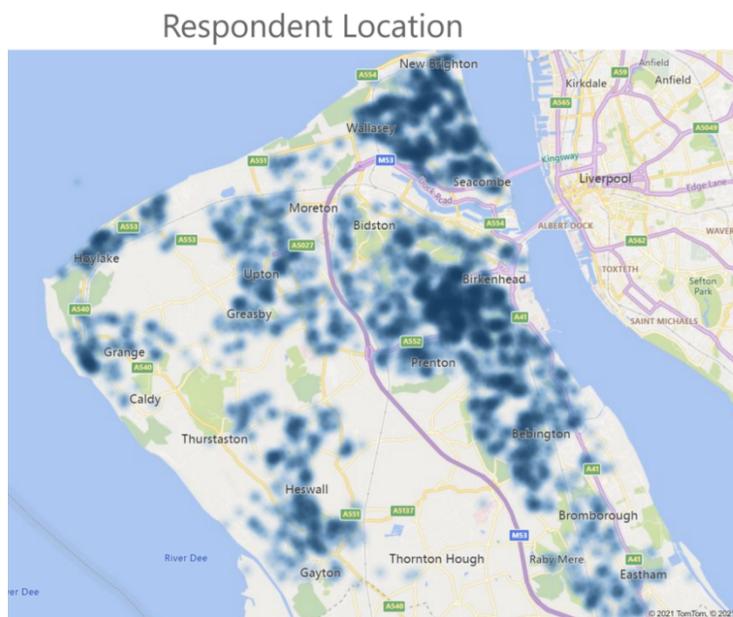


Chart 26: Respondent location by category



Map 1: Respondent location within Wirral



The respondents provided information regarding a range of categories such as if they were a resident, a member of a voluntary, community organisation, a council employee. Respondents were able to choose to belong to a number of categories. The majority of responses were from local residents.

Category	Number	%
A local resident	2313	84.3
Other	93	3.4
A local resident, A member voluntary/ community	88	3.2
A local resident, A Council employee	76	2.8
A local resident, A local business,	59	2.2
A member voluntary/community	52	1.9
An employee of Wirral Council	21	0.8
A local business	11	0.4
A local resident, A local Business, A member of a voluntary/community	8	0.3
A local resident, Other	6	0.2
An elected Member of Wirral Council	5	0.2
A local business, A member voluntary/community	4	0.1
A local resident, A Council employee, A member voluntary/community	3	0.1
A member voluntary/community, Other	2	0.1
A local resident, A local business, Council employee, A member voluntary/community	1	0.0
A Council employee, A member voluntary /community	1	0.0

Table 2: Category of respondents

The gender of respondents was 59% female, 38% male, with 3% preferring not to say and 0.25% preferring their own term.



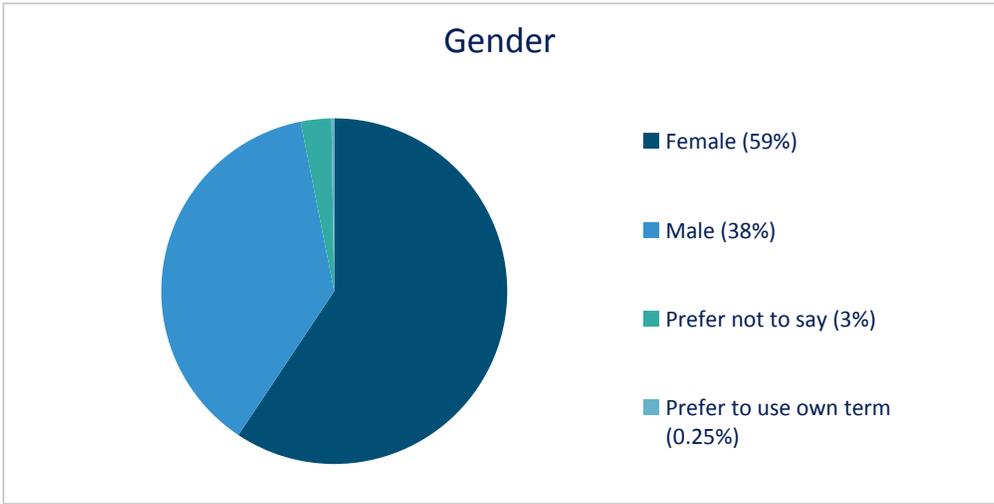


Chart 27: Gender of respondents

The age group profile is illustrated with the most common age groups were 45-54 years (22%), 35-44 years (21.7%) and 55-64 years (19.8%).

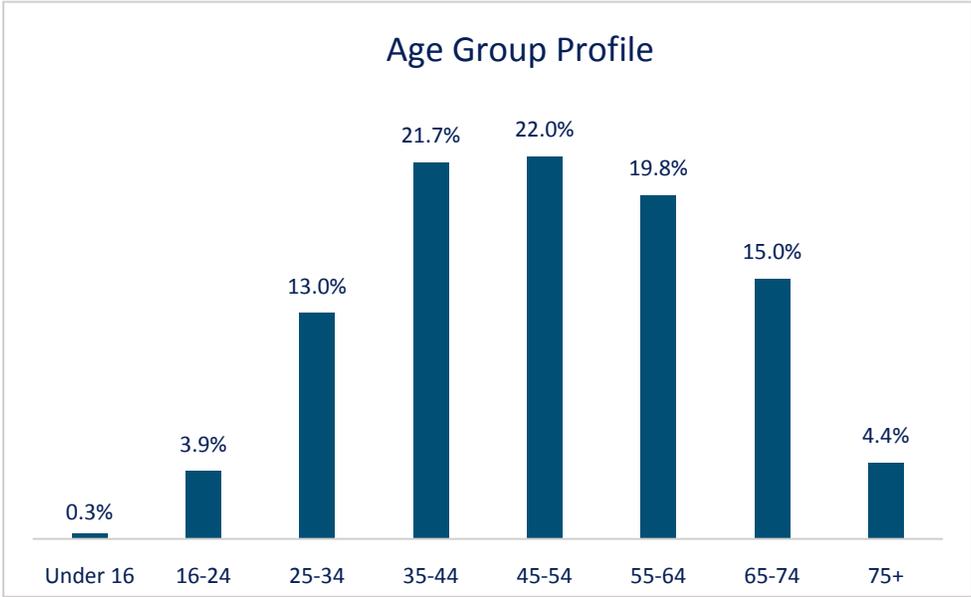


Chart 28: Age group of respondents

93.5% of respondents were white British, with only 96 (3.5%) respondents were of a non-white or other ethnicity.

81.3% of respondents were heterosexual, 2.7% were gay/ lesbian, 1.7% bisexual and 14.3% preferred not to say.

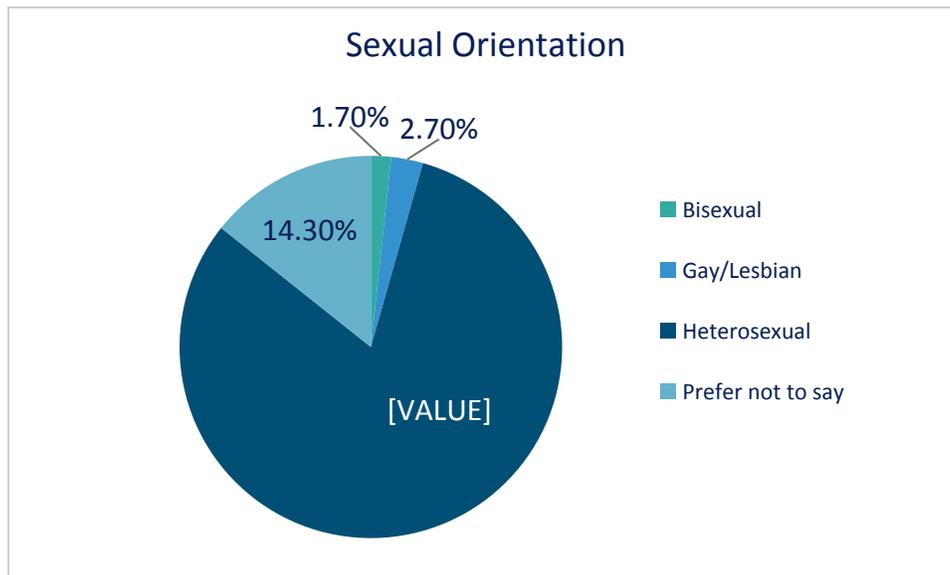


Chart 29: Sexual orientation of respondents

#### 4.2 Have your say - Site Traffic

Reviewing the site activity, visits, and how people visit the site can be useful to evaluate if people are aware of the site, as well as to ensure engagement activities are deployed effectively, and to a wide range of different people – enhancing public engagement in the future.

Site registration allows us to confirm the number of engaged participants through the completion of the questionnaire, ideas board or asking a question, this was 2,793. Of those that contributed, 2,715 completed the online questionnaire. The ideas board had 217 people contributing 236 new ideas. The ideas were also engaged with, including 1,505 ‘votes’ and a further 90 comments - a total of 1,831 contributions. A total of 59 people provided 74 questions for the events. A single registered participant can perform multiple actions.

Analysis of site traffic during the consultation period allows an estimation of numbers of site visits – this being 19,157, with 13,720 participants visiting the budget consultation page. Of these 9,988 were informed participants through an action on the site, such as contribution to a tool or downloading a document. These figures cannot be viewed as definitive as they are based on site tracking through ‘cookies’ and there are a number of factors that can impact on this. These include that cookies may be disabled or deleted, individuals may access the site multiple times through different devices or different browsers. However, the figures can be used to gauge how much interest has been generated in individual projects through the rate of engaged participants.

The route that people access the site is known as the traffic source. The ‘Have your say’ portal allows analysis to be carried out on traffic source, and if they lead to engagement in the



site tools such as the questionnaire. This analysis allows a greater understanding of which communication and promotional tools to use to optimise engagement.

For this project a range of traffic sources have been reviewed and summarised in the table below. Most visits to the site were direct visits where people have the site URL directly in their internet browser and these generated high rate of engagement with 30.1% of visits resulting in completion of a tool on the site or view or download a document. Compared to this, whilst social media accounted for 20.5% of traffic it only generated 3.4% engagement. An email about the consultation generates the most engagement at 37.5%.

Traffic Source	Site Visits	% of Visits	Number Engaged	% Engaged
Direct	13645	71.23%	4102	30.1%
Social Media	3927	20.50%	132	3.4%
Email	104	0.54%	39	37.5%
Search engine	408	2.13%	91	22.3%
.Gov sites	68	0.35%	14	20.6%
Referrals	1005	5.25%	124	12.3%

Table 3: Site traffic sources

Documents on the site were utilised by the public, with 1,658 downloads of the Budget Booklet, 252 downloads of the Easy Read Consultation Version and 163 downloads of the Budget Frequently Asked Questions.



# Appendix 1: Qualitative Feedback

This appendix includes feedback directly sent to the contact email address:

[budgetconsult@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:budgetconsult@wirral.gov.uk)

## **Williamson Art Gallery**

We write on behalf of the Museums of Cheshire and the Liverpool City Region Museums & Heritage Network in response to Wirral Council's budget consultation process for 2021/22.

We wish to express our support for the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum, which is at risk of closure having been identified as a potential budget saving in the consultation. We represent 30 different organisations from across the Liverpool City Region, Chester and Cheshire, a rich mix of small and large museums, galleries and heritage attractions run by trusts, local authorities, and universities. The Williamson is an important and longstanding member of our networks.

We are very much aware of the significant and ongoing financial pressures faced by local authorities. As leaders of local businesses, we know that difficult decisions must be made to ensure future sustainability. We know too that Wirral Council has felt the effects of budget cuts more than most local authorities and that Covid-19 has only made the financial challenges you are facing more severe. However, we felt compelled to write to you, in support of our colleagues, to outline just how important The Williamson is – for us, for people, and for Wirral's economy – and the impact its closure will have.

Local authority museums and galleries are integral to place-making and tightly bound to local pride and identity. They are part of the DNA of the area and communities they serve. Through their work, they help people to make sense of the past, raise aspirations, and make better decisions for the future. Because of the important collections they hold, the stories they tell, their relationships with communities, and the neutral spaces they provide, they are uniquely placed to help councils to deliver on important agendas too, like the environment, and social injustice. They also make a significant contribution to the local economy, both directly and indirectly, and have the potential to support regeneration. They do this by raising the profile of an area, driving domestic visitors and visitor spend, and providing employment and skills development opportunities for residents, creative practitioners, and businesses.

The Williamson is amongst the best performing local authority museums and galleries in the UK. Its permanent collections tell a local story, but they contain a wealth of treasures of national and international significance. Each year an exciting programme of exhibitions are curated in partnership with contemporary artists, schools and colleges, and community groups. The venue welcomes in the region of 50,000 visitors each year and its activities are worth just under £1 million to the local economy.

Over the last few years, the team at The Williamson have invested significant time and money in using their collections to promote wellbeing and tackle inequalities. For example, in 2020/21 they are working with Wirral Council's Family Matters team to support families at risk

of having children taken into care. The esteem with which the gallery is held locally is demonstrated by the petition that has been launched to prevent its closure, which at the time of writing has over 10,000 signatures. Over 80% of their visitors originate from the local area.

During the pandemic, their work has not stood still. They have adapted their practices to generate more digital content, thereby ensuring that their important work continues to make a difference to people's lives. When the pandemic subsides and the ability for people to participate in authentic experiences is possible once again, venues like The Williamson will be in a really strong position to appeal to both actual and virtual visitors, to support local authorities with their recovery efforts, and to improve the mental wellbeing of visitors and residents.

For us, The Williamson is integral to the local cultural and heritage ecology. We find that we are most successful when we work together effectively. We have worked hard and for many years to present a joined-up offer and disperse visitors across the region. We share resources to strengthen our programmes. We share expertise to create a level playing field. As one of the key cultural assets in the region, the loss of The Williamson will be significant for us and its impact will be felt for generations to come. We urge you not to take a short-term decision that will have a significant and ongoing impact for the people of Wirral but also impede your ability to deliver the council's vision for Wirral, 'to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services'.

We will close by saying that like you we are looking forward to better times. Despite the significant loss and suffering the pandemic has created, there are opportunities too and we feel certain that the region will emerge from this pandemic in an even stronger position. With initiatives like Eureka on the horizon for Wirral, there is plenty to get excited about. They will without doubt enhance Wirral's existing offer, providing something very different for the area, but we must not lose one of our greatest cultural assets in the meantime.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter of support. If you would like to discuss any aspect of it, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

I am writing to voice my anxiety over the possible closure of the Williamson. It is a cultural hub for the community that serves its needs and interest in many ways. It is a gallery that has a wonderful collection of art and Wirral historical artifacts, as well as showcasing local musical and artistic talent with concerts and exhibitions that feature the work of Art societies and our schools and colleges. It shows classic films and has a programme of workshops that I know from experience stimulate both old and young to further their artistic and craft endeavours. The cafe has become a social hub for local people to meet prior to exploring the fascinating contents of its many rooms or its excellent bookshop- and it is a resource for local artists both through its exhibits and the art materials available in the onsite art shop. Although

it is smaller than a large regional gallery it is big in its ambition to serve its locality both culturally and socially and in that sense, it is quite irreplaceable.

The loss of this vital cultural amenity to the Wirral would be disastrous for a community which will be in even more desperate need of a local and accessible cultural and social hub in the months and years to come as it recovers from all the pressures caused by Covid 19.

We write to express our concern about the above which appears as one of the 'Options for Saving' under the heading 'Tourism Communities, Culture & Leisure' in the Council's Budget Booklet 2021.

The Northern Ceramic Society was founded in 1972 with an international as well as a British membership that is particularly strong in the North of England. We have always admired the way in which the local people of Birkenhead have taken pride in showing their history to the rest of the world, in particular their ceramic history of which your area is justly proud.

This certainly includes the stories the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum can display through the collection of Birkenhead Della Robbia pottery. You will know that these wares are unique, in that they were made by local people trained on the job as artists and potters, and the pots they made are known and admired internationally. Although there are small collections elsewhere, the world centre of study for this remarkable factory is at Birkenhead where the collection is beautifully set out as a testament to local pride and international recognition. Our Society has regularly visited this collection, the last occasion being in August 2019, when our members both from the UK and overseas were once again thrilled to see the displays.

In addition to the local pottery, the Knowles Boney Collection of 18th century Liverpool porcelain at the Williamson is also quite unique in its breadth. We know of no similar collection elsewhere on public display. We are of course also conscious of the other collections on show at the Williamson and during our visits we also appreciate the local art exhibitions when these are available. There will no doubt be much local concern expressed at the prospect of losing these.

We do understand that the Council is facing severe financial constraints due to the current budget situation, but nevertheless we do urge the Council to carefully consider the ongoing loss both to local people and to visitors if the Williamson collections ceased to be accessible, and if at all possible, to find some way of keeping this gem of an art gallery open to the public.

We are writing to you as part of Wirral Council's budget 20 – 21 consultation, as we are dismayed to learn that the survival of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum is threatened by budget cuts.

We are huge fans of WAGM and have been part of the Friends scheme for many years. We regularly visit to enjoy the vibrant exhibitions, historic collections and wonderful art displays. We particularly appreciate access to view the world class collection of Della Robbia ceramics which draws visitors from the north west and far beyond. Della Robbia plays a unique and key role in Birkenhead's cultural heritage.

Closing WAGM would have a devastating effect on the local community as it is a popular venue for concerts, workshops, art classes and school visits. In addition, it would have major practical implications for Birkenhead Priory and the Transport Museum, both of which are managed from the Williamson. The café in the museum is a popular and well attended catering venue and well supported social hub.

For over 50 years the Williamson has played a significant role in our lives, bringing art and culture to one of the most deprived part of the country. My 80-year-old mother lives locally and also uses the Williamson to attend events and meet people – as do so many of her elderly friends and neighbours. It's a lifeline for them.

We fully appreciate the wonderful and much needed educational benefits the Williamson brings to children on the Wirral. Our young nieces regularly attend art events there which have benefited their creativity and mental wellbeing. This is needed now, more than ever, when arts and crafts are being stripped from school curricula.

Families moving to the Wirral are looking for activities to do with children and the Williamson fills this role admirably. It also attracts positive feedback from the many tourists who visit, bringing much needed revenue to the borough. There is huge potential to further promote the museum and enhance its place as part of Wirral's wider visitor economy.

We understand that Wirral Council's finances are in a parlous state with difficult decisions having to be made across the board. We ask that you consider the Williamson's future as vital to the Wirral's cultural and community offering and do everything you can to save it from closure now and in the future.

Not long after my son died in 2003 of a brain disease, I was elected a member of The Wirral Society of Arts and I have been a member ever since. The following year my daughter was diagnosed with the same brain disease. She is still alive and has been in care for the past seven years. I continue to struggle with my Mental Health issues, but I have managed to exhibit at the Williamson every year. I won the Open in 2006, the Kriterion Award in 2013 and the Presidents Prize more recently.

The Williamson is more than just an Art Gallery to me. I have no doubt that it has been a life saviour for me and helped me through a very difficult 15 years. It would be wonderful if I could carry on exhibiting my work there for at least another 15 years.

I have been a resident of Oxton for the past 24 years, living in James Street directly opposite the Williamson Art Gallery.

In 2000 I was one of the consultants for the 2020 Vision project with the then Council leader Steve Maddox. The aim was to revitalise Birkenhead by creating a cultural and Artist led community based upon the successful model of Bold Street, Wood Street and Concert Square areas of Liverpool which I was part of. The Artist led community that had established itself 10 years previously had helped to create the environment that Tom Bloxham, Jonathan Falkingham, Bill Maynard and Urban Splash went on to so successfully exploit.

I feel that in the longer term it would be very short sighted to contemplate the closure of the Williamson which represents as much a catalyst for the regeneration of Birkenhead as we artists in our youth had been for Urban Splash and Liverpool. I feel that the position of the Williamson is central to the community giving Birkenhead and Oxton a very vibrant and clear identity that people want to move to and be a part of. Sadly, it is often only when the creative community which is often invisible has been lost that it makes its absence felt.

The Williamson has played a central role in my own life both socially and importantly as a professional Artist, where I have exhibited over the years as well as enjoying the many cultural and social events that the Williamson team have created.

In January 2018 I had a major one man show in the Williamson gallery, occupying two large rooms. Colin Simpson was very supportive, and we were both delighted with the show's success and the number of people who travelled from outside the area to view it. As a direct result of this show I was approached by a top London Gallery, David Messums of Mayfair who are now my sole representatives.

The opportunity to exhibit as a local Artist, my connection to the Wirral and the representation of the working people of Birkenhead within my figurative work has enabled Messums to build up a clear profile and root me in the tradition of Northern Artists for which they are champions. I believe that this would not have happened without the Williamson's and Colin Simpsons remit of exhibiting Artists from the Wirral and supporting the local community directly through a programme of exhibitions and

importantly not representing the norm, that of an elitist organisation just pandering to the high arts, to the exclusion of the wider community.

You need not look any further than the Wirral open to see such a wide diversity of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds exhibiting. The Williamson represents the Cultural heart of Birkenhead.

I am writing to you to express my deep concern re the possible closure of the Williamson Art Gallery.

The Art Gallery is described as Wirral's hidden gem and during my lifetime it has proved itself worthy of this description to so many as it nears its 100th anniversary in 2028.

I would like to explain my involvement with the Williamson over the past forty years, not to make me the important subject, but rather to emphasise how important it is, not only to the

people of Wirral, but as a national & International venue for art exhibitions, poetry and music recitals, lectures, community projects and educational programmes. The staff working at the gallery, including a cafe, book, art shop and outside gallery, under the expert guidance of Colin, have always been so welcoming, supportive and creative in their care and development of what is Wirral's number one art venue.

Not in any particular order I would like to draw attention to some of the many exciting events that the Williamson Art Gallery has created, nurtured and presented.

\* Biennial art exhibitions for Wirral Schools in collaboration with Unilever, whereby Artists in Residence worked on site at, for example, Birkenhead Priory, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Unilever Factory, Hilbre Island etc with a wide range of pupils, students & staff to develop their art skills in paint, print, film, ceramics, sculpture and textiles. These workshops culminated in a large exhibition that ran for six weeks during the summer and gave pleasure to thousands of pupils and visitors. As an art teacher and art advisory teacher for Wirral I know how important they were in developing the skills of pupils, teachers and Artists in Residence alike

\* Old Masters and Young Poets. This was a school's event that was sponsored by Lord Leverhulme and encouraged young & older children and their teachers to visit the Walker, Lady Lever and Williamson Art Galleries to view paintings under the expert eye of Colin Simpson, Frank Milner & Marie Stacey (English Inspector) to write poetry. This was then published as a collection for public appreciation and an evening celebration with pupils at the centre of events accompanied by staff and parents at the Williamson Art Gallery.

\* Poetry/ Literary Events: Poetry evenings have been held regularly at the gallery with up to one hundred and fifty in the audience.

Stephen Spender, Carol Ann Duffy and Simon Armitage, Carol as Poet Laureate in 2018 & Simon in 2019, the current Poet Laureate. These were organised by First Thursday, a long-standing poetry group from Heswall.

\* Children's Saturday & Holiday Workshops with Artists in Residence have been a cornerstone of the Williamson's annual diary with thousands of young people, from the local community, learning new skills and having fun.

\* Art Exhibitions - The Williamson houses a fine collection of paintings and UK's largest collection of Della Robbia pottery as well as an important collection of ship's models highlighting Cammell Laird and Mersey Ferries and traffic on the River Mersey.

It hosts regular exhibitions which include national international artists, local artists and student degree shows.

As part of an International Batik Exhibition, it was exciting to have an artist fly in from Japan for the Private View.

The Singh Twins, internationally acclaimed artists are regular visitors, supporters and exhibitors at the gallery.

\* Music - The Williamson has regularly hosted musical evenings and Sunday afternoon concerts encouraging local talent as well as national performers.

U3A, local groups, teachers, community groups and so many more use this 'hidden gem' and certainly Wirral without the Williamson Art Gallery would lose a significant cultural, community and much-loved centre for the Arts.

Thank you for reading this, I have only touched the surface of the Williamson's activities, but I know I am writing this on behalf of thousands of people who have enjoyed & enjoy the galleries presence and its central function in Wirral society and population.

The Williamson is a fairly small Art Gallery compared to some. To build a new facility of this quality complete with the collections would be expensive. Why throw our asset away. The collections are of particular note Della Rosa pottery and the ship models being favourites. The Wirral has a rich cultural heritage, particularly around the Deeside with many artists, writers, poets, musicians. Other important collections are also connected with the gallery.

To close the gallery and leave us with nothing and nowhere to exhibit our artwork to a professional standard. To leave us with no cultural centre on the Wirral seems strange.

The Wirral is often considered a small area containing every aspect of our national life and culture. With the only art gallery dumped our area becomes devoid of soul, and no longer representative of our way of life.

I have hung artwork at the gallery from my twenties to the present day. Also attending ventures supporting those less fortunate. Mental health events and taking my husband to musical concerts when he suffered from dementia.

We only have one Ferry across the Mersey, please consider leaving us just one art gallery where our children have something more than the trivial, and we can gather to be artists in our community.

I have used the Williamson gallery as an exhibiting artist with the WSA and as a visitor to exhibitions book shop and cafe.

If you close this space, you will need a better plan otherwise you have a vacuum space which is prone to decay vandalism which will run the area down and create more costs in dealing with the problems. This is a vital community space which could be run as part of a bigger museums project linked to the Tate /Liverpool museum or something like that. It has adapted well as a concert venue It could host international style art architectural exhibitions in that format which post pandemic would attract visitors and revenue. It could be used as part of the art tech college buildings it also has restaurant possibilities (post pandemic) in conjunction with the art gallery space All major museums have a beautiful restaurant as well

as a cafe It is a lovely building in its own right, I am not sure if it would adapt well to apartments as it has few windows. Those are my thoughts Please don't close and leave empty.

We, the management committee of North Wales Society of Fine Art (NWSFA), are writing to you because we understand that closure of the Williamson Art Gallery is one of the options that the Council is considering in order to balance its future budgets.

NWSFA is the foremost membership body representing visual artists in North Wales and surrounding areas. Most of our members are professional or semi-professional i.e., they make all, or a significant proportion of their living from their art. NWSFA exhibited at the Williamson Gallery last year and we are already in discussions about similar exhibitions in the future. Many of our members live on the Wirral, are members of other organisations that exhibit regularly at the Gallery (such as the Wirral Society of Arts) or participate in the Gallery's own exhibition programmes.

Our society fully appreciates the financial problems that the Council is facing and the difficult decisions that you are going to have to make as a result.

We assume that the potential negative impacts of closing the Gallery on areas such as quality of life, education, social cohesion have already been well-rehearsed by others.

Instead, we would like to focus on the fact that while closure of the Williamson Gallery might appear to create immediate cash savings, it would result in a significant opportunity to rebuild the post-Covid-19 economy of the Wirral and beyond being missed.

According to a report by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, in February last year (i.e., immediately prior to the first lockdown), the creative sector had been growing five times faster than the national economy as a whole. Karen Bradley, the Secretary of State stated that "this is a testament to the talent and drive of its workforce and we are working closely with them to make sure this fantastic success continues".

Figures from Statista, a leading provider of data about the art market, reveal that the turnover of "artistic creation" in the UK had been steady over the 10 years to 2017 and had experienced considerable growth in more recent times.

Yet, despite making such a valuable contribution to the local economy, it is widely acknowledged that the cultural sector has been hit harder than most by the pandemic. Artists such as those that we represent are typically self-employed and small scale. Their main route to market has been shut off for the last 10 months with the closure of art galleries (many did not open even when lockdown was eased) and a large proportion do not qualify for any kind of the financial support packages on offer.

In the meantime, the Bank of England Reported in November 2020 that wealthy households have been saving significantly during the pandemic. It is these people who buy art (according

to an Arts Council of Wales survey in 2015, two-thirds of art gallery visitors are in social grades ABC1). Then, In December, the Centre for Business and Economic Research received widespread publicity by revealing that an estimated £197 billion of private savings had been accumulated in 2020 and was ready to be spent when lockdown ends.

All of this creates an exciting cocktail of ingredients that can aid the recovery of a post-pandemic economy on the Wirral. We have a sector with a proven track record of high economic growth and performance and a significant resource of private funds that is just waiting to be invested in its product.

The key to bringing the ingredients together will be to build as much exposure for the sector as possible; creating opportunities for the local cultural sector to promote its work to potential customers with the power to spend. Art galleries will be the key catalyst in this.

With that in mind, it would seem almost perverse to coincide this opportunity with the closure of one of the most important arts galleries in the country. The Williamson Gallery is one of only a very small number venues in the whole of the Merseyside/ North Wales region that is able to cater for the kind of larger-scale exhibitions that will need to take place and that can be run by organisations like ours.

We do hope that you are able to see the enormous economic potential that exists in retaining the Williamson Gallery and would welcome the opportunity to work with you or the Gallery to explore some of them.

Although I don't live on the Wirral, I treasure The Williamson. It is a gem of a gallery providing not only for the local population but for other people. It's a good resource for artists to get their work displayed and I've visited it many times for this purpose.

As a member of the WSA I was delighted to see my work displayed so well in such a grand context. Please save this space for future generations.

Several years ago, I left London to live in North Wales. Rather like many in the 'metropolitan bubble' I assumed that the provincial cultural landscape would be several rungs down the quality ladder from the high-flying capital. However, this prejudice quickly dispelled when I visited the Williamson Gallery and saw the standard of the art works on show. Particularly the Wirral Society annual show. I was stunned by the quality of the artworks on display.

My admiration for the gallery has increased over the intervening years.

I have been made aware of the devastating news that the gallery is under threat of closure, and I would appeal to you and your fellow councillors to do whatever is in your power to avoid this and keep this wonderful institution open.



The current covid crisis, (which although it undoubtedly will have had a detrimental effect on finances), underlines the vital importance of the continuation of the Williamson due to its wonderful contribution to the mental well-being of our citizens.

I understand that the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum is under threat of closure.

I am not a resident of Wirral, but I am a regular visitor to the Williamson. I have observed how popular it is as a community resource and I feel its closure would be a great loss to Wirral.

I am writing on behalf of The Oxton Society to say how concerned we are at the level of proposed cuts that the Council is forced to consider at this time. Clearly, there are important and competing priorities which will make the task extremely difficult. However, there is only one Williamson Art Gallery and Museum.

We are very concerned that we have been at this point before, in 2013, when the Secretary, Alan Chape, and I were part of a small group, led by Professor Robert Lee, and tasked by the Council to review and produce a strategy to preserve and develop the Williamson. It seems that we are at this point again. I quote from the Strategic Plan submitted to the Council in 2014.<sup>[1]</sup>

“Recently, a major refurbishment of the gallery and museum has been completed involving an expenditure of £1.3m to repair the roof and to make the building fully DDA compliant. Within this context, it is our belief that the Williamson has a strong future as a continuing focal point for artistic excellence but also as a recognised leader for arts activities which address wider socio-economic issues relating to health and wellbeing, low esteem, and the direct consequences of relative deprivation. Art galleries and museums are increasingly seen as key agents in delivering educational and health benefits, in transforming local communities, and in promoting good and active citizens.”

That vision holds now and with even greater force after the impact of the pandemic in the short and, undoubtedly, in the longer term. The Williamson, under Colin Simpson’s leadership, has developed in a number of important ways in line with our recommendations, and has become an even greater part of the fabric of Wirral and its local communities. These include:

1. Successful grant awards from Arts Council England and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to create workshops for vulnerable young people and pre-school children.
2. The opening of the Green Gallery, a unique space on the Wirral, funded through trusts and a campaign of private donations, which won awards including from the Royal Horticultural Society in 2019.
3. A significant extension of its network of partnerships to deliver programmes of activities which deliver educational and health benefits and are used by a wider range of groups, including those that are vulnerable and lack opportunities elsewhere.

4. A wider programme of exceptional exhibitions in celebration of artistic excellence (notably Henry Moore) and, during Lockdown, the development of a strong digital presence in which the team have revealed the depth and qualities of the collection and gained a wider audience.
5. The Gallery shop has been stocked exclusively with Wirral-based artists and makers, including Oxtan Artists, and has developed a unique character; it has provided a showcase for local artists and a vital income stream for small local businesses.
6. A book shop and art shop within the Williamson have increased the footfall and casual attendance and local small businesses are supported.
7. The Oxtan Society's own strategic partnership with the Williamson, through which it houses the Oxtan history archive, highlights local history and heritage and builds on the Council's Heritage Strategy to enable the people of Wirral to develop a real sense of place.

We also believe that the Gallery has an important part to play in the regeneration of Birkenhead as a place with exciting new opportunities for attracting visitors and meeting the needs of the resident population. It should form an integral part of, and be a focus for, the recent Council-commissioned consultancies to develop a Culture and Heritage Strategy for Birkenhead. The latter involves two consultancies to undertake the work: Counterculture Partnership LLP in association with Architectural Emporium and Sound Diplomacy. Both consultancies have a strong track record in delivering similar strategies in the UK and have linked in a number of specialists to their project teams to ensure that the wide-ranging issues for culture and heritage in Birkenhead are robustly explored. The Williamson is a cultural and community hub which should be one of the centrepieces of the proposed strategy.

In conclusion, we believe that the Williamson is a unique community and cultural asset, resource and facility for the people of Birkenhead and urge the Council to preserve it for generations to come as part of Birkenhead's vibrant and successful future.

We are contacting you in our capacity as Chair and Secretary of the Friends of The Arno and Oxtan Fields to express our opposition to the closure of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. We are aware of the Council's need to make savings in its forthcoming budget and of the financial review that is being undertaken. We welcome the online consultation on options that have so far been identified, but we are very concerned to note that the future of the Williamson is again under threat.

During the last few years considerable progress has been made by the Council, in partnership with the Friends of the Williamson and other local organisations, to strengthen the role of the gallery as a tourism asset, an educational resource and a community hub. While this has been interrupted by Covid 19, we believe that the contribution made by the gallery to the community will become even more important once normal life is restored. As a volunteer group we appreciate the opportunity to support the Council in its duty to maintain and enhance one of its major environmental areas. Similarly, we are confident that volunteers will

be prepared to play an increasingly significant role in working with the Council to secure the future of the Williamson.

One of the Williamson's particular strengths is the links that it has with other cultural facilities, including Birkenhead Park, Bidston Hill, The Arno, Port Sunlight Village and the Lady Lever Gallery. Collectively these visitor attractions provide significant potential to expand tourism across East Wirral. Furthermore, at a time where a major regeneration of Birkenhead is about to commence, it is appropriate to consider the contribution that culture and leisure can make to the town's identity and attractiveness as a place to live and work.

We hope you will take account of our views.

Dear Councillors, it is with great consternation and regret that i have seen that the closure of the Williamson Art gallery is being considered. I would like to register my deep objection to this proposal. The Williamson, apart from being one of the most iconic architectural buildings on the Wirral, provides cultural and educational facilities and experiences that nowhere else on the Wirral provides. It is used by a large portion of the local population, artists, teachers, designers, families and societies, the closure would be another nail in the coffin of our shrinking social and cultural needs for the area. I am positive that with truly creative thought and action this facility can not only maintain the present wonderful amenities but add significantly to them. Closure would be a total disgrace and betrayal of the standing of living and culture and ethos of the Wirral. thanking you

I hope this finds you well - I appreciate you are receiving a large influx of emails currently, however, I hope you may spare some time to read my email regarding a matter close to myself, and an artist collective I am part of. I read with great sadness that the closure of Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory has been tabled by the council, and I wished to share our experiences in a bid to show the power and presence these organisations have for their local community.

My name is Mrs Janine Suggett and I am writing to you on behalf of the Oxton Artists, of which I am the Chairman. As an introduction, we are a group of circa 20 artists living in Oxton, and each year we have had the privilege of holding our commercial art show - the Oxton Art Fair - within the walls of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. For the last 15 years, the art fair has been a constant and growing success, attracting up to 1400 visitors each year. It has been a great privilege for us to be able to have the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum host our event each year.

As we all know, the past twelve months have been cataclysmic for the world, the UK, and arts and culture in general. I can't begin to imagine the full effect it has had across the Wirral

Borough - and I appreciate what a seemingly impossible task it is to somehow prioritise and budget across the full landscape of growing needs.

I hope that you and your colleagues are able to understand the extent of the soft power that the arts bring across the nation both in terms of economic value, as well as health and wellbeing. Indeed, the Wirral and wider Merseyside is known globally for its cultural offer. Though doors are not able to open to key institutions such as the Williamson, I hope that we can look beyond to see the impact it has for the community around it - both before and during the pandemic.

The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum has several unique assets:

- Its position at a cultural crossroads in the Wirral, accessible to a diverse pool of people.
- The unique and varied collection it keeps.
- The historical poignancy and value - as the dream of John Williamson (the Director of Cunard Shipbuilding), which further connects it to the heritage of, not just Merseyside, but the wider UK.
- The architectural and physical assets it has - the neoclassical architecture, the central garden and the plentiful parking offer ensuring physical accessibility to as many visitors as possible.

As we all know, the Williamson has undergone organisation audits before, most recently in 2013 - and we were thrilled that the council were able to save this organisation. Granted, current economics are deep, and complex, but once lost to the community, it will be hard - if not impossible - to bring back to life these cultural hubs.

I appreciate that your team will be fully considering all options, and that it is not as simple as a 'yes/no', but may I suggest that the council consider the following:

- A short 'Situation Analysis' - where the council begin to understand the true importance of these organisations. This type of work - done by an outside and unbiased expert - often includes an in-depth assessment of the strategic context and the Wirral cultural market through research and analysis across a range of factors. This stage is crucial for a lot of councils when considering the future of certain assets - and helps form the solid and tangible foundations upon which your recommendations and future options will be based.
- This could be followed by an 'Options Appraisal' - which is where the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum / Birkenhead priory sites are fully reviewed, and where outside experts are often able to put forward a recommendation as to whether the sites are worth saving - they look at Planning Recommendations, Operating Models and Financial Assessments. They would help the council to form a fuller picture of what these sites can achieve in the future - and whether it is, indeed, possible to achieve this.

While the current operating models for both sites may not work for current and future audiences, there is such incredible potential. And the community stands behind the council

when it comes to saving these important places - as a place of meeting, where young people and children come to learn and be inspired. Where history meets the future, and where imagination can be explored. As we all now, places like these are needed now, more than ever.

We must not lose the Williamson and I ask you humbly to consider all possible avenues. I would be delighted to discuss more our ideas to support your decision making.

I doubt if you know my name but I'm an Internationally exhibiting artist who was born and educated in Birkenhead – my family lived in Oxton, then Tranmere and finally Prenton where I spent all my life until the age of 18 when I left the Laird School of Art to 'go down south'.

I have been informed by quite a few people of the threat, yet again it seems, to the future of the Williamson. I would like to add to my dismay as to this news. The Williamson has played a major part in my development from the very early days when I was taken by my art teacher at school to the film nights there in the sixties on the lives of famous artists. I can't tell you what effect this had on me –it gave me hope that one day I might be able to be an artist who lives off his work. This I've been able to do ever since. I've also had two major exhibitions at the museum and my work is in the permanent collection with the help of government funding. I was told all the way through my early to forget about the idea of being an artist as it would be impossible to make a living from it but those evenings at the Williamson gave me that belief I could do it.

Birkenhead needs the Williamson –I don't understand the role of a town if it hasn't a cultural hub, a museum showcasing its past and the future.

Please check out my web site to see what happened to me after I left, I now exhibit worldwide and museums as far as China and Russia have substantial collections of my work.

I hope you can help to preserve the arts in the town and have the Williamson play a prominent role.

We are a group of about 20 artists living in Oxton and close by, and we have had the privilege of holding our yearly art show within the walls of the Williamson for over 15 years.

It has been a constant, I can say growing, success, attracting up to 1400 visitors during that busy weekend in November ever year.

Except in 2020, naturally.

I appreciate you are receiving a large influx of mail currently, and that what I want to talk about is one problem amongst many...

I would like to talk about the possible closure of the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and the Priory - but mostly the Williamson, as I do know it so well.

The past ten months have been cataclysmic for the World, the U.K. and its people, and the

Arts in general. And I appreciate, we all do, what an impossible task it is to somehow prioritise spending fairly in a Council.

But I also believe the Arts are of great value to the nation, in general, and to our community in particular. We must look beyond the obvious affection for the Williamson, and its quiet presence in our midst. It has several unique selling points: its position, its Collection (being audited at the moment), its carpark (practical point !).

We, the Oxton Artists, did our very best to rescue it in Winter 2013, and organised various events, with great success. Of course, so did many other organisations and individuals... But it is a very different situation, and the problems are very complex.

An appraisal would show its potential, which we appreciate every year, in terms of its surroundings and its staff and their willingness to help.

The whole picture has changed greatly since 2013 - the opening of the Green Gallery to mention the most spectacular! A secret garden par excellence. The most visually and emotionally successful project - not, in our opinion, promoted outside sufficiently...

But its footfall has also increased. The Williamson Café was such an attraction too! And as we know, all Museums need an adjacent Café...

The Children's Activities were always a sell-out, and more than ever they are essential to the wellbeing of young people. Imaginative and all encompassing, they are greatly missed...

I was a Wirral resident for years and still visit the Wirral and the Williamson on a regular basis.

The Williamson has a special place in my heart because I've attended so many meetings there, of a professional nature, over the years. David Hillhouse and Colin Simpson always supported the Wirral art teachers and gave us a space to meet, discuss issues and enjoy current exhibitions. This was much appreciated.

The Williamson over the years has been a cultural hub for many groups. Schools have held exhibitions of work which has helped foster support and inform local people of the endeavours of local children. Local and National artists exhibit at the Williamson. The permanent exhibitions are a wonderful teaching element, historically so important and relevant. Students studying the history of ceramics for example have been able to study the Della Robbia work and learn about the history of ceramics and the Italian context.

The museum is a vital social hub with cafe and shop to enjoy as well as exhibitions on the walls.

It would be a crime to deprive the people of Wirral of this gem which has always been accessible. It's not a stuffy gallery for the few but somewhere for everyone. The staff are always so welcoming.

It's place that supports local artists but has a broad reaching influence.

Please do not allow the Williamson to close.



I am writing to you about the proposed closure of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum, listed in your budget consultation document. As the Friends of the Williamson and Priory, we are obviously opposed to this. It is now clear that there is considerable public opposition to this particular proposal. Our petition, which you may already have seen, has gathered over 10,000 signatures and rising and not just from local residents. The importance of an art gallery and museum, which holds a large and important art collection, extends much wider than the limits of the Borough in which it resides. I know that many of our supporters have not only completed your consultation but written to their councillors with their own stories of the impact of the Williamson on their lives. I would ask that you take a little time to read some of their comments, together with those in the petition and see how the gallery and what it offers has enhanced their wellbeing.

Impact of covid on community welfare and potential for Williamson to form part of the healing process.

At some point this year, the covid situation is likely to improve sufficiently for galleries museums and theatres to re-open. The museum staff were already accustomed to engaging with the community and making both the Williamson and Priory relevant to their lives. The Wirral Public Health report of 2019 "Culture in Action" featured the work done in and from the Williamson and in its conclusions, said this:

*"We have a unique opportunity to use Wirral's year as Borough of Culture as a springboard for developing a deeper and shared understanding of how public engagement in arts and culture can contribute to physical and mental health, emotional wellbeing, community resilience, health maintenance and improvement."*

How apposite those words are now that, for nearly a year and continuing, the whole community has had to face social and educational disruption and isolation. The Williamson's response has been to post daily, on Facebook and Twitter, images of the extensive collection, together with photos of the Priory and videos about individual paintings and the history of the buildings. This has reminded people that there still exists the potential for a normal world of enjoyment and beauty. Many people have posted that they are keen to have the opportunity to visit and view the original works. Complementing this reaching out, the Friends on our Facebook page have been reminding the public of past exhibitions of both local and international artists, Wirral Metropolitan College student shows and the many concerts offering a variety of music (from jazz to opera, 41 in 2019) and theatre performances. People are tired of just existing. They want to live again. Those isolated need stimulation beyond supermarket shopping. Wirral has hitherto been an excellent place for enjoying leisure and culture. It is often why people choose to live here.

Range of culture assets within and Williamson.

Performance Venue. The excellent acoustics of gallery 4, together with the intimate atmosphere has made the venue popular with both performers and audiences.

Art and craft classes. These are held for both adults and children, including the disadvantaged, run at capacity. A popular summer arts programme for children ends with an exhibition of work.

Schools programme. This has run for many years (45 in 2019) and the children love coming and learning about history through the museum collection.

Exhibition Galleries- Changing exhibitions of local artists, international artists and Wirral Metropolitan College student shows.

Museum Galleries- for the much-loved permanent collections.

Meeting spaces- the building is used for meetings, including local art and history groups and a monthly book club is run by a member of staff.

Functions The building is licensed for weddings and two were held in 2019. There is potential for development here. People like using unusual space such as museums.

Open air gallery- the Friends recently raised about £ 80,000 to create an award-winning garden gallery for relaxing in, for exhibitions and as a meeting space.

Shopping- the gallery has its own shop for local artists' work and there is a bookshop and art supply shop.

This is an awful lot happening in and from one building. It is purpose built and serves its purpose. The whole package could not be replicated elsewhere and the social cost to the community of losing these benefits appears nowhere in your proposal.

The Williamson's place in Birkenhead and the regeneration scheme.

Birkenhead is about to undergo an ambitious programme of regeneration. The Priory sits within the designated area. The Williamson lies neatly between the Birkenhead Library and Birkenhead Park and the town centre. It should be seen as part of the regeneration plan, not closed in advance of it. I have tried to discover Wirral's current Culture Policy. It seems we do not have one and this must surely be an error of planning. Wirral emerged into the year of covid from a hugely successful Year of Culture during which the Williamson held a number of exhibitions and events as part of that. This is the time to build on that success, not undermine it. Culture forms such an important part of the health and wellbeing of a community, as emphasised in the 2019 report and so many of Wirral's residents have had to face isolation and our children have been deprived of so many of their normal activities. It would be a sad outcome of the Birkenhead plan if we end up encouraging people to visit and move in only to find they habitually hop over to Liverpool because they find what Birkenhead offers is seriously lacking in stimulation and entertainment.

The relationship between the Williamson and the Priory.

The rising profile that the Priory currently enjoys has been achieved by the museums team promoting both buildings as contrasting and complementing venues, so as to match events and performers with the most appropriate setting. Close the museums service and you risk the Priory sliding back into a quiet anonymity. It is Merseyside's oldest building and the site of Wirral's earliest history. The quality and range of community engagement by the museum

service across the two sites cannot be effectively delivered elsewhere. As the hub of that service, the Williamson should be accorded its prime importance.

Cost/Benefit analysis.

I would suggest that the figure quoted as the annual cost represents excellent value for money. Once you drill into the detail of the figures, I believe you will find that the closing costs are higher than you estimate and the annual running costs of preserving the collection and maintaining the grade 2 building, much higher. You are the custodians of the collection which you plan to deprive the community of access to. The social cost of the community activities provided at present at the Williamson, across the age groups, needs to be calculated and put in the balance. During lockdown, improvements have been made to the gallery lighting; redecoration has taken place and you now propose to waste that expenditure. To close the building and the service is a retrograde step to your future plans for this Borough as a whole and Birkenhead in particular.

I urge you to make every effort to keep the Williamson open. The Williamson is not a budget luxury. It influences and changes lives.

I am writing to you in regard to the concerns within our community surrounding the future of the Williamson Art Gallery.

My name is Gethyn Jones and by profession I am a cellist in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, a post I have held for some 36 years. I have also been a resident of the Wirral for most of that time.

In those 36 years, as you can imagine, I have seen many challenges and changes to the arts scene worldwide. Funding in the sector has always been difficult, but never more challenging than the present!

In my spare time I volunteer to run the music concert series at the Williamson every Sunday throughout the summer. These concerts provide a platform for young up and coming musicians to perform.

Many Wirral youngsters take part in them alongside established professional musicians from the region and beyond. The series has been a fixture in the North West's cultural calendar for the last 25 years or so.

The concert attendances are large and often fill the venue to capacity. These concerts are totally free of charge to the audiences. The quality of the performances is exceedingly high and cover a great variety of genres, from classical to jazz to pop and folk.

The series is highly regarded by all those artists who participate and the venue itself being a massive reason why these wonderful musicians give up their Sundays to perform there. The Williamson has a truly unique vibe and one that we all love and adore. It is a real gem, that few communities nationwide, still possess and strive to maintain.

It would be a tragedy to lose it, especially for our young, talented musicians here in Wirral. Please let me know if there is anything, I can do to help maintain this wonderful gallery that provides so much cultural wealth to Wirral residents and beyond.

As Chair of Art Friends Merseyside, I should like to voice our members' concerns, many of whom live on the Wirral, about current news on the future of the Williamson Art Gallery.

We fully understand the difficulties which all local authorities currently face in balancing the books, especially after the exceptional demands on funding over the last twelve months and what continues to be an uncertain period of time. However, we feel that now more than ever cultural institutions such as the Williamson must keep their doors in order that this great local asset can be enjoyed by the local community. This pandemic has highlighted the nation's appetite for culture and, of course, the benefits it brings to health and wellbeing.

You will be aware that the gallery not only shares its collection in an excellent manner but acts as an important social hub for many groups and families.

We would urge you to work with your colleagues to find a long-term solution for this wonderful Merseyside asset and important collection.

I am writing to you all to express my concerns about the reported closing of the Williamson Art Gallery. I have lived in Oxton since 1974 and during that time have visited the Gallery on numerous occasions to benefit from the excellent exhibitions, musical events, talks and meetings. I am a former Art Teacher and, in that role, and also as Advisory Teacher for Art, the Gallery was vital in providing a venue and resource for young people as part of their creative education. I feel that closing the Williamson would absolutely deprive so many people of a creative venue to visit and as a population we certainly creativity.

It is with great consternation and regret that i have seen that the closure of the Williamson Art gallery is being considered. I would like to register my deep objection to this proposal. The Williamson, apart from being one of the most iconic architectural buildings on the Wirral, provides cultural and educational facilities and experiences that nowhere else on the Wirral provides. It is used by a large portion of the local population, artists, teachers, designers, families and societies, the closure would be another nail in the coffin of our shrinking social and cultural needs for the area. I am positive that with truly creative thought and action this facility can not only maintain the present wonderful amenities but add significantly to them. Closure would be a total disgrace and betrayal of the standing of living and culture and ethos of the Wirral.

I am writing to offer my support for the group asking that the Williamson Gallery not be closed. The loss of such a resource would be devastating to an area so closely linked with Art Education. Please let me know if there is anything, I can do to help the decision fall in favour of keeping the Williamson open. Do you know if National Museums Liverpool would be interested in taking it over?

The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum is outstanding in owning many fine collections which attract visitors from far and wide. It is host to many organisations, too numerous to mention and supporting disabled youngsters in work experience. Closure of the Williamson would be detrimental to Birkenhead and the Wirral.

The cost of savings in relation to closing the Williamson Art Gallery could be offset in many other ways, including making rooms for hire for other functions. The building and its artefacts and collections could be made more accessible to the public with some imagination and a small cost.

The art gallery and museum has been a part of Wirral culture for many years and is an integral part of Birkenhead.

For families on a low budget, it is one of the few places to take children where there is no cost. This is especially helpful on rainy days during school holidays. By exposing children to culture we can broaden their minds and their interests.

The closure of the Williamson would be a great loss to Birkenhead and the Wirral.

Even here in Australia, I have learned of the Wirral Borough Council's intent to permanently close the Williamson Art Gallery & Museum.

As an active worker in the Arts & Culture sector for 20 years, I fully understand the constraints caused by government budgetary cuts, however, this news is worrying. I note growing international notice of the proposal, *The Art Newspaper* has quite serious reach <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/covid-closes-nightingale-museum>

The Williamson has both a depth of local historical importance and is the hub of a vibrant community art scene: it is a true gem for the Wirral. The collections are of truly international significance: I cannot understate this, the collection rivals, and betters those of many other UK regional institutions.

Today, these collections have more audience reach than ever, pre-Covid they were accessible to local community, but, in these past months through the innovative work of the Williamson staff they are now available in the global on-line environment.

If the decision is made to permanently close the Williamson, this may present more issues than it solves. There are serious considerations to be done regarding the best practice care of the collection and the heritage building itself. The collection and building are owned by the taxpayer and will need to be publicly accounted for, especially when removing a public facility that is as cherished with civic pride as the Williamson is.

More to the point is the detriment of its closure to community - art supports the emotional and psychological well-being of its audience. Post-Covid, institutions of the Williamson's calibre can play a major role in the healing process for many people affected by the current times they are suffering with.

Museums and Art Galleries are exceptionally important in shaping individuals. Personally, as a student (Wirral is where I was born and where I still call home) visits to the Williamson in the 1990s were instrumental to my choice of career path. A decision to close the Williamson must not be taken lightly, to close is to fail the community now and into the future.

The Wirral Council holds a real tangible asset with the Williamson. It is a drawcard institution. With a little investment and innovation, it can invigorate the borough, it has the capacity to become a major event venue and a wonderful destination for local and national visitors.

Faced with severe budgetary cuts in the financial year 2014-15 (part of what is now seen as a central government strategy of 'perma-austerity'), Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC) gave serious consideration to mothballing WAGM or leasing the premises to a third party (the Elim Pentecostal Gateway Church). The budget consultation exercise at the end of 2013 contained a proposal to reduce its funding by £400,000 over the following two financial years with £250,000 to be saved in 2014-15. A reduction in funding by 73 per cent would have led to its inevitable closure.

On the initiative of Frank Field, an Action Group was established in December 2013 to find ways of saving WAGM and securing a sustainable long-term future. The Action Group, subsequently known as the Shadow Strategic Board (SSB) produced in February 2014 a draft Strategic Plan and Business Plan (2014-2019) that set out a framework for future development

of the Williamson as a centre of artistic excellence, a focal point for local history and heritage, and as a community resource which addressed the wide needs of local people and residents of Wirral in terms of creativity, health, education and wellbeing.

It was accepted that WAGM was a unique community asset which had yet to realise its full potential. A case was made for its devolution to a new Trust (a company limited by guarantee as a registered charity), but in the final analysis the Council, having accepted the SBB's main conclusions, opted to keep it in house.

### The Case for Retaining and Developing WAGM

This is as compelling as it was when the SSB met. Many of the surrounding areas are amongst the most deprived in the country; educational achievement is below the Wirral average; and average life expectancy is over 15 years lower than in the wealthier districts of West Wirral. Art galleries and museums are seen increasingly as key agents in delivering educational and health benefits, in transforming local communities, and in promoting social cohesion. Within this context, WAGM has a strong future as a focal point for artistic excellence and as a recognised leader for arts activities which address wider socio-economic issues relating to health, wellbeing, low esteem and the social consequences of deprivation. With sufficient support, it will continue to deliver key elements of the Council's current strategy in a significant number of areas.

A Vision Statement for the future of WAGM set out key aims, and objectives based on three interrelated themes. They remain as relevant in 2021 (particularly in response to the damage inflicted by Covid-19 and the incompetence of Central Government in managing the pandemic) as was the case some years ago:

- A celebration of artistic excellence designed to foster creativity, craftsmanship and skill training, including the application of new technology.
- An emphasis on local history and heritage to enable the people of Wirral to develop a real sense of place and to add their individual stories to its history.
- An engagement with the community based on a network of partnership organisations which will deliver programme activities with significant educational and health benefits.

### Achieving strategic aims

Until progress was halted by the outbreak of Covid-19, WAGM had made considerable progress in improving its operational profile, attracting new audiences, developing new facilities (including a successful cafeteria, the 'Green Gallery', and arts- and literature-based shops), consolidating its involvement in formal and informal learning, strengthening community engagement and exploiting funding opportunities. Indeed, since the crisis in 2014-15, WAGM has achieved a great deal, as I am sure you know. It is described on travel sites as 'an absolute gem' and was awarded TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence in 2019. Visitor numbers have increased markedly and its record in attracting external grant support has been strengthened (for example, with funding from the Arts Council National Lottery Project and the Elephant Trust for Alan Ward's Photographs from Another Place, 22 December 2019 – 2 February 2020). There has been a greater emphasis on history and heritage, with the highly successful Made

of Iron exhibition in 2019 (an integral part of Wirral Borough of Culture 2019). This celebrated Wirral's maritime links by focusing on six famous vessels built by Cammel Laird, while Community Made of Iron brought together digital archives, photographs and artefacts that captured the experience and social history of workers, their families and communities. The Forward Plan 2011-2016 for Wirral's Museum Service rightly emphasised the importance of extending the number of community engagement projects and considerable progress has already been made. As part of the Hedd Wynn Festival in September 2017, WAGM hosted an event for local schools (Bidston Avenue Primary, Our Lady and Saint Edward, the Priory Parish, Portland Primary and The Wirral Hospitals School) where pupils were able to read out the poems they had written for a *War & Peace Anthology*. It was a very moving occasion. It should also be remembered that the improved performance of WAGM has been achieved with limited resources, but its impact has been considerable.

### Financial and Strategic Considerations

From a financial perspective, the proposal to mothball WAGM makes little sense. On-going costs will still be incurred; its unique collection will be neglected and its quality impaired; and the continuing rise in utility costs will reduce further the level of savings. Moreover, recent years have seen a considerable capital investment in WAGM which will cease to generate benefits for the Council, while closure will lead to the termination of community engagement projects and undermine overall support for the very varied programmes that the Williamson has delivered successfully. The current budget proposal makes no mention of the future of Birkenhead Priory & St. Mary's Tower, but their future must inevitably be seen as part of a broader, forward-looking strategy for the Wirral Museums Service.

Strategically, WAGM has a critical role to play in the future of Wirral and its residents. This is particularly the case in relation to Birkenhead, where plans for the re-development of the market area were recently released. At the same time, significant progress has been made in taking forward plans to secure World Heritage Site inscription for Birkenhead Park, as the first publicly funded park in the world. The response a wide range of professional bodies, including the International Committee on Monuments and Sites UK and World Heritage UK, has been immensely supportive; a (third edition) of the draft Nomination Document has been finalised; and the case is compelling, WAGM is an important element in this process, as the custodian of paintings, prints, and other artefacts relating to the park's history. We are intending to celebrate the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Birkenhead Park next April, which will also feature an exhibition including items from the Williamson's collection. In a wider context, WHS inscription is intended as a means of increasing tourism, particularly on the eastern side of the peninsula, and of contributing to Birkenhead's regeneration.

Both my wife and I and my late parents were born and bred in Birkenhead. We now live in Oxtun. I was brought up at Home Farm, Landican. My late father, High Sheriff of Merseyside in 1979/80 would proudly say of the borough that whilst at the Landican end of the Borough in

the time it took him 3 years to rear a calf to a cow, at the other end of the Borough they built the Ark Royal.

The Williamson is part of Birkenhead's, and now latterly Wirral's, cultural heritage. There are sadly very few cultural places in Wirral, but the Williamson is one of them and under local control. Now that the Churches' influences are not as strong as they were the Williamson provides a centre for much needed community activity, as well as its traditional role for local artistic activity.

Of course, it does not yield an income and costs the ratepayer money. That is the lot of such places. The Williamson is easily accessible and not off-putting. Schools can use it.

If money has to be saved in the Council budget, then sharp end services such as the Williamson can offer should be protected. In these difficult times the many layers in your bureaucracy could be more seriously looked at.

To lose the Williamson would be an irreversible loss. To destroy is easy. To rebuild much more difficult.

I wish to express how shocked I was to hear this news. I have always appreciated the educational advantages of having this museum on the Wirral and as a Primary School teacher (now retired) I took pupils there on school visits, as well as my own children, and I now take my grandchildren.

Nowadays as member of a local art society I get great pleasure in visiting all the art exhibitions, and as the Wirral Open Art Exhibition attracts people from far and wide it has to be an excellent way of promoting the Borough. The Williamson is also a venue for showcasing the heritage of Birkenhead, the artwork and talents of local schools as well as providing art /craft classes and concerts.

I read in your proposals that you have a 'Culture & Heritage Strategy ' to put culture, creativity & heritage at the heart of regenerating Birkenhead. Surely the Williamson provides much of this already, so the proposed closure seems completely contradictory.

There are a number of crises running alongside each other in the UK currently, the virus and the economy being the headlines. These are national but filter down with immense impact on all local life. The problems that beset the Council and therefore all the citizens of Wirral are of the most profound importance.

The one crisis that is now taking on equal importance nationally and locally is the crisis of the mental health of the population.

I worked for many years in Wirral Mind and before that for the Council addressing the mental health needs in the community. I know that large sections of the community are vulnerable to

mental health problems. In an area like the Wirral as many as 50% of people are, even in normal times, experiencing or managing significant mental and emotional problems. And once people fall into these problems it is not only difficult but a long-term journey out of them. It consumes resources, costs the country billions and causes misery.

Today's crises will abate but the mental wellbeing of the people of Wirral will assuredly be severely dented in the process. The Williamson was deliberately sited away from the business and retail part of Birkenhead so it could be accessed more easily by local people. Places like the Williamson, with exhibitions, talks, concerts, meetings, workshops, the bookshop, art supplies and the cafe is without doubt a special mental health resource and a hub for hundreds of local people and families...and with many more to come. Its presence not only inspires, educates and entertains but is at its roots an essential part of the fabric of maintaining and improving our wellbeing, through involvement in art, creativity and meeting with others. Its closure would greatly add to the problems and the emotional damage we are now experiencing as a community, which impacts on us all as individuals. The Williamson isn't an Art Gallery and Museum, it is an emotional lifeline and a force for recovery from this crisis and beyond. It gives out positive messages of hope and a path for many out of these distressing times.

We are writing to you in your capacity as Vice-Chair of the Tourism, Communities and Culture Committee for Wirral Council, concerning the budget option to close the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. We realise that the Council is facing a huge challenge in identifying savings for 2021/2 and we have already given our feedback in the official consultation, but felt it was necessary to also write to you, in view of your particular role, to urge that this option be rejected. Our three Oxton Ward councillors have also been made aware of our views and we have written to the Committee Chair.

The Williamson is a unique part of Wirral's heritage, as we are sure you know, and along with many other Wirral residents we have for many decades enjoyed the great variety of what it offers. It is so much more than a traditional art gallery and museum, although its collections of paintings, pottery and ship models are excellent: it offers a venue for many present-day local artists to exhibit at frequent, well attended events, excellent local history exhibitions, regular music events (especially in the summer), adult courses and makes a real contribution to art education for Wirral school children. In a very real sense, the Williamson is a community facility, in ways that the (outstanding, but very different) Lady Lever Art Gallery would never claim to be. It is truly a 'Jewel in the Crown' for Wirral!

At a time when mental health and wellbeing are such an issue in society, the contribution that the arts can make to addressing these issues should not be underestimated and it would be tragic if the Williamson's unique and enriching contribution to the Wirral community were to be lost. Please do all that you can to prevent this.

Here we have a building funded by Mr Williamson a director of the Cunard shipping line, houses many different pictures and artefacts all from Birkenhead and Wirral!

How can the council even consider closing down one of the most important build?

Buildings we have, it is also a learning institution and displays are heritage and must be saved!

I read with great sadness that the closure of Williamson Art Gallery & Museum and Birkenhead Priory has been tabled by the council, and I wished to share our experiences in a bid to show the power and presence these organisations have for their local community.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Oxton Artists, of which I am the Chairman. As an introduction, we are a group of circa 20 artists living in Oxton, and each year we have had the privilege of holding our commercial art show - the Oxton Art Fair - within the walls of the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum. For the last 15 years, the art fair has been a constant and growing success, attracting up to 1400 visitors each year. It has been a great privilege for us to be able to have the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum host our event each year.

As we all know, the past twelve months have been cataclysmic for the world, the UK, and arts and culture in general. I can't begin to imagine the full effect it has had across the Wirral Borough - and I appreciate what a seemingly impossible task it is to somehow prioritise and budget across the full landscape of growing needs.

I hope that you and your colleagues are able to understand the extent of the soft power that the arts bring across the nation both in terms of economic value, as well as health and wellbeing. Indeed, the Wirral and wider Merseyside is known globally for its cultural offer. Though doors are not able to open to key institutions such as the Williamson, I hope that we can look beyond to see the impact it has for the community around it - both before and during the pandemic.

The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum has several unique assets:

- Its position at a cultural crossroads in the Wirral, accessible to a diverse pool of people.
- The unique and varied collection it keeps.
- The historical poignancy and value - as the dream of John Williamson (the Director of Cunard Shipbuilding), which further connects it to the heritage of, not just Merseyside, but the wider UK.
- The architectural and physical assets it has - the neoclassical architecture, the central garden and the plentiful parking offer ensuring physical accessibility to as many visitors as possible.

As we all know, the Williamson has undergone organisation audits before, most recently in 2013 - and we were thrilled that the council were able to save this organisation. Granted, current economics are deep, and complex, but once lost to the community, it will be hard - if not impossible - to bring back to life these cultural hubs.

I appreciate that your team will be fully considering all options, and that it is not as simple as a 'yes/no', but may I suggest that the council consider the following:

- A short 'Situation Analysis' - where the council begin to understand the true importance of these organisations. This type of work - done by an outside and unbiased expert - often includes an in-depth assessment of the strategic context and the Wirral cultural market through research and analysis across a range of factors. This stage is crucial for a lot of councils when considering the future of certain assets - and helps form the solid and tangible foundations upon which your recommendations and future options will be based.
- This could be followed by an 'Options Appraisal' - which is where the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum / Birkenhead priory sites are fully reviewed, and where outside experts are often able to put forward a recommendation as to whether the sites are worth saving - they look at Planning Recommendations, Operating Models and Financial Assessments. They would help the council to form a fuller picture of what these sites can achieve in the future - and whether it is, indeed, possible to achieve this.

While the current operating models for both sites may not work for current and future audiences, there is such incredible potential. And the community stands behind the council when it comes to saving these important places - as a place of meeting, where young people and children come to learn and be inspired. Where history meets the future, and where imagination can be explored. As we all now, places like these are needed now, more than ever.

We must not lose the Williamson and I ask you humbly to consider all possible avenues. I would be delighted to discuss more our ideas to support your decision making.

I am writing to you concerning the review of the council's museum service provision.

I am deeply concerned that, if the Williamson Art Gallery and possibly the Priory and the Transport Museum, which as you know are managed from the Williamson as well, were to be mothballed as part of the council's plan to save money, that we might lose them all forever. This would be deeply upsetting as they play an enormous roll in the community.

The educational advantages of all three sites are enormous as they bring alive the history of the area and help the understanding of how the Wirral evolved in relation to Liverpool and the surrounding area, and the roll it can play in the future. I well remember the excitement of school visits to the Williamson and staring in amazement at the Priory as its story was brought alive by whoever was showing us around. Students from across the country come to

do research, particularly of the paintings but also the Della Robbia pottery - a unique and irreplaceable collection. The variety of artefacts is enormous, and it would be hard to see how this vast historic collection could be amalgamated successfully anywhere else.

The exhibitions are beautifully executed and are a delight to visit. As a member of the Art Fund, we have had many very successful events in the Williamson, including lectures, parties, demonstrations, concerts and tours of the galleries. Equally the Art Society (formally NADFAS) held its monthly meetings here for many years.

I am part of the recently formed Art Friends Merseyside and we have every intention of using the gallery as much as we did when we were organising local Art Fund events. We are raising money by holding events, to support local galleries and museums, and will be giving small grants every year to different local museums which hopefully will enable them to enlarge and compliment their existing collections.

The local art exhibitions and the Oxton Art Fair are again another example of how the Williamson plays such an important role in the community. I have attended various art courses including four excellent enameling ones. The encouragement of artistic talent as well as the ability to escape to a world of beautiful artefacts when visiting museums and galleries, plays a leading role in the mental health of many people.

It would be a disaster to close the three sites now particularly as I understand money has now been made available for the development of Birkenhead centre and there is possibly more funding to come.

While I appreciate the council's dilemma over its budget, I feel very strongly that the closure of the Williamson and possibly the Priory and the Transport Museum is not the best way forward.

**Petition:**

<https://www.change.org/p/wirral-borough-council-keep-the-williamson-art-gallery-open>

**Refuse Collection**

It is not a good idea to make the green waste bin to three weeks emptying as it will call rodents and smells especially in hot summer weather. Maybe the grey recycling bin could be emptied less often but the green household bin definitely needs emptying more frequently.



Why are the council considering moving the emptying of the green bin waste to 3 weeks? Surely for hygiene reasons it would be better to empty the grey bins ever 3 weeks and leave the green bins at 2 weekly intervals.

I write with regard to the proposal to close Europa swimming pool. I appreciate the council need to make cuts wherever and whenever possible but to close this facility would be catastrophic to local children.

This pool is packed out every school holidays and weekends with children and families enjoying the leisure pool, often seen with queues around the block.

This pool is used to teach the next generation of children to learn to swim and affectively saving lives.

This pool hosts the only competition pool in the area, housing Wirral Metro swimming club where my 14-year daughter swims up to 18 hours a week! There is no other facility who can provide what their club needs to continue this level of training.

I am appealing to you as a mum of three children who all use this pool week in week out that it needs to stay open for not only me and my family but hundreds of local families bringing their children to exercise, have fun, grow to love competing, learning to swim, and keeping a happy healthy mental health.

If this close, children in one of our most deprived areas will see a decline in their mental health. I'm already seeing the effects on my children's mental health that the pandemic has had but if this facility closes my daughter will have nowhere to train, my son will have nowhere to work out and my youngest will be left without a fun pool to play and release the tension of the week.

Please do not allow the closure!!

My concern is about Europa pools being closed. I am 12 years old I have trained at Wirral metro for about 2 years. I have become very passionate about swimming.

1) Does anyone on the committee understand anything about competitive swimming?

If you do, then you would understand that we need a pool.

2) Where will we train? Would you be able to provide us with the same amount of pool time?

I train for about 12 hours a week, and I am not just worried about myself I am worried about other clubs and future generation of swimmers. Europa pools is used by the entire swim community including the schools.

3) Where will peninsula galas, open meets and school galas take place?

Bebington- Oval = This pool only has 4 lanes and there is no space for spectators.

Wallasey- Guinea Gap = There are only 4 lanes and no space for spectators.

Birkenhead- Leasowe = This may have 6 lanes but there is not enough space for spectators.

Hoylake- Concourse = 4 lanes and not enough space for spectators.

Woodchurch = They only have 4 lanes.

Europa is the only pool with enough space for swimmers and spectators. Everyone has seats to sit down and space to stand up. Europa has all the best equipment. It has diving blocks and a digital scoreboard.

I am 13 years old and a keen swimmer and spend nearly 18 hours a week in the pool at Europa training with Wirral Metro. I find it good for my physical and mental health, like so many of my friends. I am worried that if you close Europa I won't have anywhere else to train. Please can you assure me that I will always have a pool at Europa.

One of your plans is to close Europa. My daughter swims for Wirral metro, if Europa closes where are the squad supposed to swim, what provision are you going to provide for these children who work so hard to achieve their goals which potentially include Regionals, Nationals and Olympics?

I'm responding regarding the option of closing Europa Pools. There are a few reasons that I'm strongly against this option being taken up.

1. It's the only facility of its type in the area.
2. Many people in the immediate vicinity will not have the means to travel to other facilities.
3. Health and wellbeing has been a major focus of Government/NHS policy in recent years, with the intention of improving the nation's health, mental health and reducing the strain on the NHS. I can't remember a time when wellbeing has been more important - and the NHS needs protection now, more than ever. So, closing the major leisure/fitness facility in the area doesn't make any sense.
4. Closing Europa would especially impact children. I believe that kids have already had enough to deal with over the last 9 months with schools being closed and not being able to see family and friends. Taking this away from them doesn't seem right.
5. Europa is the base of Wirral Metro Swimming Club who desperately need access to the facility for their performance programme. The kids in the club have put in thousands of hours

of training in the hope of becoming an elite level swimmer. Closing the facility will pretty much wipe-out their prospects.

**Petition:** [https://www.change.org/p/wirral-council-save-europa-pools?recruiter=1121858790&utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_campaign=share\\_for\\_starters\\_page&utm\\_medium=whatsapp&utm\\_content=washarecopy\\_26342018\\_en-GB%3A7&recruited\\_by\\_id=9d99f900-b221-11ea-8051-d10f46ec59cd](https://www.change.org/p/wirral-council-save-europa-pools?recruiter=1121858790&utm_source=share_petition&utm_campaign=share_for_starters_page&utm_medium=whatsapp&utm_content=washarecopy_26342018_en-GB%3A7&recruited_by_id=9d99f900-b221-11ea-8051-d10f46ec59cd)

## **Swimming Pools**

I would like to voice my protest at the plans to close Europa and mothball the Woodchurch Pool. I do so in my capacity as treasurer and coach of the Woodchurch Swimming club and parent to two girls who swim for the club. I myself am a swimmer, competing in the national masters and I swim 6 times a week when pools are open.

I have completed the Budget cuts consultation survey. I would really like to see the detail in the numbers to understand how the Council thinks it would really save £300,000 by closing the Woodchurch pool for a year. A swimming pool still requires maintenance even if it is closed or it will simply decline and cost a lot to restore. You will not really save anything unless you make the staff redundant. It costs a lot to do that. Then you'd need to find people to run the pool in a year or so. I suspect you don't really achieve much by keeping a pool closed for a further year. All these staff are likely to have been on full pay since the March 2020 lockdown despite the centre having remained closed throughout.

The Woodchurch pool is one of the nicer ones on the Wirral. It is light and relatively spacious. If it is under-utilised that is because the Council have not done enough to promote it. It is apparent that many Wirral residents do not even know it's there. The Council have often turned down opportunities to hire the pool out to clubs and commercial swim schools that would pay more commercial rates to use it. How can it be that the Caldys pool has huge demand from groups keen to hire it from the early hours to 10pm every day (including bank holidays!) but the Council claims there is no demand for Woodchurch pool. Also, the fact that the Council have not invested in this centre means that areas other than the pool have deteriorated to a significant extent and they don't attract anyone.

We are aware that the air conditioning needs an upgrade to make it COVID compliant. This was the case for all pools in the Wirral which is why there were delays to opening any Wirral pools. Three did not open until the end of October despite the government allowing pools to open on 25 July. The remainder of Wirral pools are still shut. How is that Cheshire West & Chester managed to open all of its pools from 25 July. The delay to the opening of only half of the Wirral Pools until the end of October (with the rest still shut) suggests mismanagement and a lack of investment. In warmer weather could the Woodchurch pool operate in a COVID compliant manner simply by opening a number of the fire exits to improve the circulation of air?

The Council claims it has lost money due to having the leisure facilities closed for months. The closure from 25 July to the end of October is down to the Council. However, this sounds contradictory to me; on one had the Council say they have lost income from having the leisure centres closed and on the other they say closing them can save money.

I don't accept that using the centre as a vaccines centre means the pool cannot be used. The pool is at one end of this facility and vaccines are administered from another part of this centre, which is at quite a distance. It would be quite easy to keep people using each facility apart. Alternatively, there must be plenty of other buildings which cannot be used due to Covid that could be used for vaccines.

Schools must offer swimming as part of the National Curriculum. If this pool is closed, schools that use it will now have to hire buses to use other pools. Hiring buses is expensive so have you taken these extra costs into account. This is just one example of extra costs arising from keeping the pool closed. I assume it will also mean that pupils will waste more time in travelling when they could be learning something else. Will the Council even be able to offer all pupils the swim sessions they need for schools to comply with the National Curriculum?

I used to be an Invigor8 member prior to March lockdown but have not renewed my membership simply because the Council cannot offer me enough swimming in the facilities that are open. So, the Council is losing money from reduced Invigor8 membership. I know a number of adult swimmers that used to swim at the Concourse now swim at Caldý for this reason.

Europa pool. This is also an important facility for Wirral with huge demand. It will be very damaging to competitive swimming on Wirral if we are left without the competition pool. It should not be running at a loss if it is well managed. When the Council calculated the savings from closure did it take into account all the income lost from the car park charges at Europa if it closes?

I am in disbelief that the Council is even consulting "on a review of back office function". The Council should constantly be looking to make savings through efficiencies in administration. This is not something the Council should question.

Why have the Council continued not to seek charges for parking? The Council have always done this so why stop if they are so short of funding.?

I can see on your website that you are currently investigating sport in the community and wanted to highlight this case study to you as an example:

<https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/18945938.wirral-council-budget-deficit-see-swimming-baths-close/><https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/18945938.wirral-council-budget-deficit-see->

## [swimming-baths-close/](#)

Due to the Government reneging on its promise to pay back Council's for their coronavirus spend and to end austerity, Council's across the Country are having to make drastic cuts to institutions that once gone are gone forever from communities. Wirral Council is one such Council, a place with a high number of elderly people and poor people, a suburban place that does not make much through council or business tax.

The Council are now telling residents that they will have to close down the Borough's most popular swimming pool, Europa Pools, and the local Museum in Birkenhead. Birkenhead is a very working-class area, and these facilities offer sport and culture right in the heart of these communities. If you have ever gone to these venues before covid-19 they are packed with kids and families.

Where is the Conservatives "Levelling Up" agenda, if children in then North are not even able to learn to swim?

The plans also include possible closure of the public golf course, which offers cheap deals for local working-class children to learn golf, as well as the closure of the Woodchurch leisure centre, which again is the heart of a deprived community.

The Council has lost half of its budget since 2010, and the final blow of the Government's Council covid-19 funding settlement not even covering what Council's need, will hamper a whole generation of young people in deprived areas. I think the Treasury should implement a one off 1% wealth tax: [https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/dec/09/economic-cost-of-covid-crisis-prompts-call-for-one-off-uk-wealth-](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/dec/09/economic-cost-of-covid-crisis-prompts-call-for-one-off-uk-wealth-tax)

[tax](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/dec/09/economic-cost-of-covid-crisis-prompts-call-for-one-off-uk-wealth-tax) to cover this black hole in the finances of local Government to save young people falling decades behind the generation above in these deprived areas. Council run institutions like leisure centres and museums mean poorer families (who are more likely to be obese) are able to get cheaper or free tickets to attend, just privatising them is not the answer, especially in poor areas like Birkenhead where they wouldn't be able to turn a profit anyway.

I know Wirral isn't the only place this is happening, and sadly it is not a Council in London that can raise business rates or sell of its land.

I hope you are able to read this and consider it for your evidence.

There seems to be many unintended consequences of this pandemic and the next generation being unable to access sport and culture in their communities being one of them is frankly terrible. As I said, once swimming pools, libraries and museums (often created in Victorian times) are taking away they are almost never reinstated.

Please do not close down facilities like pools in areas of social deprivation like Birkenhead and Woodchurch. No to the People's Lido which will take away custom from the Council pools and is likely to become a financial burden on the Council over time.

I would like to voice my protest at the plans to close Europa and mothball the Woodchurch Pool. I do so in my capacity as treasurer and coach of the Woodchurch Swimming club and parent to two girls who swim for the club. I myself am a swimmer, competing in the national masters and I swim 5 or 6 times a week when pools are open.

I have completed the Budget cuts consultation survey. I would really like to see the detail in the numbers to understand how the Council thinks it would really save more than £300,000 by closing the Woodchurch pool for a year. A swimming pool still requires maintenance even if it is closed or it will simply decline and cost a lot to restore. You will not really save anything unless you make the staff redundant. It costs a lot to make employees redundant. Then you'd need to find people to run the pool in a year or so. I suspect you don't really achieve much by keeping a pool closed for a further year. All these staff are likely to have been on full pay since the March 2020 lockdown despite the centre having remained closed throughout.

The Woodchurch pool is one of the nicer ones on the Wirral. It is light and relatively spacious. If it is under-utilised that is because the Council have not done enough to promote it. It is apparent that many Wirral residents do not even know it's there. The Council have often turned down opportunities to hire the pool out to clubs and commercial swim schools that would pay more commercial rates to use it. How can it be that the Caldy pool has huge demand from groups keen to hire it from the early hours to 10pm every day (including bank holidays!) but the Council claims there is no demand for Woodchurch pool. I suspect the Caldy pool does not run at a loss. Also, the fact that the Council have not invested in the Woodchurch Leisure Centre means that areas other than the pool (i.e., halls and rooms) have deteriorated to a significant extent and they don't attract anyone.

We are aware that the air conditioning needs an upgrade to make it COVID compliant. This was the case for all pools in the Wirral which is why there were delays to opening any Wirral pools. Three did not open until the end of October despite the government allowing pools to open on 25 July. The remainder of Wirral pools are still shut. How is that Cheshire West & Chester managed to open all of its pools from 25 July. The delay to the opening of only half of the Wirral Pools until the end of October (with the rest still shut) suggests mismanagement and a lack of investment. In warmer weather could the Woodchurch pool operate in a COVID compliant manner simply by opening a number of the fire exits to improve the circulation of air?

The Council claims it has lost money due to having the leisure facilities closed for months. The closure from 25 July to the end of October is down to the Council. However, this sounds contradictory to me. On one had the Council say they have lost income from having the leisure centres closed and on the other they say closing them can save money.

I don't accept that using the centre as a vaccines centre means the pool cannot be used. The pool is at one end of this facility and vaccines are administered from another part of this centre, which is at quite a distance and with separate entrances. It would be quite easy to

keep people using each facility apart. Alternatively, there must be plenty of other buildings which cannot be used due to Covid that could be used for vaccines.

Schools must offer swimming as part of the National Curriculum. If this pool is closed, schools that use it will now have to hire buses to use other pools. Hiring buses is expensive so have you taken these extra costs into account? This is just one example of extra costs arising from keeping the pool closed. I assume it will also mean that pupils will waste more time in travelling when they could be learning something. Will the Council even be able to offer all pupils the swim sessions they need for schools to comply with the National Curriculum?

I used to be an Invigor8 member prior to March 2020 lockdown but have not renewed my membership simply because the Council cannot offer me enough swimming in the facilities that are open. So, the Council is losing money from reduced Invigor8 membership. I know a number of adult swimmers that used to swim at the Concourse now swim at Caldys for this reason.

Europa pool. This is also an important facility for Wirral with huge demand. It will be very damaging to competitive swimming on Wirral if we are left without the competition pool. It should not be running at a loss if it is well managed. When the Council calculated the savings from closure did it take into account all the income lost from the car park charges at Europa if it closes?

Please save the swimming pools, they are a vital place for exercise for all members of the community, all ages and all abilities. The swimming clubs provided a focus for the local community bringing people together, giving young people a constructive outlet. They learn a skill which could save their lives, they understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They develop the ethos of supporting the local community, have the opportunity to give back to the community by helping and supporting younger children. The higher-level sport develops British champion role models, and pride in the region. In the long term this will provide savings in health, both physical and mental, and is a real investment in the local community for people of all ages and ability.

### **Woodchurch Leisure Centre**

Please open Woodchurch pool as soon as possible, keep it open and invest in its future, for the sake of the deprived local communities that use it, all the many schools that use it to fulfil the National Curriculum obligation to teach all children to swim and all the disabled, elderly and overweight who need it and cannot access other forms of exercise for physical reasons. If reducing health inequalities is an aim of this Council, then you must look to keep this pool open.

I would be grateful if you would record my objection to temporary or permanent closure of Woodchurch pool and also my objection to stopping or reducing school crossing patrols.

I would like my objection to the continued closure of Woodchurch Leisure Centre to be logged as part of the budget consultation.

As the parent of a child who uses the Centre regularly, I feel it is a vital resource to offer children affordable and local swimming.

Both physical and mental health is of utmost importance for all children but as this Centre serves an area of social and economic challenge it is even more important to maintain this facility to provide equality of opportunity for fitness and leisure activities for young people in the community.

I am writing to you today in the hope to make you aware of the significant negative effects that the proposal to mothball Woodchurch Leisure Centre (WLC) would have on our local community and schools. I live in Thingwall, work hard, pay my taxes and have never asked for anything.

I have completed the 'have your say' survey and detailed my concern in the 'comments' section, a large portion of which is detailed below.

I understand the tough times we are facing, however from a personal viewpoint - please, please do not mothball Woodchurch Leisure Centre. Myself and my family have been regular patrons of the swimming facilities for many, many years now. I was a member of Woodchurch Swimming Club growing up and now my daughter is a member. I know so many local people who use it themselves and their children have their swimming lessons there. My auntie, cousins and parents (and many, many friends with their families) have used this pool through the years - for swimming, aqua-aerobics, mother and child and rehabilitation purposes. Some have health problems and live local to the pool, so it is ideal for access and addressing physical and mental health problems (rheumatoid arthritis, hip/knee replacement, heart attacks, cancer and anxiety to name a few). Mothballing would appear to be just step one of closure.

Prior to COVID-19, many local primary schools, including my daughters (Thingwall Primary) utilise WLC for their school swimming lessons. With curriculum requirements the time allocated for swimming lessons is minimal and having a pool nearby means that actual pool time can be maximised, particularly for children who have not been introduced to the wonderful world of swimming. The staff there are fabulous and most have been there for many years, which all adds to the experience when your child can walk in and feel safe to say hi to all the lifeguards. It may not appear much to outsiders, but it really is a safe, happy space for so many. The staff keep it spotless and extremely well maintained (on what I can only imagine is a very small budget). We have been heartbroken to see other Wirral pools re-open and Woodchurch remain closed and the rumours as to why this has been the case have changed by the day. If the argument that the pool is closed as the building is being used for a

covid-centre (which is clearly vitally important currently), this makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. If you know the layout of the building, the swimming pool has a completely separate entrance to all other parts of the building and so there is no cross-over of people if both were open (if people are confused where to go at the front of the building - then a couple of signs and/or directions on the floor would suffice to help direct the flow of people going to each service). If the question is ventilation, then there are several doors which can be opened, whilst the pool is open, something Calday pool appears to have adopted.

Europa is also a great pool, and important in terms of competitive swimming on the Wirral (pulling in swimmers from all around for quarterly open swimming competitions). It is also jam-packed at weekends to use the great (but very small in my opinion) leisure pool/wave pool and slides. However, I do understand that the area in which it stands is in desperate need for re-generation. I understand within the regeneration budget for there to be a provision for rebuilding a leisure service of some description.

I also understand that in the past two years, plans were drawn up and money was spent to begin the redevelopment of Woodchurch into an aquatic centre. With only the smallest of imagination, one can see that the land surrounding the Woodchurch leisure centre provides endless possibilities for expansion, not only of the swimming facilities - but for many, many other sports. It is ideally placed in the middle of Wirral and this would attract so many more people to the centre and, if managed well, likely turn losses into profit. When Woodchurch was originally built, the local people actually contributed to this as they had absolutely nothing in the area for them.

There is no point of just complaining and saying this can't happen, without providing suggestions, thoughts and ideas for a potential solution in the longer term.

I am a forensic toxicologist by trade, and this is clearly outside my area of expertise. However, a simple solution in my opinion, is that if the money set aside for leisure facilities from the regeneration of the Birkenhead area where Europa pools is now, could potentially be injected into an all singing-all dancing aquatic/sports centre in Woodchurch - an area also in much need of regeneration, this would be of great benefit to so many. This building could provide both a top standard racing/training pool and fun pools on a much larger scale than that provided currently by both Woodchurch and Europa. In addition, a good standard gym and possibly spa-like facilities (hydrotherapy pool etc) would be hugely attractive (I know many people, myself included who would change my gym membership immediately to a council facility such as this). Many other sports would also gain from a centre like this in Woodchurch, for example astro-turf pitches are in huge demand by local football and hockey teams. I also know that a judo club, producing children who (prior to covid) were representing GB in competitions overseas use the hall at Woodchurch leisure centre to train. Martial arts have been growing exponentially in popularity over the recent years and a much-updated hall for which clubs could come and use for training would be immensely appealing (and contribute to profits of course).

At the end of the day, seeing such leisure facilities as Woodchurch, which is adored by its users, as a financial burden, is only because the council have driven it to be so. With such

little invested money and effort, in addition to zero awareness in the local community of its existence (this has become blatantly obvious recently as I know several healthcare workers who have said that they are shocked how many people who are being told to go to Woodchurch Leisure Centre for their vaccinations, have no clue what, or where it is!). An investment into such a sports facility in Woodchurch would tick so many boxes - providing services to the population both near and wide, injecting investment into an area in much need of regeneration itself (potentially allowing the development of ancillary businesses around the facility - cafes etc.) and of course improving both physical and mental health of the Wirral people, hopefully reducing the burden on our precious NHS in future years to come. Finally, and probably to a lot of people involved - the most important point, if managed well, a centre such as this would make money.

I understand that back in 2009 a similar need to save money existed and it was proposed as part of the Strategic Asset Review to close Woodchurch Leisure Centre. Woodchurch Swimming Club members, local residents, GP's, councillors and local user groups played a big role in helping to keep the centre open. At that time, it was accepted by Wirral Council that the Pool was of great importance to the public, to School swimming's National Curriculum requirements, to Learn to Swim, Woodchurch Swimming Club and other organised user groups, and that the Leisure Centre itself, although it did not offer Squash or badminton etc, was used by many Sports and Social Groups of great importance to the local area. As a result, the necessary financial cuts were made elsewhere. Sadly, because of the continued lack of investment, WLC appears to remain a financial burden. The present proposal is to mothball it for a year. This means that many of the good things that happen there will stop. Pools left empty tend to deteriorate, the centre will probably be vandalised. We fear that if closed it may never re-open.

My daughter is devastated to not be back training with her team (and me, coaching) several times a week at Woodchurch and this has certainly contributed to her significant mental health struggles attempting to cope with everything being taken away from her through this unprecedented time.

Please consider my points seriously and try to find other ways to save money other than mothballing our beloved local swimming pool. We are living in a time where this would feel like kicking us in the gut when we are already on the floor struggling to cope.

As a swimming coach with Woodchurch Swimming Club, I was happy to hear and I feel that a good case has been made for the importance of Europa so that the Council can make a properly informed decision on its future/replacement. There was however no mention of the proposed mothballing of Woodchurch Pool which I believe would be disastrous, so this letter specifically concerns Woodchurch. Before going on to discuss the need to keep the Pool

open when lockdown eases, I want to comment on/question the reasons I have been given for keeping the pool closed. Firstly, it has air conditioning that is not Covid compliant; how much will it cost to put this right and why has it not been done between now and last March when the pool closed? Secondly the building will be used for Covid vaccination, so in a building with 2 large entrances, why does this prevent the pool from being used? There is no need for any mixing of those arriving for vaccination and those arriving for swimming. Thirdly financial; how is it even remotely possible to lose £300,000 per annum running a 25m swimming pool? Perhaps the Council need to adopt a similar business plan to Calday Trust who manage to do the same thing while making ends meet.

Now with regard to the pool, apart from use by the public for leisure swimming, the pool is used by Woodchurch Swimming Club which even after Covid losses still has a membership of well over 100, many more than Wirral Metro which (rightly) was given some weight in the Consultation Q & A. A few members are elite swimmers also with Metro, but most are not, and the most important purpose of local competition swimming is about developing the outlook and potential of young people. The pool is also used extensively for the Council's Learn to Swim lessons and the loss of those lessons will be keenly felt, as time will not be available at other pools, particularly if Europa is out of action. The same can be said of school swimming for National Curriculum purposes. Woodchurch is used by at least 9 schools, some of which can walk to the pool for their lessons, saving the cost of buses. It seems unlikely that there will be sufficient capacity at other pools to satisfy the needs of these schools. Those groups just mentioned represent what Swim England describe as the "Swimmer Pathway" from learning to swim through swim club to elite. All stages are important to the health and wellbeing of young people and disruption of the pathway is a seriously bad thing. Local GP's will tell you that the loss of a local facility is an equally bad thing for older adults who need a local pool for exercise for mental and physical health. Indeed, for that reason, Dr Ivan Camphor of Heatherlands surgery on Woodchurch Estate took a leading part in the campaign to save Woodchurch LC from the Strategic Asset Review of 2009 that is referred to below.

With regard to the Leisure Centre in general, as it says in the "have your say" document, Woodchurch is a small Leisure Centre that is not busy enough. This is because it does not offer much in the way of leisure facilities other than the very pleasant pool. I have always been somewhat mystified by this as it is in a prime location in the middle of the Wirral Peninsula, surrounded by a very large field which has a running track, mostly unused. It does not even have a gym, which could hardly fail to do well given the location. It loses money because it has not received the investment that it needs. When we host other swimming clubs the swimmers' parents often say, "This is a lovely pool, I didn't know it was here." If the Centre had more to offer, then perhaps it would be better known and both it and the pool would be better used.

Back in 2009 a similar need to save money existed and it was proposed as part of the Strategic Asset Review to close Woodchurch Leisure Centre. Woodchurch Swimming Club members, local residents, GP's, councillors and local user groups played a big role in helping to keep the centre open. At that time, it was accepted by Wirral Council that the Pool was of great importance to the public, to School swimming's National Curriculum requirements, to

Learn to Swim, Woodchurch Swimming Club and other organised user groups, and that the Leisure Centre itself, although it did not offer Squash or badminton etc, was used by many Sports and Social Groups of great importance to the local area. As a result, the necessary financial cuts were made elsewhere. Sadly, because of the continued lack of investment, Woodchurch Pool remains a financial burden. The present proposal is to mothball it for a year. This means that many of the good things that happen there will stop. Pools left empty tend to deteriorate, the centre will probably be vandalised. We fear that if closed it may never re-open.

I am writing as Chair of the Woodchurch Swimming Club and a concerned resident of the Wirral. I attended the Consultation Q & A meeting on Teams on Thursday and was surprised there was no mention of the proposed mothballing of Woodchurch Swimming pool. I believe there had been several questions and comments added as part of the "Have Your Say" submission for both Europa and Woodchurch pools. I appreciate that Europa is proposed to be closed, but as others have said there are potentially plans in the bigger picture for that to be redressed through new facilities in the future.

Can we have further explanation on why Woodchurch Pool needs to stay closed because of the vaccination centre – they are entirely separate parts of the building with their own entrance/exits. It should be relatively easy to maintain a Covid secure environment.

As we come out of lockdown it will be more important than ever for people to stay healthy and fit, something that swimming can do for lots of people who cannot otherwise exercise due to its low impact on the body. Investing in swimming pools has been shown to be repaid with reduced costs for health spending and associated services as supported by several GPs in 2009 when Woodchurch Pool was proposed to be closed as part of a review then.

Can we see the details of the £300,000 loss to run the pool – as similar (and less accessible) facilities run by Caldys Pools seem to be doing well and is often overbooked, indicating there is demand for pool time that is not being met. This has been especially true as due to Covid people are seeking every opportunity to get out and exercise.

It is my fear that once mothballed, the pool will never reopen - can we have a firm commitment and date as to when the pool will be reopened in the future.

## **Golf**

Referring specifically to the Warren and Brackenwood for now, I'm told by a Labour Party member and trade union activist that jobs are at risk due to closure/private sector outsourcing. Can you confirm if this is the case? Again, on a personal level I'd like to see a way through the negative feeling that continues to exist on this issue. Have alternative ways been looked into regarding their running? For example, with a Community Interest Company

or Co-Operative SPV established to asset lock the courses and then create a business case for running them? It may kickstart some more social value and community wealth building opportunities and I'd be happy to have a chat at your convenience on this should you wish to pursue. In my current working life, I have established and continue to run 3 Community Interest Companies, one of which has benefitted from asset-locked stock transfer from Liverpool City Council, so I am aware of the benefits around them.

Over the past 12 - 18 months various consultations, workshops, reviews and surveys have been conducted surrounding the future provision of Golf. This included so many stakeholders, from Clubs and users to unions and employees. There was also a call in, and Environment and overview scrutiny meetings held which resulted in agreed actions. These included.

- 1) To retain the courses in house
- 2) A ground survey commissioned, and capital programme be amended to carry out the investment and improvements needed from the survey over the next EIGHT years
- 3) A consultative user group be established with clubs, employees and users
- 4) Unfreeze capital money to provide suitable equipment for maintenance staff to bring the courses up to standard
- 5) That there be no reduction in playing capacity.

These were accepted and agreed as late as Dec 2019.

Yet here we are again - the process the council went through was the right process. But now this seems to be ignored. This will erode trust in the council, the council processes and consultations and of course, the councillors themselves.

The only real viable option, to save the alleged £273 000 within the budget year you are consulting on is to close the courses. We believe this will reignite the greenbelt issue and building on green land that was so fiercely opposed as you know.

Are the council going back on their agreements and long-term plans with regards to Golf? and can you confirm that closing the course will actually save the council overall, the £273 000 when you take into account redundancies or redeployments, recharge costs etc?

I am a member of Arrowe Park Ladies' Golf Club and Warren Ladies Golf Club.

I wish to express my concern about any further budget cutting which would jeopardize the future of the clubs.

It is well recognized that exercise outdoors is highly beneficial to the physical and mental health of the participants.

### **Adult Services**

I hope you are well and can assist in the proposed budget cut of £500,000 from Wirral Evolutions. They provide an excellent service for adults with special needs.

Graham Hodgkinson of Adult Services has recommended this reduction from his budget with no other suggested cuts from Adult Services. In discussions with Graham Hodgkinson together with others in the Parent/Carers group he has given the impression that this cut will be made in any event. A forgone conclusion and consultation will make no difference.

I find it appalling that such a huge amount can be stricken from such a small company without any reasoning. Please ask Graham Hodgkinson where these cuts can be made. He must have gone through some thought process to come up with this figure. Such a reduction will be disastrous to the lives of adults who use the service and parents/carers. Our son, Graeme attends Oakenholt, Moreton and I am treasurer of the charity which purchases extras for the centre.

There has been a suggestion that the service be brought in house but that would be a total disaster given the council's track record. We don't want to go back to a time when the service simply confined service users to the building with no creative programme of events.

I do hope you can help in this matter because adults with special needs must be a priority for any council.

I have learned that WBC proposes to cut the budget for adult services one of the most vulnerable groups in our society. I am a carer for my brother-in-law.

(unpaid) who lives with me and attends Heswall day centre I have noticed over the years I have looked after him the service offered has slowly been ebbed away, first the hot meals at lunchtime, then the transport and his blue badge not renewed. A further cut would be disastrous. I have to speak out for him as he can't speak for himself. Please reconsider.

I believe this Service is provided and run by Wirral Evolutions -for WBC Adult Social Services.

Can you provide a breakdown of the Savings proposals to enable an informed contribution; - .... for example, is it a saving on a Building / Centre .... funding for Staffing / personnel.

Hoping you can help, to allow me to make a meaningful contribution to the Budget Proposals Consultation deadline (later this week)

## Youth Services

You will know many members of The Hive and their families have contributed to the process, along with board members, stakeholders, partner agencies and others who are concerned about the welfare and prospects of young people. For many of our young people this has provided a first experience of politics and local democracy, involvement with which is something we always encourage.

I am conscious that much has already been submitted and contributed but I just wanted to pick up on one issue that has come to our attention during the process, that being that a number of elected members consider The Hive to be Birkenhead centric in its work and I just wanted to respond to this.

Whilst strategically located in Birkenhead, as both one of the areas of Wirral of greatest deprivation as well as having better central transport links than other areas, The Hive is Wirral Youth Zone, not Birkenhead Youth Zone and we have always worked hard to ensure that the organization serves and supports young people from across Wirral. This approach has been sustained and as the chart below illustrates, 84% of current members live outside of the Birkenhead and Tranmere areas.

I am a trustee of The Hive Youth Zone, a position I have held since before it opened and where I have oversight of all matters relating to HR and People. As such I am particularly interested in the mental health and well-being of all involved, young people and team alike. The Hive is not a specialist mental health charity, nor does it aspire to be, but supporting the positive mental health of members has always been an integral part of the day to day work of the youth work team.

Engagement in physical activity and/or creative arts is known to promote positive mental health and with these activities forming a major part of our offer to young people we do see positive outcomes. This is evidenced in "Ambitions for Young People"- A study of the impact of universal youth provision at OnSide Youth Zones (which incorporated a Deep Dive study at The Hive) which reports;

- 77% of members report being more confident;
- 73% of members feel happier about their lives.
- 89% of members on free school meals feel happier about their lives.

Furthermore, The Hive offers more bespoke support to those young people needing extra help via our mentoring program on which young people receive weekly support from the

same mentor. This is a well-established successful scheme which has seen a 100% increase in referrals since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, three quarters of which are made by the Local Authority.

Increases in mental health concerns among young people have been widely reported over recent months including just this week when The Princes Trust reported the results of its research including the finding that one in four young people have felt “unable to cope” in the pandemic. This is no surprise to our youth workers who have remained connected with young people over and above what we are permitted to offer on site; proactively calling vulnerable members, delivering essential supplies, combining this with welfare checks, increasing outreach work and much more.

Conscious of continually wanting to meet young people’s needs The Hive (having secured a specific grant) have invested in training for more than 20 workers in mental health first aid. As such we are now committed to having trained workers available at all times to help young people overcome concerns and regain focus and confidence thereby preventing escalation of issues to a point requiring professional intervention at greater cost.

In these circumstances I believe, and not a view held solely by me I would add, that a reduction in support for young people will be devastating to many and ultimately counterproductive. I have lived most of my life as a resident on the Wirral and lived as a child in the public house next door to The Hive. My personal experiences motivated me to support The Hive and I was delighted when asked to become a Trustee because of my passion and local ties. From my experience as a Trustee, I could relay countless stories of the amazing wide-reaching support and work that the teams of youth workers have provided, the betterment to a staggering number of young people’s lives has been achieved across the Wirral and I worry for the future ability to provide this life changing support.

Whilst I appreciate the difficult predicament the council faces as a budget is prepared, I would ask that the council does consider the needs and future of Wirral’s young people and reconsiders its proposal.

I would implore you to reconsider having The Hive as an option for your funding cuts. There are very clear statistics showing how much our young people need these services.

### YoungMinds

COVID-19 summer 2020 survey: 80% of respondents agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse.

I would like to ask you to support the funding for The Hive.

The people who work for this organisation have, during both lockdowns, been unstinting in their support of the people who use The Hive.

Their efforts, particularly regarding fund raising, have been diverse and at times strange, but successful and constant. Statistics strongly back this up: -

Coronavirus: Impact on Young People with Mental Health Needs – Sept 2020

Study of Young people going back to school after Lockdown 1.0 showed.

- 69% of respondents described their mental health as poor now that they are back at school; this has risen from 58% who described their mental health as poor before returning to school.
- 40% of respondents said that there was no school counsellor available to support students in their school.
- Only 27% had had a one-to-one conversation with a teacher or another member of staff in which they were asked about their wellbeing, by the time they completed the survey.
- Almost a quarter of respondents (23%) said that there was less mental health support in their school than before the pandemic, while only 9% agreed that there was more mental health support.

Source: <https://youngminds.org.uk/media/4119/youngminds-survey-with-young-people-returning-to-school-coronavirus-report-autumn-report.pdf>

The Guardian Newspaper Article - Youth organisations in England face wholesale closure

Published: 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2021

“There are 1.6 million children from a vulnerable family background for whom support is either patchy or non-existent. Just over half of these children are ‘invisible’ to services,” said Anna Alcock, the head of engagement and advocacy at UK Youth. “Youth work could be the only answer to helping these children; a preventative service that provides support before problems arise.”

“Youth services simply do not have the capacity or enough funding to meet young people’s vastly increased needs,” said the NYA’s chief executive, Leigh Middleton. “They have depleted reserves and incomes slashed by half or more.

I am writing this in response to the potential budget cuts proposed for Youth Services, in which I have been made aware that this is specifically targeted to the Hive Youth Zone.

I would like to ask you to take a minute to read the reasons why I strongly disagree that the funding you provide the Hive should be cut. I might just be one person, however, I know there are many more people that the Hive has changed lives of, since 2017, and will continue to do so in any possible way. Before I tell you my story on how the Hive has impacted my life, I would like you to read just how much the Hive does for young people on the Wirral.

The Hive provides a 365 day offer to be able to support young people, for just 50p a visit, they get everything that every young person on the Wirral deserves. Somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to. They have over 20 activities on a session each night, where there is something suitable for everyone, whether that be arts, sports or 'rec' activities. The most important thing in my opinion is the level of support the Hive provides for young people, particularly during these uncertain times.

During the lockdowns and the different tiers our local area have faced, the Hive has adapted to every restriction thrown at them, to provide the support for young people in times that were uncertain for everyone. They have adapted their in-house offer quickly and efficiently to provide a virtual offer for young people, including online videos on social media platforms, zoom sessions and live social media sessions. This gave young people an opportunity to check in with staff and have that ounce of normality back in their lives, even if it is through a different method.

In addition to this, the Hive have supported vulnerable young people by doing doorstep visits, delivering hampers and activity packs and making regular phone calls to young people to ensure their wellbeing and safety. They also have an email address which is monitored 7 days a week, where young people can reach out for support when they need it.

Now please, if you could take just a few minutes just to read how the Hive has helped me personally, I would be very grateful...

I have been involved with the Hive for six years now, and I can honestly tell you it has been the best six years of my life. Before the Hive, I was a young person suffering from isolation, lack of confidence and severely struggling with my mental health after the loss of my dad. I was self-harming every single day, blaming myself for my dad's death, and I was very low, didn't see a future for myself, and the worst thing was I couldn't and wouldn't open up because I was scared to admit that I needed help, or that anyone cared enough to help me.

The Hive proved all my beliefs wrong, from day one. They supported me with every single aspect of my life; from education, mental health, caring for my mum, and building my skills up to allow me to achieve what I wanted to in the future. They helped me to keep my head above water when I felt like I was drowning inside. They provided me with everything I needed to fight what felt like impossible battles and provided me with a place that I called home.

Even before the Hive was open, it helped me so much. Being part of their development group allowed me to build my confidence by interviewing staff, representing them in consultations and talking to the founder patrons to ask them to support the Hive where possible. I did all this whilst making friends that I am still in contact with now, the longest I have had a friendship for.

If I look back a couple years ago, I was not expecting myself to make it through the year, I honestly felt that low. I didn't see a future, I was enrolled on a degree that I hated, I was so unhappy, but now, thanks to the Hive I was able to complete a Prince's Trust course, a college course and I am now doing a degree that I love, and I have learnt that it really is ok

not to be ok. I owe my everything to the Hive because, without them I wouldn't have experienced things I have experienced today, and I wouldn't be able to have reached the milestones I have today.

Without the Hive, I can honestly tell you I wouldn't be alive today, they saved my life when I didn't think it was possible to be saved. Through every up and down in my life, they were there for me, like they are for every young person, 365 days of the year, they are there to provide the support that the young people of Wirral not only need but deserve. They built my resilience and provided me with opportunities that I am forever grateful for, just like I know they have for many other people on the Wirral.

If I had allowed myself to continue to be as low as I was a few years ago, I honestly don't think I would have made it to see my nephew grow up, to meet my niece, and to finally say I am happy in life. I am not saying my issues have gone away, I still struggle with self-harm, I still struggle with my mental health, but the important thing is, I have more bad days than good days, and on the days when things are hard, the Hive taught me ways to cope with it, they taught me to reach out if I needed it.

Before you cut the funding, you provide to the Hive, please take into consideration everything I have said. Think about the detrimental effects the budget cut will have on young people of the Wirral. Every young person deserves somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to every day of the year, and a safe place where they can call home, just like I did. The Hive change lives on a daily basis, and not only did they change mine, but they also saved it.

I would like to express my great concern about the reduction in the budget for Youth Services, or more specifically, the Hive. Halving their budget will have a huge impact on the work undertaken there; as a consequence, this could have a detrimental effect on the lives of many young, and often extremely vulnerable, people in the borough at a time when this couldn't be in greater demand. This vital youth work, although organized on a different basis, has continued throughout the COVID pandemic; the expertise of the management at the Hive is also a reference point for other care professionals.

The Hive is a truly inspirational place that has a profound effect on the lives of thousands of young people. If the current level of financial support for the Hive can't be maintained, presumably these young people would need assistance from other services; this would then place a greater financial burden on them.

Please give great consideration to this proposed significant reduction in the budget of the Hive. The lives of many young people could be in jeopardy!

The Hive does so much for me and other young people around Wirral. I have friends from Meols, Upton and other areas that come to The Hive, we all travel there because it is the only

place, we feel safe and they understand and support our needs. Why would you make cuts to The Hive when it is supporting so many young people across the whole of Wirral, and wider community's?

There are young people who rely on The Hive heavily, young people with disabilities or young people needing support with their mental health and wellbeing, how are you prepared to help them if you're thinking of cutting the services that The Hive provides to these young people.

I am very concerned about the proposed cut of £200,000 to the Grant to The Hive Youth Zone project. This is a very successful project supplying a great need to one of the poorest parts of the whole country.

The Hive helps keep youths off the street and thus stops them getting bored and then into trouble by taking drugs or committing other crimes.

I understand that since the Hive opened crime in Birkenhead has substantially reduced. This one fact proves that it is a project worth supporting.

It would be a tragedy if the cuts The Hive will have to make result in increased drug and other offences.

I suspect that every £1 of grant to The Hive saves several pounds in other areas that have to clear up the results of anti-social behaviour.

As well as financial, the costs of anti-social behaviour affect the victims but also ruins the lives of offenders who may never be able to lead productive lives once they have police records.

Each extra criminal that these cuts could cause will cost the community thousands of pounds annually for 40 or 50 years. Please find the Budget elsewhere.

My daughter is disabled, and she loves going to the Hive. She is 21 years old so cannot access young peoples' youth clubs, but she cannot relate to adult provision because she is only small and is mentally not an adult. If council cuts effect the Hive, where can she go?

Are you going to provide any money for the services that will be overused should you cut the Hive because without the Hive's early intervention, mental health services will be stretched, social workers (who aren't doing adequate visits because of covid, and the hive have made first contact with vulnerable young people when teachers and services hadn't seen them for months)?

Please don't cut the budget for the hive it's a good and safe place for young people to attend and for young people to talk and get help with problems.

The hive has helped so many young people grow in persona and just be them self around new people but most of all they do everything they can to be there for young people do you think if the hive get funding taken away from them, you're going to see young people struggle in so many ways.

You have mentioned that Birkenhead is one of the most deprived areas, and you have also mentioned the mental health crisis. Why are you proposing to cut the Hive, when the Hive not only supports young people in Wirral with their mental health but also provides food parcels, support for families and have stepped up massively during covid-19, when everyone else stepped down?

I am emailing in regard to the proposed cut to youth services including the Hive youth zone. As a member myself of nearly 4 years that building has given me a vast amount of life changing opportunities and skills that I would never of dreamed I would get for example I went away twice on a sailing experience I have been on several residential various trips and visits and travelled around the country but not only that growing up on the Wirral is difficult there is limited things to do and get involved In for such an affordable price to the hive completely changed that for me at one point I was attending this facility every single night where I could get a hot meal do many activities sports music art etc but not only that just have someone there to talk to about your day and that back up for if you ever where to need it the hive has become a massive part of my life and I would do anything in my power to persuade you against any cut to this service as I know the detrimental effect this will have on so many young people's lives as well as the staff that work there. Therefore, under no circumstances do I agree any funding should be cut at all if anything should be increased do the extremely challenging times they are facing.

The Hive isn't a youth club!!!! It is an essential service for young people on the Wirral! It is a support, a lifeline, a home for so many young people on the Wirral! It is so much more than a

youth club, a youth club is a table tennis and tv etc, the hive provides so much more than this.

As a Trustee at The Hive I would like responses to the following questions please.

Please can you explain why the published budget document did not clarify that all of the proposed £200k reduction in spending on youth services would be applied to The Hive, leaving it to The Hive to communicate this to Wirral residents?

Youth work is now officially recognised as essential and as confirmed by Diana Barran, Minister for Civil Society, qualified youth workers are now recognised as key workers. Does the council believe cuts to key workers are appropriate at this time and if not, will it reconsider the proposed cut to The Hive?

Increases in mental health worries amongst young people have been widely reported over recent months. Youth work support to prevent such issues unnecessarily escalating is needed now more than ever. The Hive have responded to this by ensuring most of the youth work team are now fully trained in mental health first aid. If such support is reduced how does the council propose responding to the issue?

The Hive has seen an increase of 100% in referrals and demand for its mentoring programme since last summer with three quarters of the increase coming from Wirral council teams. Does the council accept that if such programmes are cut then young people's problems can escalate and ultimately cost more to address

The council contributes less than 30% of the current revenue costs of The Hive equating to just 36p per day per member, or significantly less if the digital programme is factored in. The Hive generates the remainder of funds via charitable donations therefore giving excellent value for money to Wirral. If a reduction in council funding caused other supporters to lose confidence how does the council propose meeting the subsequent unmet needs now being met by The Hive?

The Institute of Fiscal Studies have reported that young people, along with women are the two groups most significantly impacted by Covid. According to your budget document £54m has been administered in business grants due to Covid. At the very least should support for young people be maintained through critical services like The Hive.

I write as a Patron of The Hive facility in Birkenhead to share my dismay at the proposed budget cuts for this facility.

In the time of a national pandemic which has seen young people's mental health issues soar and ever rising youth unemployment – I find it difficult to understand how these proposed cuts make moral or economic sense. Every negative impact made on the ability to support our young people now will have lasting and serious consequences for our society, evidenced by the lasting impact of the youth service cuts in the 80's and 90's.

It is my understanding that the level of proposed cuts will have as a minimum the following effects.

- Closing on Sundays, losing the dedicated Hiveability session for disabled members and a weekly session for junior members.
- Shorter opening hours throughout the week (closing one hour early each day).
- A reduction in our outreach work, positively engaging fewer young people; and
- 50% reduction in mentoring (1-2-1 support)

Each of these reductions will negatively impact on Wirral's young people's mental health, social cohesion and ambition at a time when we should be investing more in ensuring our youth are supported to strive for their (and our) better future.

I sincerely hope you reconsider these proposed cuts and sustain the level of support given to The Hive, maintaining the social contract you have with your young residents.

I am writing to you as a Wirral resident and council taxpayer and also as a volunteer at The Hive Youthzone in Birkenhead.

I have read the consultation document for the Wirral Council's budget for 2021 - 22. I appreciate that it is really difficult in the circumstances for the council to find savings of £16.5m when there is such a demand for public services. There are absolute no easy choices, but I would ask that there be protection of the current expenditure on 'Children, Young People & Education'. Of all the sectors in society who have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, perhaps we really should give priority to children and young people in order to ensure that their futures are secured with our support.

In particular, I would register a strong disagreement to the proposal for a reduction in Youth Provision of £200,000. I understand that this proposal relates solely to the Council's support to The Hive. I do think that this would be highly unfortunate and cause much harm in view of the activities and support which The Hive provides to thousands of young people, many of whom are from a disadvantaged background and who really do benefit from its services. Since opening in April 2017, The Hive has provided tens of thousands of hours of engaging and positive fun activities as well as more targeted activities such as mentoring, holiday clubs, young leaders' programmes and employability support in addition to a comprehensive programme for disabled young people. Since the start of the pandemic, when other services

have closed or been reduced, The Hive staff developed a digital programme enabling young people to remain in contact with their youth workers, set up a dedicated contact email monitored 7 days a week and maintained telephone contact with many of the youngsters. The Hive reopened once it had adapted its building and its programme in line with regulations.

All of this work is so valuable to the children and young people who benefit considerably. If the proposed cut is approved, it will result undoubtedly in a significant amount of the work carried out by The Hive being put at serious risk.

I would urge the council not to proceed with the proposed cut of £200,000 in the budget for Youth Provision.

As a former Patron and current Trustee at the Hive, I wanted to voice my deep concern and sadness in relation to the proposed Council funding cuts to the Hive. For many years I have been a huge advocate for making our community safer and attractive to young people and local businesses.

As a result of the Hive's supportive interventions with young people there has been a huge reduction in anti-social criminal activity which in itself speaks volumes about savings to the State and Safeguarding Wirral as a Community.

In light of the recent financial success of the new Towns Fund, I would request that Members re-consider the proposed cuts in the context of the transformational impact of the Hive on our community and local economy.

I am writing to express my concern re the above.

I have had close links to the Hive over the last 18 months and have seen first-hand the real difference its services make to so many families over the 3 years it has been operating. It has real potential for effecting fundamental change in so many ways, but it takes time to embed change and reap the rewards. I have been so impressed in the way that the Hive has adapted to Covid and has continued to support families in a real, tangible way.

The Hive has significant business engagement sitting alongside local government funding which is a really strong partnership to be built upon. Any cut in funding is extremely unlikely to be picked up by business at the moment and will, no doubt, lead to a direct reduction in service provision. Given that our young people are already facing an interrupted education with real financial and social pressures from the pandemic, it is essential that they have somewhere to turn, and the Hive provides just such support.

With the Hive supporting the whole of the Wirral and complementing so much of the care from our Council, how can you consider cuts to this vital service at a time when it's needed the most. Are you aware that 84% of active members live outside Birkenhead/Tranmere, with members from all electoral wards?

I had worked for Wirral for over 18 years, in Early Years, before becoming a Foster Carer for Wirral Council for the past 3 years.

I am also fortunate enough to be a member of Team Hive, which I found to be one of my favourite jobs ever. Working with the experienced and highly qualified team at the Hive, has taught me many new skills, and further developed my understanding of the true needs of all Wirral young people.

My young CLA, who has been in placement with me for 3 years attends the Hive.

She joined as soon as she came to me and has progressed through to the senior section.

Without the constant support, opportunities provided, friendships made, and the support of every member of staff, she would have found many things very difficult with her situation.

She has attended the Hiveability sessions, as she has ADHD and Dyslexia regular Junior sessions, Holiday club, outings etc.

This has greatly helped her socially, with her education, and life skills.

She has gained massively in confidence and her ability to deal with others.

She has also received support through the Hive Mentoring Scheme, with one-to-one support around her specific needs and interests.

We have attended the Hive Christmas Lunches with other families and received support packages throughout all of the Lock downs. From delivery of resources, to regular Zoom sessions, phone calls from team members, emails and texts to check we are ok.

Now none of this may seem important to you, but as a single, working carer, their support has been invaluable both to myself and YP. It is immeasurable to quantify the impact being part of the Hive family.

This has also saved Wirral Council both manpower and financially in the care of YP, as we have accessed lots of FREE support and advice through the Hive.

This has not had to incur further interventions or cost to the Children's department.

To cut even a small amount of funding to the Hive, would be detrimental to ALL Wirral Young people, as it serves over 80% of the Wirral, not just Birkenhead.

Having experienced other Youth Services and centres, I can honestly say the Hive is the best service, with well trained, approachable, knowledgeable staff, who always go the extra miles for the YP and their families.

It is more than a “Youth Club” it is a centre for so many experiences for YP, with access to career choices, training, talents etc.

In short as my YP says “it’s the best place ever, and I always feel safe and happy there, and you know I love it and I’m safe too. I’ve made friends, learnt to cook, sew, do sports and my favourite is climbing. I know if I need anything, I just ask the staff, they always know what to do, even when my bike broke. I love the Hive!”

As I say I also work there as a Youth Worker, and I have met so many fantastic YP, and their families and played a small part in seeing real change for them, and that they always have only good and positive things to say about the Hive. And that like me they appreciate all the effort, hard work and commitment they all show to OUR Young People. Even in the midst of a worldwide Pandemic.

i am a teenager from Birkenhead and I would like to help change your decision on cutting the funds for the Hive, they saved my life!

The Hive has done a lot for me and many other young people and we need this to be reconsidered!!

I have been a member of the Hive since 2017 and up until lockdown I was there more than I was at home! The Hive has changed my life and hundreds of other young people, since opening in 2017 they have had over 1/4 of a million visits!!

Before the Hive opened, I was an isolated teenager who had just moved to a new house and school due to bullying, when first starting the Hive I had no confidence however 3 years on and I’ve achieved the most amazing things because of the support and opportunities given from the Hive and the incredible youth workers there!

I can only start by telling you some of the amazing opportunities I’ve had, one being a life changing experience when I performed in the Royal Albert Hall alongside the Script, John Newman and I was privileged to even meet Prince Harry. I’m part of a vocal group we’re we have performed in countless venues including both cathedrals in Liverpool, I also run the junior pop choir, a younger version of the vocal group I am in.

As a young leader I volunteer my time each week to give back to the younger generation as the Hive staff have done for me and hundreds of other young people!

Because of the opportunities and help I’ve had from the Hive, in July last year they helped me get an apprenticeship in a SEN primary school, this has set me up for the rest of my life and I wouldn’t of been able to do it without them!

The Hive is an amazing facility and the young people of the Wirral need it now more than

ever, due to lockdown the mental health statistics in young people have rose greatly, the Hive is an amazing support and this money being cut will not only affect us as young people later in life, however they won't be able to give the innumerable amount of support and opportunities to the younger generations as there won't be enough fund to carry on doing so!

During lockdown and over Christmas the Hive supported hundreds of families with food hampers, isolation activity packs, toy hampers and daily phone calls to the young people to make sure they were ok, they adapted there offer in less than a week to ensure that all young people still had a virtual youth zone and a way of accessing youth work even if it was virtual.

I am asking you to please reconsider your proposal! It is so important to thousands of young people! If you take 200,000 pounds away from them, you will have to put it back in for mental health support for young people and other opportunities the Hive provide!

I am trying to voice the thoughts and feelings for many young people as this will affect thousands of children in the future years, some who are too young to have social media now and can't voice their opinions now.

A €200,000 cut to their provision will jeopardise the Hive being there for many young people!

As a school we a grateful for the added value The Hive offer to us in regard to wrap around support with -

Delivery of isolation packs to our students

Food hampers for students and their families who are struggling.

Programmes such as Inspiring Futures which has supported groups of young people who have disengaged with school. The programme has enabled them to try new activities and encouraged them to reengage with school.

If the Hive could no longer offer these services due to cuts, what would the council do to support with enhancing Young peoples' attainment & engagement.

Cutting funding to The Hive can only have a very negative impact to the wellbeing on our already struggling and neglected young people in this deprived and under privileged area. It also will impact people's jobs and surely that will just transfer the financial burden to another department... with the unemployment this will cause.

As a founder patron of The Hive and continued supporter I have seen for myself the great work that is carried out. Throughout this past year and particularly during the lockdowns the staff and volunteer's day in day out have continued to engage with young people throughout Wirral. Many of those they support are vulnerable and if it was not for the The Hive they

would not have received as much if not any support to check on their wellbeing, including the delivery of food parcels.

Regardless of the current situation The Hive does amazing work in engaging with youngsters, giving them new opportunities and helping them prepare for their futures. Wirral Council has undoubtedly contributed towards the success of The Hive through their funding from the start. However, the proposed cut of 50% of your present funding to The Hive would have a devastating effect. It was well documented that the long-term effects of the pandemic will impact on the young generation most, therefore moving forward it's essential The Hive is there in its full capacity for these people when they will need it most.

The Hive is not just a Youth Club, as it provides so many services for young people and their families!

I am writing in my capacity as Chair of The Hive asking for the Council's reconsideration of the proposed £200,000 funding cut.

Before I write anything further, I firstly acknowledge the Council's considerable help and support over the past four years. Your financial pledges have not only secured the viability of our youth work, but it has also continually helped to enhance our offer. Thank you so much, you have been instrumental in our success.

Your association with us has been a "win win". The current financial dynamics read well, with your contributing less than 30% of our current revenue costs, equating to 36p per day per member or significantly less if the digital programme is factored in. Research has established that The Hive brings £2.03 of social benefit for every £1 spent on operating costs. Now together with your fellow counsellors, you all have the unenviable task of deciding which services should be reduced.

Just about everyone acknowledges that services to young people should not be reduced or indeed disrupted in any way. Thankfully, youth work is now officially recognised as essential, as confirmed by Baroness Barran, Minister for Civil Society. Qualified youth workers are now recognised as key workers. This so much complements the findings of the Prince's Trust announced earlier this week who said:

*Young people are in danger of giving up on their futures and on themselves, with a quarter saying they feel unable to cope with life. Their long-running annual survey of young people's happiness and confidence returned the worst findings in its 12-year history. More than one in four said they had felt unable to cope with life since the start of the pandemic, increasing to 40% for those not in education, employment, or training. Half of 16- to 25-year-olds said their mental health had worsened since the start of the pandemic.*

*“The pandemic has taken a devastating toll on young people’s mental health and well-being,” said Jonathan Townsend, the Trust’s UK Chief Executive. “Many believe they are missing out on being young, and sadly we know that the impact of the pandemic on their employment prospects and overall well-being could continue far into their futures.”*

*Half of the young people interviewed-said current political and economic events had affected their mental health. More than half said they always or often felt anxious, rising to 64% among those not in work, education, or training.*

With the established reputation of The Hive, we are already working to address such issues, through existing specialist mental health and employability programmes.

The irony surrounding the financial threat is that as an organisation we are needed today more than ever before. In an ideal world, I am sure you and your colleagues would be wanting to enhance our offering at this time when services are much in demand and now increasingly so. Only this week we received and acted on 360 referrals from local schools asking for our assistance with young people who are isolating.

We have around 3000 members of The Hive. If the average household has 2.3 occupiers, that’s around 7000 individuals who have significant impact from our youth work. Over 4,500 have viewed our recent Virtual Awards ceremony online, again demonstrating the level of local interest. Of course, I am aware of social media, newspaper, and local radio support, all of which emphasise the impact of our activities.

Although I have been a supporter of The Hive since its early days, it was only last month I had the honour to succeed John Syvret as Chair, the day before the Council cuts were announced. Since then, I have begun to appreciate more the extraordinary impact this charity has for the benefit of all residing in the Wirral with 84% of our members living outside the Birkenhead/Tranmere region. We have members from all electoral wards.

It was good to see you within the last week’s Q&A Consultation and clearly you have all been in listening mode and thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts. Collectively this is such an important part of the process, helping you all to make more informed decisions. Likewise, as a Board, we have been supporting our staff, young people and their families as we have focused on representing our organisation whilst continuing to serve our communities.

The impact of The Hive is indeed extraordinary and over the past few weeks I have been so encouraged hearing how strongly our young people and their families and indeed our community at large feel about what we do. The consequences of reducing our income would have such a terrible effect over The Wirral, significantly increasing the demands on other areas of Council provided services and associated costs.

Cutting youth support would send out such a negative message and this is so contrary to what central government as well as our local Council need whilst we prioritise our care for our young people. We need to give them hope for their future and to lead by example, simultaneously delivering far reaching benefits to wider society.

We do enjoy a very strong working relationship with you all. We look forward to carrying on with our responsibilities, supporting yourselves to look after those who need our help.

I am contacting you in regards to the budgeting for the hive , I just wanted to let you know that when my son has attended it's been a real help to our family and his mental health , the workers couldn't of done more to try and accommodate his special needs , which helped me work in the summer holidays , and half term times , the Sunday inclusion session was very helpful for children with needs to have some were to go safe when there is very few places also , I will never forget they had us for Christmas Dinner when , we were completely alone not this year just gone but the year before , they made us welcome when no 1 wanted us because of my sons behaviours around special needs , so I feel that it is vital that they get the support they not just for us but other families thank you for taking the time to read this.

Letter to Angela Eagle MP

**Petition:**

[https://www.change.org/p/wirral-borough-council-no-funding-cuts-for-the-hive?utm\\_source=share\\_petition&utm\\_medium=custom\\_url&recruited\\_by\\_id=bd6806b0-5027-11eb-9fa3-b7f98f1de79b](https://www.change.org/p/wirral-borough-council-no-funding-cuts-for-the-hive?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=bd6806b0-5027-11eb-9fa3-b7f98f1de79b)

**Grass Cutting**

I had a similar idea to yours last Sunday, I was mulling over not bothering to mow my own lawn ever again to save electricity or pick-up litter to save my bad back. But then I thought about it for 3 seconds and realised that not cutting the grass or picking up the rubbish would be a stupid idea as it would lead to the garden looking overgrown, scruffy and uninviting. It would also annoy the heck out of my neighbours who would conclude that I was a complete moron. I am sure the Council will be judged by residents, visitors and investors in exactly the same way.

The above proposals will lead to the borough looking even more unkempt than it already does. These proposals are only appealing if you do not care how the Wirral looks. Do you think visitors first impressions would be 'Oh look how lovely the long grass looks' or do you think it more likely to be 'look at the state of the place, the Council doesn't even bother to cut the grass'? My money is on the latter!

If anything, the Council should be going completely the opposite way on this and increasing spending on grounds maintenance to provide a smart, neat environment that is aesthetically pleasing for all to enjoy and be proud of. Frequency should be increased, height of cut should be reduced, and decent edge trimming should be undertaken so that the borough is

more likely to attract tourists and investors as nobody wishes to live or work in an unkempt environment.

Nothing so openly showcases to the public how good or bad a Council is more than the neatness of its open green spaces, grass verges and hedgerows. Maintenance should be one of the Councils top priorities as it was in 2006 when the borough looked neat and tidy just prior to the Open Golf Championship. I wonder what the R&A, and the 000's of visitors will think of the place next time they visit!

As you read this, please ask yourself whether you mow the lawn and pick-up litter in your own garden. If you do, ask yourself why you do it. After you have concluded that you like your garden to be a nice place to spend time in and enjoy, and that keeping it in a pleasant condition is worth the effort and expense, you will then hopefully realise how terrible this proposal is.

### **School Crossing Patrol**

Following on from unison update, I feel disappointed by the cuts to the crossing patrols near schools. My daughter attends Christ church primary in Moreton. Cass the crossing patrol near this site is very much part of the community. I know lots of parents and children regularly chat to her. This role is a huge start to the school day not only the safety aspect but having a positive social interaction with a familiar adult at the start of the day for some children.

It's sad that cuts impact on children, her role helps children learn the importance of safety and stops some parents trying to take short cuts by quickly running across the road. Helping children learn from an early age the benefits of road safety in a relaxed manner.

### **Miscellaneous**

Children, Young People & Education

Youth Provision - £200k cut.

I would have liked a bit more detail on this option as it doesn't really give enough detail on which service provision would be affected. Is it funding for the Hive in Birkenhead? Overall, I wouldn't be in agreement on this. Children & young people have already been badly affected by the pandemic and a cut to services for them will only exacerbate their vulnerability further.

Modernisation & Social Care - £102k cut.

Again, I would have liked more drilled down detail. If it's a cut in provision for vulnerable children etc then I wouldn't be in favour.

Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport

Neighbourhood Review - £350k saving.

If this means that there won't be a reduction in neighbourhood services for residents then yes.

#### Parking Charges - £1m income

This is a difficult one. A catch 22 situation. Damned if you agree and damned if you don't. I can see both arguments - positive effect on climate but negative effect on local retail. People will just drive to retail parks, so local independent shops will lose out, unless they are in walking distance and people have the time and want to walk to them. Online retail has increased since the pandemic started, and I think that this will more or less stay at the new level. I think higher car parking charges will lead to less footfall, shops will close, and this will mean a reduction in business rates for the LA. A vicious circle. You could perhaps raise it in some areas, but not in others and I really don't think there should be parking charges at parks anyway. Some residents don't have their own green space, so access to public green space is important (especially in a pandemic). If you have to charge people to park at parks, then it should be cheap parking at a much lower rate than to park elsewhere.

#### School Crossing Review - £276.3k cut.

I realise this isn't a statutory service but if you want more kids to walk to school then I don't think you should get rid of Lollipop men & women. They provide an element of road safety around primary schools and also a reassuring visible presence for parents & children walking to school. This service is encouraging residents to 'do the right thing' and get off their backsides and out of their cars and walk their kids to school - therefore teaching their children to do the right thing as well. So no, I don't agree with this option.

#### Reduction in Grass Cutting - £250k cut.

This one isn't as simple as saving as you are making out. I agree that more of the land in our borough should support wildlife & pollinators. So yes, more wildflower meadow habitat is to be encouraged. Also, this is possible by leaving panels and only cutting areas which need it for road safety/pedestrian access. However, proper wildflower meadows (even small panels of land) require the correct treatment and maintenance to ensure that they thrive. This doesn't mean just leaving an area of grass and never doing anything to it. It means cutting it very low, scarifying it, sowing a mixture of wildflower seeds and yellow rattle and then letting this establish, no cutting through the season, except for a really good close cut at the end of the flower season, when all the flowers have bloomed and died, and their seeds have dropped onto the ground (late August/early September). Then it needs cutting and all grass removing as any left behind will only add nutrients back into the ground and wildflower meadows need poorer soil to thrive. So yes, treat as wildflower, but staff will still need to tend these areas, so there will still be a labour cost for the 'panels' of wildflowers, so operatives will need to be re-trained from 'hack it & cut it' to the Monty Dons of the PAC service.

#### Ceasing green space maintenance - £100k cut

I'd like to have had more information on this. Which amenity areas? Where? Yes, we do need more allotments or perhaps raised bed resident growing schemes? We also need more trees and wildflowers. But we still need litter removal, and it depends on where these amenity

areas are and whether residents want these things or whether they want clean & tidy grass edges. This needs to be sensitive to the area with engagement with residents and I don't think you'd realise those figures.

Removing the current provision of public toilets - £142k cut

We are supposed to be a Tourism/Leisure peninsula. Tourists, visitors and residents need toilets. Most of the sites listed are in tourist/leisure areas, like New Brighton and West Kirby, so these should be kept.

Changing Household Waste Collection to every 3 weeks - £180k cut

My opinion quite frankly is, No. This option has suggested that it 'could lead' to having additional packaging (plastic pots, tubs, trays, tetra paks & aerosols) recycled, but why aren't we already recycling these things?! Other LA's in the LCR do recycle them so why aren't we? Change the contract. Why did we lock into an extension with Biffa to 2027 if it doesn't include the recycling of these types of packaging? It means sending more still to landfill - so it's bad for the environment and we as an Authority will pay more landfill tax than we could do - double lose lose. A separate food waste collection has already been proposed in previous consultations and has been dismissed by the LA and Councillors as costing too much versus any cost savings. Rotting food, used nappies, used incontinence pads, cat and dog poo needs collecting every 2 weeks at the least. If you do manage to get the plastic tubs, pots, trays, aerosols etc collected for recycling, then you could always reduce the size of the green bin?

Refuse collection & street cleaning from Biffa - £75k saving.

Yes, if this doesn't mean a reduction in service to residents and that Biffa staff are at least on Living Wage.

Environmental Enforcement - £150k income

We're already giving out fines/PCN's for this, but please don't go back to using the tactics of Kingdom Ltd! Officers should be using common sense when deciding on whether to issue fines or not. You are going to need a lot of education with residents/visitors - if people won't wear masks in shops and on public transport and stay at home in a lockdown then you've no chance of appealing to their civic duty. But yes, if people drop an empty crisp packet or bottle or cigarette butt then they should be fined. If it's a little old lady feeding a piece of bread to the birds, then no she shouldn't.

Tourism, Culture & Leisure

Reduction in Culture & Visitor Economy - £620k cut.

Yes. I think the corporate budget for this is far too big, you can't morally justify it when you're proposing cuts in youth provision, community alarm service, closure of the main pool & leisure centre for a deprived area of the borough and adult & social care provision.

Closure of Europa Pools - £640k cut.

No. I thought the plan was to build a new pool/leisure centre next to the Europa Site and after it has been built to close & demolish Europa and build retail/restaurants on that area? I don't think Europa should close until a new pool/leisure centre has been built. The new pool/leisure centre should also be a Municipal one not a private gym company. Birkenhead is currently (& historically) an economically deprived area and residents have profoundly poorer health outcomes than residents on the western side of the borough. Europa Pools is a resource for improving residents health outcomes. Closure before a replacement is built would negatively affect physical & mental health of residents.

Delay re-opening of Woodchurch Leisure Centre - £322k cut.

I would have liked more detail on this option as I don't feel informed enough to have a decisive opinion on it. It doesn't say how long the proposed delay in re-opening is for. Are you thinking about keeping it closed for whole of the 2021/22 financial year? As lockdown and a high tier will certainly go into April? So, you're thinking to keep it closed for the rest of the year? It being closed at the moment has a reason as it's been re-purposed, but if leisure re-opens you will be disadvantaging Woodchurch residents.

Closure of municipal golf courses - £273k cut.

Golf is leisure and exercise and it's outdoors. It's cheaper than private golf courses and it's diversified in recent years with football golf. I do think we still need a municipal golf offer, especially being a tourism and leisure peninsula, which has a notable international golf presence. Maybe we don't need 4 courses though? One could be re-purposed to allotments (income generation & good for climate) and new forest with tree planting (climate)?

Closure of Williamson Museum - £327.5k cut.

History and art are a reflection of an educated and cultured society. I think if you are going to keep it needs to generate some income. I would like it to stay open (I love history and art), but it could be seen as an elitist interest when you're proposing the other cuts that you are. I would rather Europa Pools is kept open as Europa benefits more people, those who are in more need.

Rope walks at Royden Park - £80k income

I like the fact that you've thought of providing something different that we don't currently have to generate income. But why are we letting an external partner do it and only taking rent? This could be done by us and ran by PAC service, but you are going to have to market Royden as an 'Adventure' destination. People have come to value the importance of their green spaces and public parks during the current pandemic and this new interest in the outdoors should be seen as an income opportunity by us as a Council.

Economy, Regeneration & Development

Restructure Birkenhead Market - £240k saving.

I had thought that this was being done anyway as part of the Birkenhead Regen Plan. I would like to see a new market modelled on those in Barcelona and Amsterdam, where food is sold by independent food producers, pop-up restaurants offering an independent food offer

(no chains), a street social/farmers market offer. This is a good opportunity for us to take the new interest people have in locally produced food and run with it.

DDA Building Works budget - £200k saving.

If DDA complaint measures will be implemented as part of the general building code for any municipal development or new build, then yes.

Housing

Community Alarm Service - £500k cut.

No, I don't agree with this.

Adult Social Care & Health

Wirral Evolutions Review - £500k cut.

No. This service has already changed to a CIC and had a further review. Carers aren't paid enough for what they do. They are key workers - the Covid pandemic has made people realise this. Please don't batter them after they have been working through this to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people with needs. These carers are more important than Directors or Councillors.

Policy and Resources

Ward member budgets - £250k saving for 1-year suspension.

Yes, as this is discretionary spend.

One Stop Shop reduction - £98k

Only if service provision for residents isn't negatively affected. Not all residents do online so a physical presence is still needed for this.

Review of Revenues & Benefits - £150k

If there won't be a negative impact on service provision for residents.

Programme Management Office - £670k cut.

Yes

Digital Services/IT reduction - £618k

Not if it affects service. IT services do a good job of keeping the Authority cyber safe and enabling us to wfh. They provide a good helpline service and issues are sorted quickly in my experience & no I don't work in IT!

Centralised Print Service - £157k

Only where generic documents/simple jobs would have been sent to Printing anyway. Some documents are individual (usually in projects that still require paper documents), so for these it would be better (in staff costs i.e., labour time) and timelier to keep an MFD for these projects, as it would be quicker for 1 person to print off 3 pages there and then than to send it to Print and for them to print it and Distribution to then deliver it back to the project.

This may work for some service teams but not all, but it may reduce some of the canda contract cost. Suggest you ask individual Team managers whether they could move to this or not?

Business Support Unit - £237k cut.

We still need front of house for some buildings, definitely public ones.

Local Council Tax Support - £1m underspend

Yes, as you have received alternate Government funding which covers this relief.

Review of Contract & Commissioning support - £350k cut.

I would have liked more details on this, but if you are following LGA guidance then yes.

Apprenticeships first model - £148k saving.

I thought that we were already following this approach, as we recruit apprentices and graduates each year and they seem to transition to normal job roles afterwards?

Review of Council Traded Services - £270k saving.

Yes, if it doesn't affect service provision.

I have lost the will to live after all of that feedback, but I do have some suggestions as follows:

What about thinking big and creating something both income generating and that appeals to both the borough's history and the recent interest people have in the outdoors and exercising outdoors? What about building a new seawater Lido for New Brighton or West Kirby? Cold water swimming is an increasingly popular thing to do as it's thought to improve your immune system and also promote better mental health. Drawbacks to using the sea are jellyfish, people not being aware of tidal currents, lack of changing facilities etc. Why not build a lido, offer changing facilities, a coffee shop (where people can get a hot chocolate to warm back up...and a slice of cake for those calories they've burned off and now they feel virtuous)? I think it's a winner.

Another idea similar to the Lido is to build a Wave Centre? This would encourage wannabe surfers to train at the Centre acquiring a certain level of skill before going out in the sea. It would also perhaps attract visitors from the LCR (those with no coast) and other areas?

With the reduction in footfall in traditional retail centres across the Country and the increase in online retail, the Government should consider introducing a tax for online retailers. Part of this could then be used to support bricks and mortar retail via distribution to Local Authorities. MP's should petition Government and LA's ask the LGA to consider taking this up as an argument as well. Not a chance I know, but it would go some way to offsetting the disparity between online and high street.

Finally, not going to be popular, but do we really need 66 councillors to represent Wirral?

1; In my opinion it is best to keep the bin service as it is. People as it is now dump rubbish in fields and roads in Wirral. It will only get worse if 3 x weekly collection occurs.

2; I would like some improvement to the Wirral cycle lanes. Near Moreton. The lanes stop at Saughall Massie. No route to West Kirby or Hoylake.

The money you did obtain went to Bromborough. The West Kirby/Hoylake area does not even have a footpath? from Saughall Massie??

3 Parking is limited, and I have mentioned that valuable space is taken even from your Pest Control Van which I asked to be parked better in the Grampian Way road as before?

4 The 400 new houses in Moreton are good but that is 800 cars i.e., 2 people per car. There is no shop even to buy a bottle of milk in this area. If they go to the small Tesco they will drive. It may be worth looking at a small Tesco etc in this estate?? Or opposite the estate near the old garage.

(stitch in time saves nine)

5 Rubbish, this is building up in Moreton and it may be worth looking at a local collection. One day in the week per month. No problem in helping.

6 Paving people still park on the pavements and cause problems. Hence that is why I asked for your council van pest control to park in the other area. More room.

7 Trees You did have a budget for this, and I was wondering what the plan was. Nice to start planting in Moreton along the roads Not in Birkenhead again please.

I am one of your constituents and am writing to you with comments about the Wirral Council Budget 2021 consultation. I want to make you aware of my views about some of the items listed in the consultation document, where I have particularly strong views.

Page 9: Parking charges. This is always a very contentious issue. Can I suggest that the Council looks into provision of charging points for electric cars in car parks, in collaboration with one of the companies that provide them? With appropriate arrangements this should provide an income stream for the council as well as being attractive to tourists. It would also benefit Wirral residents who live in flats or (like me) do not have off-road carparking.

Page 9: Reducing grass cutting of verges, roadsides, parks and open spaces. This is an excellent idea. It is so sad to see colourful flowers, even orchids, cut off when they are in full bloom. These areas have such a great natural diversity of grasses and flowers. To increase long-term financial savings, the council should also, in contract details or when new mowing machinery is purchased, specify that the grass cuttings are collected and removed rather than left to rot on the cut area. Not only is this more aesthetically pleasing but over time will reduce the fertility of the area so slowing the growth of grass, reducing need for cutting and increasing diversity of other plants within the grassland. In addition, consultation with

ecologists on the best timing of grass cutting and possible addition of yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) to further slow grass growth would be of long-term benefit.

Page 10: Ceasing green space maintenance, planting trees, creating allotments. These are all excellent ideas and overlap with the reduced grass cutting listed on page 9. The note about ceasing litter removal is surely unlikely but maybe the interval can be reduced. I hope the Council will take appropriate advice on the types and care of trees to be planted. Provision of more allotments would be very welcome since many have been lost on the Wirral over the years (e.g., Mayer Park; adjacent M53 junction 2; Port Sunlight Greendale Road). When I applied for an allotment in 2019, I was told that some sites have people waiting over 5 years. If true, this is surely unacceptable.

Page 10: Closing public conveniences. This is a very bad idea. It is uncivilised and unhygienic. It is not welcoming to visitors. It disadvantages those with children, the elderly (especially men with prostate problems) and others with medical conditions. Provision through restaurants and pubs cannot be relied on since they are not always open, and many do not provide facilities for non-customers. We have seen in 2020 what happens when people visit areas that lack public conveniences.

Page 10: Reducing collection frequency of green rubbish bins and increasing recycling, possibly food waste. This is another contentious issue. I support it along with increased general and targeted publicity about what goes in the recycling bin.

Page 11 – 12: Remove support for culture and visitor economy. You point out that the council is not required to support this area but also that it is a valuable source of income. I think your proposals need more thought. Collaborating with Liverpool and Chester is obviously important, especially to think why someone would visit the Wirral rather than just travel through to visit these better-known places. Closing the Williamson Art Gallery and Museum and the Europa Pool reduce reasons to visit and reduces opportunities for local residents.

Page 20: Review of Benefits and Revenue Service. I think this is a good idea. My experience is from dealing with my late mother's affairs. She had a fall alarm provided through the council services which we each thought was excellent. It gave me confidence to continue working knowing she could get help and was invaluable on her last day. When dealing with her probate a few months later, I was assured that her payments for this service were complete. A full year later I had a letter that she owed £10. The series of letters, detailed payment account and phone calls that followed, since I thought it was a mistake, must have cost the Council over £10 in postage and time. Anything that makes payments more timely, understandable, transparent and informative can only be valuable to save Council money and time.

I've noticed that you are a member of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee as well as conservation area advisory committees, so I hope my comments are of interest to you.

The consultation document indicates that savings of £16.5 million in financial year 2021 – 2022 are needed, and the items listed reach £10, 375, 800. The Council must thus have

ideas for additional sources of savings to reach the required target. I hope that some of these provide larger than anticipated savings to replace some of those in your brochure that are poor value.

Does Wirral need 66 Councillors? Would this not be a huge saving to cut the amount?

Please record my disagreement to getting rid of school crossing patrols and to closure of Woodchurch pool for any time. It needs to open asap.

I support the options to rewild areas and reduce grass maintenance.

Thank you,

I am a local resident and have seen the online budget video and the budget gap you have. I have spoken to a number of your people involved in analysing costs in the council and I discussed grassroots football. We have a growing concern on the Wirral that the grass pitches through lack of investment are now most of the time waterlogged and unusable. The cost to the council for maintaining these pitches will be massive and the income you generate will be small from pitch fees etc. With the current covid pandemic I can see many of these grassroots teams folding and players stopping so less people playing resulting less income as a result too.

I run a local football club with approximately 380 children involved in with some youth and adult teams. We run from a council owned pitch and all lease a school facility ourselves at great cost. Our council owned pitches we can probably use during the season 12 weeks out of the 24-week season which isn't ideal.

The need for Astro pitches and better-quality grass pitches are massive and we understand the limitations on the councils. However, you have many options available to you:

- 1) hand the control of large pitch venues i.e., plymyards to the leagues (Eastham league have over 6000 players) who could then run these pitches, maintain them, invest in them and make them better without being a drain on council resources.
- 2) the clubs of substantial size could and would be able too if given sites with more control be able to do the same as above. In some cases, being able to invest and get sport England and other funding to develop them further giving grassroots players the chance to play more often.

To get funding for leagues or clubs they need substantial lease or own these sites as the funding won't be given if the council can take the land back at any point after the investment has been made.

The need for these pitches is massive and the time is now otherwise in the near future grassroots will die and the game will be lost. I know of local ex footballers who would support and have enquired about venues such as lingham park but wasn't able to get anywhere.

The parents would pay whatever is needed to get the kids playing. I do believe the grassroots community and leagues would be able to improve and take the costs out of the council's hands if given the space and land to do it. I'm sure this would benefit all parties and lead the way in how local sports in ran in our borough and give our community the best facilities we possibly can in the current climate.

Regarding saving money by altering green waste bins to be collected every 3 weeks. I feel that this will add additional costs to the council overall as people will be guaranteed to fly tip their rubbish. This is a problem already in my area of New Ferry where people constantly dump rubbish in entry ways. You only have to look at Christmas collections where there are a few days difference to the amount of rubbish dumped around the area. This surely would cost the council more in arranging for them to be emptied or to solve vermin issues. The individuals who actively do this need to be caught and heavily prosecuted and fined. I, myself have provided the council with the details of a resident that was notorious for fly tipping, even the Biffa men knew who he was and as far as I am aware, he was never issued a fine much to the suffering residents disappointment and at a cost to us, the taxpayers!

I agree with the wildflower grass verges however, you need to ensure that pathways running alongside are disability friendly for people who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters, visually impaired etc.

Adult social care.

I strongly disagree with the proposals that half a million pound needs to be saved when Wirral Evolutions inherited that debt and have never been able to pay the debt back to the council due to the council not raising the contract price of the block booking in line with inflation, increasing staff costs etc. I agree that there is a need for modernisation however, I feel that more than 1 year would be required to complete this modernisation and it also should not be at the expense of the vulnerable adults that attend. I feel that despite an easy read document going out that the people who access Wirral Evolutions service have not been consulted at all and have not had the proposals given to them to agree or disagree on. For example, they agree to modernise the service, however, do they fully understand that they may not be with their friends, at a centre that they have accessed most of their adult lives or by being supported by staff that they have also known for the majority of their lives. What will happen to those individuals whose service will be reviewed and discharged? Those individuals have had so much to contend with this year, being locked down 3 times, not being able to see their

family and friends or access the centres that they feel safe in. What about the extra upset that this is going to cause them? What additional services will those people need if they are severely distressed by the proposed changes to Wirral Evolutions and to whose expense? Most of the people that attend still reside with their parents or siblings who are an ageing population, saving the taxpayer and Wirral council an absolute fortune in care home fees. Accessing the day centres is their only respite and prevents a carer breakdown. What will happen if their child/ siblings only care breaks down and they cannot cope looking after them at home? They will need to go into a residential/ supported living facility therefore increasing the cost to the council. In addition, how come out of all the adult service providers is it only Wirral Evolutions that has been asked to make a saving? Autism Together despite being a charity is one of the largest employers on the Wirral and demands a high fee for Wirral residents who access their service. Are they required to become cheaper to make a saving to Wirral council? How can Wirral council expect Wirral Evolutions to make such a saving, alongside no doubt closure of centres, reduction in staffing but become more “modern”. This is a lose lose situation that has been put out for “consultation” however, I firmly believe that a decision has already been made.

I sincerely hope that you change your mind and waiver the half a million-pound debt from Wirral Evolutions. I also hope that you do consult with the individuals who access the centre and provide evidence of the consultation with those individuals.

Other ways that the council could save money is look at contractors who are commissioned to complete repair jobs that stick plasters on council buildings and do not resolve health and safety issues. How much are these contractors being paid? I appreciate it must go out to tender however, the cheapest tender should not always win. The one who will fix the issue first time round should as this ultimately would save money overall. The Wirral is also full of old run-down council buildings that are not used to capacity. Can some of these buildings/ land not be sold to generate revenue for the local authority?

Realise and publicly accept that you are all living with your hands wedged in the real taxpayers’ pockets....

Unlike Council employees many real taxpayers are now unemployed, so no longer taxpayers. So much less money for you.

Full transparency

Publish all payments to staff and Councillors – so we can see where to make the savings to our money.

Review all the departments – whose ideas were they. are they still of value, close them?

List all depts, staff numbers and salaries of the management and their pension pots.

Effective Scrutiny of the Council’s “Cunning Schemes”, e.g., £5m? wasted so far on the great Hoylake Golf Resort fiasco, £00,000’s preparing the inappropriate THIRD Sea Wall with a

rising cost of £6m of taxpayers' money to construct. Surely £6m could buy the houses at risk for that sum!

Re-align to Private Sector pay and benefits. E.g., Close all DB pensions.

Reduce the number of Councillors.

Stop "rewarding" those who "leave". for whatever reason.

Stop lending out "my" money.

Make service departments profitable. e.g., Enforcement, Planning etc.

Keep the parks funded as they are part of the ONLY economic growth, and anything else related to – *Day Tourism*.

Keep the Green bins at two weeks collection. Think of those with nappies and colostomy bags filling bins for weeks in the summer. Major Biohazard!



<b>Service</b>	<b>Sales, Fee and Charge Item</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>ROOM HIRE</b>		
	<b>Bebington Civic Centre</b>		
	Bebington Suite - After 6pm per hour	34.30	36.01
	Bebington Suite - Up to 6pm per hour	31.93	33.53
	Phoenix Suite (Room J) - After 6pm per hour	20.09	21.09
	Phoenix Suite (Room J) - Up to 6pm per hour	15.35	16.11
	Room A - After 6pm per hour	14.52	15.25
	Room A - Up to 6pm per hour	11.54	12.11
	Room B - After 6pm per hour	14.52	15.25
	Room B - Up to 6pm per hour	11.54	12.11
	Room D - After 6pm per hour	14.52	15.25
	Room D - Up to 6pm per hour	11.54	12.11
	Room E - After 6pm per hour	14.52	15.25
	Room E - Up to 6pm per hour	11.54	12.11
	Room F - After 6pm per hour	15.76	16.55
	Room F - Up to 6pm per hour	13.39	14.06
	Room G - After 6pm per hour	15.76	16.55
	Room G - Up to 6pm per hour	13.39	14.06
	Room H - After 6pm per hour	15.76	16.55
	Room H - Up to 6pm per hour	13.39	14.06
	Civic Suite Up to 6pm per hour	30.90	32.45
	Civic Suite After 6pm per hour	33.27	34.93
	<b>Birkenhead Town Hall</b>		
	Assembly Room	59.74	60.99
	Beverages	0.44	0.45
	Conference Room (Wirral Room)	40.17	41.01
	Council Chamber	59.74	60.99
	Green Room	40.17	41.01
	Mayor's Parlour	40.17	41.01
	Other Refreshment Services / Buffets	quoted on request	quoted on request
	Tea Room	40.17	41.01
	Use of Kitchen (Light Snacks) - per Hire Period	10.82	11.04
	Wedding Ceremony In Council Chamber (Friday & Saturday Only)	36.05	36.81
	<b>Bromborough Civic Centre</b>		
	Additional charge per hour for Saturday from 6pm and all day Sunday.	14.94	15.68
	Large Hall - After 6pm per hour	33.27	34.93
	Large Hall - Up to 6pm per hour	23.59	24.77
	Room C - After 6pm per hour	14.52	15.25
	Room C - Up to 6pm per hour	11.54	12.11
	Small Hall - After 6pm per hour	20.09	21.09
	Small Hall - Up to 6pm per hour	15.35	16.11
	<b>The Grange</b>		

	Lounge - After 6pm per hour	31.42	32.07
	Lounge - Up to 6pm per hour	25.24	25.76
	SDS - After 6pm per hour	13.91	14.20
	SDS - Up to 6pm per hour	11.85	12.09
	<b>Wallasey Town Hall Civic Hall and Meeting Rooms</b>		
	Hire between 18.00-23.59 charge per hour weekdays only	54.59	55.74
	Hire between 9.00-18.00 charge per hour	36.05	36.81
	Use of Kitchen - Light Snacks - Per Hire Period	10.30	10.52
	Use of kitchen - Meal Preparation - Per Hire Period	20.60	21.03
<b>Car Parks</b>	<b>Birkenhead Shoppers Car Parks – Tariff A</b>		
	Europa Pools Car Park Coach Parking All day	5.00	5.00
	Up to 1 hour	1.20	1.20
	Up to 2 hours	1.80	1.80
	Up to 3 hours	2.30	2.30
	Up to 4 hours	3.50	3.50
	Up to 5 hours	4.30	4.30
	All day	4.70	4.70
	Up to half hour	0.70	0.70
	<b>Birkenhead Long Stay Car Parks – Tariff B</b>		
	Up to 1 hour	1.20	1.20
	All day	4.70	4.70
	<b>Birkenhead / Heswall Long Stay Car Parks – Tariff C</b>		
	Up to half hour*	0.70	0.70
	Up to 1 hour	1.20	1.20
	All day	2.20	2.20
	<b>Birkenhead Long Stay Car Parks – Tariff D (Price Street)</b>		
	Up to 1 hour	1.20	1.20
	Up to 2 hours	1.80	1.80
	Up to 3 hours	2.30	2.30
	All day	3.20	3.20
	Coach Parking All day	5.00	5.00
	<b>Shoppers Pilot Tariff</b>		
	Up to 1 hour	0.90	0.90
	Up to 2 hours	1.10	1.10
	Up to 3 hours	1.40	1.40
	Up to 4 hours	2.30	2.30
	Up to 5 hours	3.50	3.50
	All day	4.70	4.70
	<b>Trader Permit Charges</b>		
	Birkenhead	600.00	600.00
	Liscard	600.00	600.00
	Heswall/ West Kirby	600.00	600.00
	<b>Country Parks</b>		
	Up to 1 hour	0.50	0.50
	Up to 2 hours	1.00	1.00
	All Day	2.00	2.00

	Membership of Country Park	50.00	50.00
	<b>Birkenhead On Street Pay and Display</b>		
	Per Half Hour up to a maximum 3 hour stay	0.50	0.50
	Over three hours - Long Stay zones	2.50	2.50
	Over three hours - Short Stay zones	8.00	8.00
	Annual Permit Charges - part year at pro-rata rate	570.00	570.00
<b>Resident Parking</b>	Access protection markings - no charge if a Blue Badge holder is resident at the address	152.88	152.88
	Access protection markings for double driveway - no charge if a Blue Badge holder is resident at the address	305.76	305.76
	Pre April 2006 Residents Permits	No charge	No charge
	Pre April 2006 Visitor Permits	No charge	No charge
	Pre April 2006 Replacement Residents Permits	40.00	40.00
	Pre April 2006 Replacement Visitor Permits	40.00	40.00
	Residents Parking application fee	78.00	78.00
	Post April 2006 Introduction of new scheme	10.00	10.00
	Post April 2006 Parking Schemes Residents Permits per annum charge	10.00	10.00
	Post April 2006 Parking Schemes Visitor Permits per annum charge	10.00	10.00
	Post April 2006 Parking Schemes Replacement Residents Permits per annum	10.00	10.00
	Post April 2006 Parking Schemes Replacement Visitor Permits per annum	10.00	10.00
	Residents Parking Scheme application non-refundable application fee	135.00	135.00
<b>Traffic and Highways</b>	<b>Traffic</b>		
	Accident Information minimum charge for first hour based on actual staff time	150.00	150.00
	Accident Information minimum charge for further hours based on actual staff time	68.00	68.00
	Container Permit OVER 20ft - 1st 28 days	155.00	172.00
	Container Permit Renewal OVER 20ft subsequent. 28 days	78.00	87.00
	Container Permit Renewal up to 20ft subsequent. 28 days	39.00	43.00
	Container Permit up to 20ft - 1st 28 days	78.00	87.00
	Driver assessment	90.00	90.00
	Hourly charge out rate	70.00	70.00
	Provision of existing traffic survey info per survey	163.00	163.00
	Request to authorise diversion/ temporary signing excluding AA & RAC	265.00	265.00
	Short notice cancellation	30.00	-
	Stall on Highway Charity/Public Service	No charge	No charge
	Stall on Highway Commercial Application fee	26.00	30.00
	Stall on Highway Commercial per day or part thereof	213.00	235.00

Temporary directional signs to New Housing Developments	£198.00 + £60.00 per sign	£198.00 + £60.00 per sign
Temporary traffic orders including diversion minimum based on actual staff time	1,235.00	1,235.00
Temporary traffic regulation order for special functions	145.00	145.00
Things on Highway - large Crane per day or weekend	155.00	172.00
Things on Highway - small Crane per day or weekend	78.00	87.00
Things on the Highway - Cherry pickers per day or weekend	78.00	87.00
Traffic signal information per junction	170.00	180.00
UTC related traffic accident - Supervision Cost	10% oncost	10% oncost
<b>Section 50 New Roads and Street Works Act</b>		
Standard works	825.00	825.00
Major works	1,210.00	1,210.00
Minor works and non-s50 apparatus related road openings - EG Vehicle crossings	£385/£135	£385/£135
Authority Approval of Gov. Office Planning Order for householders	-	-
Dedicated Street Seat: Refurbish Existing	136.24	170.00
Dedicated Street Seat: Supply and Fit	671.84	700.00
Permanent Stopping Up/Diversion of Highway	935.00	1,028.00
Requests for Adopted Highway Information	70.00	87.00
S179 Cellar Opening	110.00	120.00
S184 Licence Developments	Variable	Variable
S278 Improvement Works	0.10	0.10
Boards and Shop Displays - fee 1st Year application	No charge	No charge
Boards and Shop Displays - fee Subsequent years	No charge	No charge
Vehicular Dropped Crossings - Charge based upon cost	Variable plus 12% supervision	Variable plus 12% supervision
<b>S.74 New Roads and Street Works Act Overrun Charges</b>		
<b>Charge for occupying the carriageway:</b>		
Traffic Sensitive Street in road categories 2, 3 or 4 - charge per day for the first three days	5,000.00	5,000.00
Traffic Sensitive Street in road categories 2, 3 or 4 - charge per day after the first three days	10,000.00	10,000.00
Traffic Sensitive street in road category 2 - charge per day for the first three days	3,000.00	3,000.00
Traffic Sensitive street in road category 2 - charge per day after the first three days	800.00	800.00
Traffic Sensitive street in road category 3 or 4 - charge per day	750.00	750.00
Other street in road category 2 - charge per day	2,000.00	2,000.00
Other street in road category 3 or 4 - charge per day	250.00	250.00
Other Street not in road category 2, 3 or 4 - charge per day	2,500.00	2,500.00

	Charge for works outside the carriageway:	-	-
	S38 Agreements - %age of estimated construction costs	0.13	0.13
	Street in road category 2 - charge per day	2,000.00	2,000.00
	Street in road category 3 or 4 - charge per day	250.00	250.00
	Street not in road category 2, 3 or 4 - charge per day	2,500.00	2,500.00
<b>Waste and Environment</b>	<b>Litter</b>		
	Fly Posting & Graffiti	80.00	80.00
	Littering	100.00	100.00
	Dog fouling	50.00	50.00
	<b>Trade Waste</b>		
	Failure to comply with formal notice to store and manage trade waste correctly - maximum charge	110.00	110.00
	Failure to produce Waste Carriers Licence in relation to the transport of non-domestic waste	300.00	300.00
	Failure to produce Waste Transfer Note in relation to the disposal of trade waste	300.00	300.00
	<b>Abandoned and Nuisance Vehicles</b>		
	Abandoned Vehicle	200.00	200.00
	Nuisance Vehicles	100.00	100.00
	Fly Tipping previously Domestic Waste	-	-
	Unauthorised deposit of waste	400.00	400.00
	<b>Skip Permits</b>		
	Failure to comply in addition to skip permit	40.00	41.00
	Skip Permit - valid 14 days Full size	40.00	41.00
	Skip Permit - valid 14 days mini-skip	26.75	27.30
	<b>Waste Collection</b>		
	Bulky Waste	29.50	30.10
	Residual Waste Collections - schools. Annual charge per bin per number of weekly collections	534.00	545.20
	<b>Bins and Waste Containers</b>		
	140 litre wheeled bins - green only	40.00	40.80
	140 litre wheeled bins - grey only	Free of Charge	Free of Charge
	140 litre wheeled bins - brown only	40.00	40.80
	240 litre wheeled bins - brown only	40.00	40.80
	240 litre wheeled bins - green only	40.00	40.80
	240 litre wheeled bins - grey only	Free of Charge	Free of Charge
	360 litre wheeled bins - green only	Not currently available	Not currently available
	360 litre wheeled bins - grey only	Not currently available	Not currently available

	Wheelie bin repair - lid, hinges and/or wheels	11.00	11.25
	<b>Garden Waste</b>		
	Collection of garden waste from first 140L bin	43.00	43.00
	Collection of garden waste from first 240L bin	43.00	43.00
	Collection of garden waste for each additional garden waste bin at the same address	25.00	25.00
<b>Cemetaries and Crematoria</b>	<b>Cremation of Remains</b>		
	Direct Cremation	420.00	462.00
	Cremation of Remains (including copy of disposal certificate): Stillborn child or child under 18 years	165.00	182.00
	Person over 18 years (including copy of disposal certificate): 9.00 & 9.30am	560.00	616.00
	Person over 18 years (including copy of disposal certificate): 10.00-2.00pm	800.00	880.00
	Person over 18 years (including copy of disposal certificate): 2.30pm onwards	842.00	926.00
	<b>Additional Charges</b>		
	Webcast of service	-	45.00
	Webcast and Recording Bundle	-	72.00
	Recoding of service (ordered separately)	-	33.00
	Extraction from Cremation Register	46.00	50.00
	Strewing of cremated remains (if cremated elsewhere)	106.00	116.00
	Extended chapel service for Cremation Service 9.00	170.00	187.00
	Extended chapel service for Cremation Service 9.30 onwards	258.00	283.00
	Cremation service proceeding into next chapel time	278.00	305.00
	Late cremation papers	68.00	74.00
	Cremation remains held for 1 month (first month free)	40.00	44.00
	Cremation of coffin larger than 7ft or 29"	plus 33%	plus 33%
	Strewing remains by appointment	38.00	41.00
	Assistance with self-organised cremation	87.00	95.00
	Widening of grave when necessary	247.00	271.00
	Brickwork and stone slabs each interment	-	-
	Duplicate certificate of right of grant of exclusive right of burial	56.00	61.00
	Request for grave search	56.00	61.00
	Late funeral charge	66.00	100.00
	Lengthening grave over 7ft	247.00	271.00
	Transfer Right of burial	30.00	33.00
	Selection of Grave	37.00	40.00
	Grave Top Up (7 months following burial)	20.00	22.00
	Burial Shelf – Section M Landican	40.00	44.00
	Use of Chapel for Burials Service per 30 minute slot	170.00	187.00
	Collection of cremated remains from office by authorised party	40.00	44.00
	Cremation outside normal hours (excluding sat and sun)	Plus 20%	Plus 20%

	<b>Book of Remembrance</b>		
	2 line entry	51.00	56.00
	3/5 line entry	106.00	116.00
	6/8 line entry	148.00	162.00
	Floral emblem badge or crest or shield (additional charge)	107.00	117.00
	Remembrance Card	-	-
	2 line entry	39.00	42.00
	3/5 line entry	46.00	50.00
	6/8 line entry	69.00	76.00
	Floral emblem badge or crest or shield (additional charge)	107.00	117.00
	Booklet of Remembrance	-	-
	2 line entry	70.00	77.00
	3/5 line entry	83.00	91.00
	6/8 line entry	106.00	116.00
	Floral emblem badge or crest or shield (additional charge)	107.00	117.00
	Additional entries for booklet per line	13.00	14.00
	<b>Vase Blocks</b>		
	Provision of vase block - 10 year lease	500.00	550.00
	Provision of vase block - 5 year lease	315.00	346.00
	Provision of vase block - 15 year lease	675.00	742.00
	Provision of vase block - 25 year lease	750.00	825.00
	Renewal of 10 year lease	250.00	275.00
	Renewal of 5 year lease	162.00	178.00
	Renewal of 15 year lease	300.00	330.00
	Renewal of 25 year lease	375.00	412.00
	Replacement plaque	206.00	226.00
	Provision of emblem	89.00	98.00
	Provision of photograph plaque	115.00	126.00
	<b>Memorial Bench</b>		
	Provision of and inclusive of inscription 4' for lifespan of bench - space permitting	1,100.00	1,210.00
	Shared bench - baby garden & adult section - space permitting	725.00	797.00
	Bench Plaque	182.00	200.00
	Bench Maintenance	POA	POA
	<b>Memorial Tree and Plaque</b>		
	Memorial tree plaque for residue of a 10 year lease	135.00	148.00
	Provision of and inclusive of plaque - 10 years	300.00	330.00
	Renewal of Memorial Tree - 10 years	135.00	148.00
	<b>Bird or bat box</b>		
	Bird or bat box and nameplate	85.00	93.00
	Little owl or sparrow box and nameplate	110.00	121.00
	Boutonniere Plaques	-	-
	Provision of plaque and text only - 5 years	242.00	266.00
	Provision of engraved motif or symbol	24.00	26.00
	Provision of hand painted motif	39.00	42.00

Provision of ceramic photo plaque	95.00	104.00
<b>Sanctum 12 Vault</b>		
Replacement plaque	170.00	187.00
Provision of and inclusive of 1st interment and plaque - 80 letters - 25 years	950.00	1,045.00
Additional lettering per letter	2.50	2.75
2nd interment	90.00	99.00
Standard motif	77.00	84.00
Photograph plaque	98.00	107.00
<b>Other charges</b>		
Baby memorial plaque	-	-
Postage of cremated remains	POA	POA
Memorial vase insert	15.00	16.00
Cremation of tissues or organs	100.00	110.00
<b>Cremated remains caskets</b>		
caskets Adult	50.00	55.00
caskets Child	32.00	35.00
caskets Scatter tubes	17.00	18.00
caskets Heart keepsake	62.00	68.00
caskets Casket keepsake	31.00	34.00
caskets Ornate urns	154.00	169.00
<b>Exclusive Right of Burial</b>		
Full Size Grave Adult - 3 No	1,238.00	1,361.00
Full Size Grave Adult - 2 No	1,032.00	1,135.00
Purchase of grave space - Baby	285.00	313.00
Cremated remains plot - Landican, Plymyard, Frankby & Wallasey	742.00	816.00
Purchase of meadow grave	794.00	873.00
Purchase of traditional grave Landican and Frankby Cemeteries	2,980.00	3,278.00
Non-residents of the borough Full size Grave Adult – 3 No	1,857.00	2,042.00
Non-residents of the borough Full size Grave Adult – 2 No	1,548.00	1,702.00
Non-residents of the borough Purchase of grave space - Baby	400.00	440.00
Non-residents of the borough Cremated remains plot	1,112.00	1,223.00
Non-residents of the borough Purchase of meadow grave	1,588.00	1,746.00
Non-residents of the borough Purchase of traditional grave	4,470.00	4,917.00
<b>Internment- Public Grave</b>		
Stillborn or child under 18 years	265.00	291.00
Person over 18 years - Single burial	757.00	832.00
<b>Interment Private/ Woodland Grave</b>		
Stillborn or child under 18 years	265.00	291.00
Person over 18 years - Single burial	757.00	832.00
Person over 18 years - Double burial	815.00	896.00
Person over 18 years - Triple burial	875.00	962.00
Non-residents of the borough - Stillborn or child under 18 years	265.00	291.00

	Grave Non-residents of the borough Person over 18 years - Single burial	1,136.00	1,249.00
	Non-residents of the borough Person over 18 years - Double burial	1,217.00	1,338.00
	Non-residents of the borough Person over 18 years - Triple burial	1,313.00	1,444.00
	<b>Internment of cremated remains</b>		
	Stillborn or child under 18 years	125.00	137.00
	Person over 18 years	245.00	269.00
	Non-residents of the borough Stillborn or child under 18 years	125.00	137.00
	Non-residents of the borough Person over 18 years	362.00	398.00
	<b>Right to Erect a Memorial</b>		
	Headstone or tablet	216.00	237.00
	Rock Niche	206.00	226.00
	Baby garden headstone or tablet	62.00	68.00
	Kerb Stones - Traditional Graves Only in additional to headstone	212.00	233.00
	Kerb stones surrounding 18 inch border	145.00	160.00
	Additional inscription to existing memorial	42.00	46.00
	Right to replace a memorial	110.00	121.00
	Additional vase or book	48.00	52.00
	Memorial Mason Annual Registration	53.00	58.00
	<b>Child Grave Headstone</b>		
	Provision of inscription	218.00	239.00
	Re-lettering of public headstone	POA	POA
	<b>Exhumation</b>		
	Cremated remains exhumation including opening of grave	1,250.00	1,375.00
	Full exhumation including opening of grave	2,750.00	3,025.00
	<b>Woodland- Memorial Mushroom</b>		
	Inscription on Memorial Mushroom - 10 years	255.00	280.00
	Renewal of 10 lease on Memorial Mushroom	150.00	165.00
	<b>Burial of Tissues or Organs</b>		
	Burial of Tissues or Organs	245.00	269.00
	Niche - Opening	106.00	116.00
	Niche lettering	POA	POA
<b>Floral Pavilion</b>	<b>Conference Suite/ Blue Lounge</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	850.00	875.50
	Standard Hire Rate 2	1,400.00	1,442.00
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	708.33	729.58
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	1,166.67	1,201.67
	Music Event	1,400.00	1,442.00
	Private Hire/ Party	315.00	315.00
	Bank Holidays	2,200.00	2,266.00
	<b>Winter Gardens</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	450.00	463.50

	Standard Hire Rate 2	820.00	824.00
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	375.00	386.25
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	666.67	686.67
	Bank Holiday Day Rate	-	1,133.00
	<b>Palace Room</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	400.00	412.00
	Standard Hire Rate 2	750.00	772.50
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	333.33	343.32
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	625.00	643.75
	Bank Holiday Day Rate	-	1,081.50
	<b>Palace and Tower Room Combo</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	NA	N/A
	Standard Hire Rate 2	NA	N/A
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	NA	N/A
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	NA	N/A
	<b>Winter and Tower Room Combo</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	NA	N/A
	Standard Hire Rate 2	NA	N/A
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	NA	N/A
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	NA	N/A
	<b>Tower Room</b>		
	Standard Hire Rate 1	250.00	257.50
	Standard Hire Rate 2	480.00	494.40
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	208.33	214.58
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	400.00	412.00
	Bank Holiday Day Rate	-	803.40
	<b>Tivoli Suite</b>	-	-
	Standard Hire Rate 1	90.00	92.70
	Standard Hire Rate 2	150.00	154.50
	Reduced Hire Rate 1	75.00	77.25
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	125.00	128.75
	Bank Holiday Day Rate	-	463.50
	<b>Conference Bar</b>	-	-
	Standard Hire Rate 1	na	N/A
	Standard Hire Rate 2	na	N/A
	<b>Panoramic Lounge</b>		
	Standard Rate 8 Hours	1,000.00	1,200.00
	<b>Plaza Lounge</b>		
	Community Rate	20.00	21.50
	Theatre Show Rates	-	-
	Reduced Hire Rate 1 Mon - Wed 2020 onwards	1,765.00	1,817.95
	Reduced Hire Rate 1 Thur - Sun 2020 onwards	1,800.00	1,854.00
	Reduced Hire Rate 2	2,350.00	2,420.50
	Reduced Hire Rate 2 Thur - Sun 2020 onwards	2,397.00	2,468.91
	Standard Hire Rate 1	2,100.00	2,163.55
	Standard Hire Rate 1 Thur - Sun 2020 onwards	2,142.00	2,206.26
	Standard Hire Rate 2	2,975.00	3,064.25

	Standard Hire Rate 2 Thur - sun 2020 > or Bank Holiday	3,034.00	3,125.02
	Standard Rehearsal Rate	1,650.00	1,699.50
	Reduced Rehearsal Rate	1,350.00	1,390.50
	Whole Complex	-	-
	Standard Hire Rate	5,922.50	6,222.20
	Standard Hire Rate Thur - Sun	6,040.00	n/a
	Bank Holiday Day Rate	8,884.00	9,150.52
	Additional Hourly Rate	500.00	510.00
	Standard Rehearsal Rate	4,441.00	4,574.23
	Blue Lounge/ Conference Suite	-	-
	Standard Hire Rate 1	850.00	875.50
	Private Hire/ Party	315.00	315.00
	Booking Fee	1.75	1.75
	Box Office Commission - Tickets priced £8.00 and above	1.75	1.75
	<b>Resources</b>		
	Basic Marketing Package	350.00	350.00
	In House Marketing Package	150.00	150.00
	Bechstein	120.00	120.00
	Tuning of Piano	100.00	100.00
	Radio Mic	13.50	14.59
	Intelligent Moving Light Package - Full	na	190.00
	Intelligent Moving Light Package - Half	na	100.00
	Smoke Machine	8.50	8.50
	Pyro Unit	16.66	16.66
	Steel Decking	27.50	30.00
	Star Cloth	66.08	66.66
	Projector and Cradle	50.00	55.00
	LX RE Rig	395.85	395.84
	Orchestra Pit removal	396.00	396.00
	Listing	na	na
	Flip Chart	16.48	16.48
	Additional Technicians	19.50	19.50
	LCD	na	na
	photocopying	na	na
	Robe 700	na	na
	Roland RD	na	na
	Pen and NoteBook	na	na
<b>Leisure</b>	<b>GOLF COURSES</b>		
	<b>9 hole course - Warren</b>		
	Per round Summer Weekday Adult	8.50	8.50
	Per round Summer Weekday Adult 2pm -6pm	7.10	7.10
	Per round Summer Weekday Junior/Senior	5.20	5.20
	Per round Summer Weekday Wirral Passport A	6.50	6.50
	Per round Summer Weekday Wirral Passport A 2pm - 6pm	5.40	5.40
	Per round Summer Weekend Adult	10.90	10.90

Per round Summer Weekend Adult 2pm -6pm	8.60	8.60
Per round Summer Weekend Junior/Senior	6.50	6.50
Per round Summer Weekend Wirral Passport A	8.10	8.10
Per round Summer Weekend Wirral Passport A 2pm -6pm	6.50	6.50
Per round Summer Under 11's	No Charge	No Charge
Per round Winter Weekday Adult	5.70	5.70
Per round Winter Weekday Junior/Senior	3.50	3.50
Per round Winter Weekday Wirral Passport A	4.30	4.30
Per round Winter Weekday Wirral Passport A 2pm -6pm	3.20	3.20
Per round Winter Weekday 2 hours before sunset	n/a	n/a
Per round Winter Weekend Adult	7.20	7.20
Per round Winter Weekend Adult 2pm -6pm	3.80	3.80
Per round Winter Weekend Junior/Senior	4.30	4.30
Per round Winter Weekend Wirral Passport A	5.40	5.40
Per round Winter Weekend Wirral Passport A 2pm -6pm	3.20	3.20
Per round Winter Weekend 2 hours before sunset	n/a	n/a
Per round Winter Under 11's	No Charge	No Charge
<b>Arrowe Park/ Hoylake/ Brackenwood</b>		
Summer Under 11's	No Charge	No Charge
Summer Weekday 2 hours before sunset	7.90	7.90
Summer Weekday Adult	13.50	13.50
Summer Weekday Adult 2pm -6pm	11.30	11.30
Summer Weekday Junior/Senior	6.80	6.80
Summer Weekday Wirral Passport A	10.10	10.10
Summer Weekday Wirral Passport A 2pm -6pm	8.50	8.50
Summer Weekend 2 hours before sunset	9.00	9.00
Summer Weekend Adult	16.90	16.90
Summer Weekend Adult 2pm -6pm	13.50	13.50
Summer Weekend Junior/Senior	8.10	8.10
Summer Weekend Wirral Passport A	13.20	13.20
Summer Weekend Wirral Passport A 2pm -6pm	10.10	10.10
Winter Under 11's	No Charge	No Charge
Winter Weekday 2 hours before sunset	5.60	5.60
Winter Weekday Adult	9.00	9.00
Winter Weekday Junior/Senior	5.40	5.40
Winter Weekday Wirral Passport A	6.80	6.80
Winter Weekend 2 hours before sunset	6.80	6.80
Winter Weekend Adult	11.30	11.30
Winter Weekend Junior/Senior	6.80	6.80
Winter Weekend Wirral Passport A	8.50	8.50
<b>Miniature Golf - 18 Holes Wallasey Beach</b>		
Adult	7.90	7.90
Family Ticket (max 4 players - 2 adults)	20.50	20.50
Junior/Senior	4.70	4.70
Wirral Passport A	6.00	6.00
<b>Pitch n Putt Golf</b>		
Adult	4.00	4.00

Family Ticket - max 4 players - 2 adults	10.30	10.30
Junior/Senior	2.40	2.40
Wirral Passport A	3.00	3.00
Tennis Outdoor	-	-
All weather courts, per court per hour Adult	5.50	5.50
All weather courts, per court per hour Junior/EP	2.80	2.80
<b>LEISURE CENTRES</b>		
Athletic Meets	-	-
Local Meets Oval Weekday	n/a	n/a
Local Meets Oval Weekend	n/a	n/a
Local Meets Oval Bank Holiday	n/a	n/a
Oval Floodlights per meeting	73.00	73.00
Regional and National Meets Oval Weekday	291.90	291.90
Regional and National Meets Oval Weekend	359.20	359.20
Regional and National Meets Oval Bank Holiday	420.90	420.90
Athletic Training/ Football Training/ Jogging etc	-	-
Hourly rate per club	42.10	42.10
Adult session	4.00	4.00
Junior session	2.90	2.90
<b>Badminton</b>		
4 people - 60 minutes Adult	14.15	14.15
4 people - 60 minutes Child/EP	8.50	8.50
4 people - 60 minutes Wirral Passport A	10.65	10.65
<b>Cricket</b>		
Cricket Adult per match	73.00	73.00
Cricket Child/EP per match	n/a	n/a
<b>Equipment Hire</b>		
Hire of Equipment (per item) Adult	2.20	2.20
Hire of Equipment (per item) Child/EP	1.40	1.40
Hire of Equipment (per item) Wirral Passport A	1.60	1.60
Hire of Equipment (per item) Deposit	5.60	5.60
Tennis balls (box of 6) Adult	2.50	2.50
Tennis balls (box of 6) Child/EP	1.60	1.60
Tennis balls (box of 6) Deposit	5.60	5.60
Hire of Cricket Set Adult	16.40	16.40
Hire of Cricket Set Deposit	16.40	16.40
<b>Europa Pools</b>		
Europa Pools Function Room Hire per hour	32.60	32.60
Europa Pools Health Suite/ Steam Room	-	-
Adult	3.80	3.80
Child/EP	2.30	2.30
Wirral Passport A	3.00	3.00
<b>Football</b>		
All Weather Area Half pitch (60 minutes) Adult	n/a	n/a
All Weather Area Half pitch (60 minutes) Junior	n/a	n/a
5-a-side indoor court hire Adult	42.40	42.40
5-a-side indoor court hire Child/EP	25.50	25.50
5-a-side indoor court hire Wirral Passport A	n/a	n/a

Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Third Pitch per hour Adult	40.80	40.80
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Third Pitch per hour Child/EP	24.60	24.60
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Full Pitch per hour Adult	121.90	121.90
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Full Pitch per hour Child/EP	73.80	73.80
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Adult (Adult Peak (Mon - Fri 6pm-9pm))	36.40	36.40
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Junior Peak (Mon - Fri 6pm-9pm)	21.80	21.80
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Adult Off Peak	27.50	27.50
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Junior Off Peak	16.60	16.60
Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Adult	149.20	149.20
Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Child/EP	88.80	88.80
Artificial Turf Pitch (Off Peak) Third Pitch per hour Adult	27.80	27.80
Artificial Turf Pitch (Off Peak) Third Pitch per hour Child/EP	17.20	17.20
Artificial Turf Full Pitch per hour Adult	83.40	83.40
Artificial Turf Full Pitch per hour Child/EP	51.40	51.40
Artificial Turf Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Adult	99.50	99.50
Artificial Turf Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Child/EP	59.90	59.90
Floodlights Full pitch (60 minutes)	25.20	25.20
Floodlights Half pitch (60 minutes)	12.60	12.60
All-Weather Area Full pitch (60 minutes) Adult	n/a	n/a
All-Weather Area Full pitch (60 minutes) Junior	n/a	n/a
<b>Guinea Gap Baths &amp; Recreation Centre</b>		
Sauna Adult	No charge	No charge
Sauna Child/EP	No charge	No charge
Sauna Wirral Passport A	No charge	No charge
Revolutions Adult	6.80	6.80
Child/EP	4.10	4.10
Revolutions Wirral Passport A	5.10	5.10
Exercise classes wet/dry Adult	5.80	5.80
Exercise classes wet/dry Child/EP	3.50	3.50
Exercise classes wet/dry Wirral Passport A	4.30	4.30
Fitness Suite (Per session) Adult	7.50	7.50
Fitness Suite (Per session) Child/EP	4.50	4.50
Fitness Suite (Per session) Wirral Passport A	5.60	5.60
<b>Invigor8</b>		
Families - monthly charge	60.00	60.00
Inclusive - monthly charge	34.00	34.00
Plus - monthly charge	29.00	29.00
Corporate - monthly charge	25.00	25.00
Teen/Junior - monthly charge	15.00	15.00
Families - annual charge	600.00	600.00
Inclusive - annual charge	340.00	340.00
Plus - annual charge	290.00	290.00
Corporate - annual charge	250.00	250.00
Teen/Junior - annual charge	170.00	170.00
Armed Forces	18.75	18.75
Invigor8 Daytime	23.50	23.50

Ivigor8 Saver	18.50	18.50
Invigor8 Local Woodchurch or Wirral Tennis Centre	20.00	20.00
Invigor8 Local Leasowe or Guinea Gap	24.00	24.00
<b>Oval - other charges</b>		
Oval Floodlights Full pitch per hour	25.20	25.20
Oval Floodlights Half pitch per hour	12.60	12.60
Oval Floodlights per match	46.70	46.70
Oval Main Pitch & Floodlights Full pitch per hour	184.20	184.20
Oval Main Pitch & Floodlights Full pitch per match	230.20	230.20
<b>Pool Parties</b>		
Children's Birthday Party- per child	9.40	9.40
Splash parties (whole pool, flumes)	308.70	308.70
Splash parties (whole pool, no flumes)	203.80	203.80
Splash parties (whole pool, no flumes) Excess per hour above 1.5 hours	123.50	123.50
Splash parties (whole pool, flumes) Excess per hour above 1.5 hours	185.20	185.20
<b>Ski Slope- The Oval</b>		
Use of slope per hourAdult	4.70	4.70
Use of slope per hourChild/ EP	2.80	2.80
Equipment hire per hour Adult	4.70	4.70
Equipment hire per hour Child/EP	2.80	2.80
Social Club Hire	-	-
Saturday/ Sunday (per hour VAT exempt)	156.10	156.10
Weekdays (per hour VAT exempt)	143.70	143.70
Spectators	-	-
Spectator Adult	0.90	0.90
Spectator Junior	0.50	0.50
Spectator Wirral Passport A	0.70	0.70
Wirral Passport Means Tested - A	7.50	7.50
<b>Squash</b>		
45 minutes Adult	8.50	8.50
45 minutes Child/EP	5.10	5.10
45 minutes Wirral Passport A	6.40	6.40
<b>Swimming</b>		
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Adult	5.10	5.10
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Junior/EP	3.10	3.10
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Wirral Passport A	3.90	3.90
Europa Pools (peak) Swimming Adult	6.80	6.80
Europa Pools (peak) Swimming Junior/EP	4.10	4.10
Europa Pools (peak) Swimming Wirral Passport A	5.10	5.10
Pools (Excluding Europa) Adult	5.10	5.10
Pools (Excluding Europa) Child/EP	3.10	3.10
Pools (Excluding Europa) Wirral Passport A	3.90	3.90
Aqua Classes Adult	5.80	5.80
Aqua Classes Child/EP	3.50	3.50
Aqua Classes Wirral Passport A	4.40	4.40

Pools (Excluding Europa) Family Swim Ticket	11.30	11.30
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Adult	9.40	9.40
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Child/EP	6.00	6.00
One to One Swimming Child/EP 30 mins	25.00	25.00
One to One Swimming Adult 30 mins	30.00	30.00
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Wirral Passport A	7.00	7.00
Direct Debit Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Adult	n/a	n/a
Direct Debit Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Child/EP	20.15	20.15
Direct Debit Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Wirral Passport A	n/a	n/a
<b>Swimming</b>		
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Weekdays (3 hours)	264.00	264.00
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Excess Per hour	85.10	85.10
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Saturday/Sunday (3 hours)	430.20	430.20
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Saturday/Sunday Excess per hour	146.20	146.20
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Weekdays (3 hours)	216.30	216.30
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Excess Per hour	73.20	73.20
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Saturday/Sunday (3 hours)	308.20	308.20
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Sat/ Sunday Excess per hour	102.60	102.60
<b>Table Tennis</b>		
60 minutes Adult	4.60	4.60
60 minutes Child/EP	2.90	2.90
60 minutes Wirral Passport A	3.50	3.50
Tennis	-	-
Outdoor Court Adult	5.25	5.25
Outdoor Court Child/EP	2.65	2.65
Outdoor Court WPA	3.90	3.90
Indoor Court (Peak) Adult	25.40	25.40
Indoor Court (Peak) Child/EP	15.25	15.25
Indoor Court (Peak) Wirral Passport A	19.00	19.00
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Adult	17.35	17.35
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Child/EP	10.40	10.40
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Wirral Passport A	13.00	13.00
Indoor Court (Tennis Club discount) 2 courts for 2 hours	35.70	35.70
Indoor Court (Tennis Club discount) 1 court for 2 hours	61.10	61.10
Outdoor Court Wirral Passport A	4.00	4.00
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Adult	2.70	2.70
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Child/EP	1.70	1.70
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Wirral Passport A	2.20	2.20
<b>New Activities:</b>		

	Gym Programme - Adult	8.50	8.50
	Gym Programme - Junior	5.60	5.60
	<b>Footgolf 9 hole</b>		
	Footgolf - Adult	5.60	5.60
	Footgolf - Wirral Passport A	4.30	4.30
	Footgolf - Junior	3.40	3.40
	Footgolf - Family	14.70	14.70
	Footgolf 18 hole	-	-
	Footgolf - Adult	9.00	9.00
	Footgolf - Wirral Passport A	6.80	6.80
	Footgolf - Junior	5.40	5.40
	Footgolf - Family	23.40	23.40
	<b>MARINE LAKE, WEST KIRBY</b>		
	Annual Licences (April to March)	-	-
	Rowing boats/ canoes	130.30	130.30
	Sail boats/ boards	183.00	183.00
	Sailing Dinghy	183.00	183.00
	Day Licences	-	-
	Rowing boats/ canoes	11.30	11.30
	Sail boats/boards	13.50	13.50
	Sailing Dinghy	13.50	13.50
	Evening Licence (4 hours from closing)	-	-
	Rowing boats/ canoes	6.80	6.80
	Sail boats/boards	7.90	7.90
	Sailing Dinghy	7.90	7.90
	Seasonal Licences (April- September)	-	-
	Rowing boats/ canoes	106.70	106.70
	Sail boats/ boards	152.70	152.70
	Sailing Dinghy	152.70	152.70
	Seasonal Licences (October to March)	-	-
	Rowing boats/ canoes	84.20	84.20
	Sail boats/ boards	111.20	111.20
	Sailing Dinghy	111.20	111.20
	Vehicle and Launching Permits	-	-
	Day Permit any powered craft	22.50	22.50
	Diving/ fishing/ powerboat club member	73.00	73.00
	Exempt craft/ vehicle only	9.00	9.00
	Non club members any powered craft	140.30	140.30
	PWC/ Jet Ski club members	73.00	73.00
<b>Parks and Countryside</b>	Arrowe park Pavilion up to 4 hours	89.00	98.00
	Arrowe Park Pavilion over 4 hours and up to 8 hours	177.00	195.00
	Other Park Pavilion up to 4 hours	27.00	30.00
	Other Park Pavilion over 4 hours and up to 8 hours	43.00	47.00
	<b>GREEN AND PITCH HIRE</b>		
	BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	925.00	971.00

BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	556.00	584.00
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	1,767.00	1,855.00
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	1,060.00	1,113.00
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	925.00	971.00
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	556.00	584.00
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	1,767.00	1,855.00
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	1,060.00	1,113.00
BOWLING GREENS Casual Booking per match Adult	68.00	71.00
BOWLING GREENS Casual Booking per match EP/Junior Clubs	45.00	47.00
Cricket Green Lane - Full Share Weekend (Vat Exempt)	805.00	886.00
Cricket Thornton Hough - Casual Booking - Adult	103.00	113.00
Cricket Thornton Hough - Casual Booking - Child/EP	64.00	70.00
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class A	674.00	694.00
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class B	543.00	559.00
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class C	426.00	439.00
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class A	90.00	93.00
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class B	76.00	78.00
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class C	69.00	71.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class A	359.00	377.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class B	271.00	285.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class C	211.00	222.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Mini Soccer (per pitch)	129.00	135.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class A	55.00	58.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class B	48.00	50.00
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class C	42.00	44.00
Rugby Pitches (UML Sports Ground) Charge per season, alternate weekly use Charge per season	633.00	665.00
<b>EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>		
Forest or Beach School taster session for up to 15 children 3 hours	246.00	253.00

Forest or Beach Schools for over 15 children for each 2 hour session	202.00	208.00
Birkenhead Park Forest Schools for over 15 children per ten 2 hour sessions	1,622.00	1,671.00
Forest or Beach Schools for up to 15 children for each 2 hour session	192.00	198.00
Birkenhead Park Forest Schools for up to 15 children per ten 2 hour sessions	1,082.00	1,114.00
Forest or Beach taster session 3 hour session for up to 30 children	57.00	59.00
Summer School session for up to 15 children 3 hours	246.00	253.00
Wirral Country Park Charge for ranger activity for schools from outside Wirral (per child)	n/a	n/a
Wirral Country Park Charge for ranger-led activity - per pupil per hour	3.10	3.20
Woodland Activity Day (weekend) - Child 5 to 8 years of age	16.50	17.00
Woodland Activity Day (weekend) - Child 8 to 11 years of age	22.00	23.00
<b>VISITOR CENTRE FEES AND CHARGES</b>	-	-
Wirral Country Park Hire of theatre - morning or afternoon	60.00	66.00
Wirral Country Park Hire of theatre - whole day	106.00	117.00
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Full Day)	136.00	180.00
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Full Day) - with preparation room	171.00	226.00
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Half day)	85.00	113.00
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Half day) - with preparation room	113.00	149.00
Birkenhead Park Commercial use per head	7.20	9.40
Birkenhead Park Hire of Gallery	136.00	180.00
Birkenhead Park Hire of Gallery / Exhibitions and Displays	136.00	180.00
<b>ROYDEN PARK FEES AND CHARGES</b>	-	-
Royden Park Hire of Coach House - Half Day	39.00	41.00
Royden Park Hire of Coach House - Full Day	72.00	76.00
Royden Park Walled Garden	n/a	£15 per hour
<b>OTHER SITE FEES AND CHARGES</b>		
Central Park Walled Garden	n/a	£15 per hour
Eastham Country Park Visitor Centre Room Hire	n/a	41.00
<b>WIRRAL COUNTRY PARK CAMPSITE FEES AND CHARGES</b>		
Wirral Country Park Campsite day hire (schools/community groups) - In Borough	38.00	42.00
Wirral Country Park Campsite day hire (schools/community groups) - Out of Borough	43.00	47.00
Wirral Country Park Campsite day hire (commercial events/weddings)	65.00	72.00

Wirral Country Park Campsite day hire (including use of showers)	108.00	119.00
Wirral Country Park Campsite overnight charge (up to 15 persons)	55.00	61.00
Wirral Country Park Campsite overnight charge per person (charged after number exceeds 15 persons)	3.10	3.40
<b>WIRRAL PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE EVENTS</b>		
Site Bond for Community, Charity and Private Events - small/medium/large/ very large	1,081.00	1,113.00
Site Bond for Community, Charity and Private Events - major	POA	POA
Charity Events and Private Events - small - daily site fee	83.00	85.00
Charity Events and Private Events - medium - daily site fee	168.00	173.00
Charity Events and Private Events - large - daily site fee	446.00	n/a
Charity Events and Private Events - very large -daily site fee	1,114.00	n/a
Charity Events and Private Events - major - daily site fee	POA	na
Non-Commercial Events and Private Events - non refundable deposit for large/ very large / major events	324.00	n/a
Site Bond for Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Park - small/medium/large/very large	1,082.00	2,500.00
Site Bond for Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Park - major	POA	POA
Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Parks - small (capacity 1-499) - daily site fee	334.00	367.00
Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Parks - medium(capacity 500-1 999) - daily site fee	668.00	735.00
Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Parks - large(capacity 2 000-9 999) - daily site fee	1,950.00	2,145.00
Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Parks - very large(capacity 10 000-24 999) - daily site fee	3,899.00	4,289.00
Commercial and Private Events (excluding circuses) in Heritage Parks - major(capacity 25 000+) - daily site fee	POA	POA
Site Bond for Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - small/medium/large/very large	1,082.00	1,190.00
Site Bond for Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - major	POA	POA
Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - small - daily site fee	251.00	276.00
Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - medium - daily site fee	502.00	552.00
Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - large - daily site fee	1,337.00	1,471.00
Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - very large - daily site fee	3,046.00	3,351.00

Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - major - daily site fee	POA	POA
Commercial Events (excluding circuses) in all other parks and beaches - non refundable deposit for large/very large/major events	324.00	356.00
Charity/Community Events Large/Extra Large/Major Fees discount 30% (excluding Site Bond Fees) for all event sizes	-	POA
Circuses - all parks -all sizes- Site Bond	POA	POA
Circuses - all parks -all sizes- daily site fee	562.00	590.00
Circuses - all parks -all sizes- Agreement	60.00	63.00
Circuses - agreed parks - all sizes - non refundable deposit.	324.00	340.00
Fairgrounds (maximum 5 children's rides as part of another event) - Licence fee	60.00	63.00
Weddings - Site Bond	POA	POA
Weddings - minimum charge	557.00	613.00
Weddings - locations with additional services	-	POA
Mini Markets	-	POA
Transit events which pass through a park (e.g. a Marathon) - charity	222.00	244.00
Transit events which pass through a park (e.g. a Marathon) - commercial	557.00	613.00
Filming - crew of 1 to 9 - less than 4 hours	357.00	368.00
Filming - crew of 1 to 9 - 4 hours and over	714.00	735.00
Filming - crew of 10 + less than 4 hours	714.00	735.00
Filming - crew of 10 + 4 hours and over	1,190.00	1,226.00
Additional costs for very large or major events:	-	-
Disturbance of parking for regular users	222.00	244.00
Use of park/ open space as car parking for other venue's event	POA	POA
Additional storage	222.00	244.00
Events where alcohol will be available	-	POA
Ticket sales from Visitors Centre	-	POA
Build Up/Take Down days - without significant disruption to Park	-	-
Build Up/Take Down days - with significant disruption to Park	-	-
Rig and De-Rig Charges - Small Events	n/a	100.00
Rig and De-Rig Charges - Medium Events	n/a	200.00
Rig and De-Rig Charges - Large Events	n/a	350.00
Rig and De-Rig Charges - Very Large Events	n/a	450.00
Rig and De-Rig Charges - Major Events	n/a	600.00
Discounted Rig and De-Rig Charges Charity/Community Event discount rate	-	POA
TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Group Fitness Training Licence	469.00	516.00
TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Professional Dog Training Licence	234.00	257.00

	TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Professional Dog Walking Licence	294.00	147.00
	Dog Shows at all sites - Daily site fee	215.00	237.00
	Skip hire for dog shows at all sites	POA	POA
	<b>PARKS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>		
	Allotments	-	-
	Allotments Per Plot	67.00	74.00
	Allotments Per Plot EP	36.00	40.00
	<b>VALE PARK CELEBRATION GARDEN</b>		
	Celebration Stone small - single	n/a	250.00
	Celebration Stone small - duplicate stone	n/a	200.00
	Celebration Stone large - single	n/a	350.00
	Celebration Stone large - duplicate stone	n/a	300.00
	<b>MOORING CHARGES</b>		
	Annual fee for mooring on Council owned foreshore	27.00	29.00
<b>Wirral Museums</b>	<b>WILLIAMSON ART GALLERY &amp; MUSEUM</b>		
	<b>Other charges</b>		
	Hire of digital projector	No charge	No charge
	Hire of PA system	No charge	no charge
	Hire of Piano (per hour, without tuning)	35.00	35.00
	piano tuning (recommended)	70.00	70.00
	Regular bookings (min 10 per year) available Monday & Tuesday daytime, Thursday evening only	-	-
	3 hour charge	50.00	50.00
	<b>Other bookings</b>		
	Charity/concessionary rate on room hire only (at Curator's discretion)	by negotiation	By negotiation
	Kitchen, including crockery, tables etc	10.00	10.00
	Large gallery (per hour) - daytime	£35 Mo/Tu £40 We-Su	£35 Mo/Tu 40 We-Su
	Small gallery (per hour) - daytime	45.00	45.00
	Thursday (per hour) - after 5pm	25.00	25.00
	Weekdays (per hour) - after 5pm	50.00	50.00
	Weekends (3 hour charge) - after 5pm	210.00	210.00
	Weekends (per additional hour)	60.00	60.00
	<b>Weddings</b>		
	Dependent on room and time chosen	800.00	From £800.00
	<b>Gallery Sales</b>		
	Commission on sales from exhibitions	0.25	0.25
	Commission on sales from gallery shop	0.40	0.40
	<b>Photographic Service</b>		
	Inkjet prints A5	17.00	17.00
	Inkjet prints A4	22.00	22.00
	Inkjet prints A3	27.00	27.00
	Inkjet prints A3+	32.00	32.00

	Digital files A5	54.00	54.00
	Digital files A4	77.00	77.00
	Digital files A3	98.00	98.00
	Digital files A3+	120.00	120.00
	<b>Workshop providers</b>		
	upto 15 people clean space per person	-	2.00
	upto 15 people dirty space per person	-	3.00
	<b>BIRKENHEAD PRIORY</b>		
	Other charges	-	-
	Hire of digital projector	no charge	no charge
	Self-serve refreshments: urn, crockery, tables etc	10.00	10.00
	Hire of PA system	No charge	no charge
	Daytime (9am-5pm)	-	-
	per hour	40.00	40.00
	Evening (5pm-midnight)	-	-
	per hour	50.00	50.00
	Weekend evening (5pm-midnight)	-	-
	per hour	60.00	60.00
	Rear of site (St Mary's + car park)	-	-
	9am - midnight	1,000.00	1,000.00
	Whole site	-	-
	9am - midnight (ticketed)	by negotiation	by negotiation
	<b>Weddings</b>		
	Party 5pm-midnight	800.00	800.00
	own room dressing (per hour)	15.00	15.00
	room dressing (per hour)	30.00	30.00
	Table hire (fairs)	-	-
	per table per day	25.00	25.00
	charity rate at Service discretion	15.00	15.00
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>BOOK RESERVATIONS</b>		
	Regional & British Library (concessionary rate)	£4.50 (£2.85)	£4.50 (£2.85)
	Renewal British Library Reservation (concessionary rate)	£2.85 (£2.30)	£2.85 (£2.30)
	Standard (concessionary rate)	£1.10 (£0.80)	£1.10 (£0.80)
	Computer printing:	-	-
	A3 black and white print (educational purposes rate)	£0.42 (£0.21)	£0.44 (£0.22)
	A3 colour (educational purposes rate)	£1.85 (£0.95)	£1.90 (£0.95)
	A4 black and white print (educational purposes rate)	£0.21 (0.11)	£0.22 (£0.11)
	A4 colour print (educational purposes rate)	£0.95 (£0.50)	£1.00 (£0.50)
	<b>COPYING</b>		

A3 children's homework	0.21	0.22
A3/B4 personal copying	0.42	0.44
A4 children's homework	0.11	0.11
A4 personal photocopying	0.21	0.22
Digital Licence - Own Device	-	-
Annual Licence	45.00	45.00
Day Licence	3.50	3.50
Weekly licence	11.00	11.00
<b>Facsimile:</b>		
Receiving fax charge	0.90	0.95
Sending international – charge for 1st page/charge for additional pages thereafter	2.20	2.25
Sending local – charge for 1st page/charge for additional pages thereafter	1.45	1.50
Sending UK – charge for 1st page/charge for additional pages thereafter	1.65	1.70
<b>FINES</b>		
Replacement of lost library card	1.10	1.10
Adults (maximum fine per book)	0.23 (£9.20)	0.24 (£9.60)
Adults (maximum fine per CD)	0.23 (£9.20)	0.24 (£9.60)
Adults (maximum fine per DVD)	£1.25 (£14.75)	£1.30 (£15.35)
Children (maximum fine per book)	£0.08 (£3.20)	None
OAP (maximum fine per book)	£0.12 (4.80)	£0.13 (£5.20)
OAP (maximum fine per CD)	£0.12 (4.80)	£0.13 (£5.20)
OAP (maximum fine per DVD)	£1.05 (£12.00)	£1.10 (£12.20)
<b>HIRE</b>		
Internet – 1st 30 minutes FREE then charge per 30 minutes thereafter	1.05	1.10
Music CDs	£1.00 (£0.70)	£1.10 (£0.75)
New DVDs	£2.40 (£1.80)	£2.45 (£1.85)
New Spoken word	£1.95 (£1.50)	£2.00 (£1.55)
<b>MUSIC SCORES</b>		
Wirral Societies: Less than 10	2.05	2.10
Wirral Societies: For 10-20	1.75	1.80
Wirral Societies: For 20 or more	1.50	1.55
Non-Wirral Societies: Less than 10	4.30	4.35
Non-Wirral Societies: For 10-20	3.55	3.60
Non-Wirral Societies: For 20 or more	2.85	2.90

	<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
	Commission on Exhibit Items	0.35	0.35
	Commission on Ticket Sales	0.35	0.35
	Handling charge for images	20% of cost	20% of cost
	Hire of library space/rooms (Room A type) – per hour or part of hour (Commercial Organisation)	16.50	16.50
	Hire of library space/rooms (Room A type) – per hour or part of hour (Community Organisation)	11.00	11.00
	Hire of library space/rooms (Room B type) – per hour or part of hour (Commercial Organisation)	21.50	21.50
	Hire of library space/rooms (Room B type) – per hour or part of hour (Community Organisation)	16.50	16.50
	Laminating A3	1.80	1.85
	Laminating A4	1.00	1.05
	Microfilm Reader Print	1.00	1.15
	Microfilm Reader Use	1.00	1.05
	Photographic quality paper	5.30	5.35
	Digital Photograph per image (A4)	1.00	1.00
	Reference Research Fee – per half hour or part (excludes digital licence)	12.00	12.00
	Research Service for commercial companies – per hour or part (excludes digital licence)	45.00	45.00
	<b>SUBSCRIPTIONS: Audio</b>		
	1 Ticket Subscription (concessionary rate)	32.00	32.00
	2 Ticket Subscription (concessionary rate)	54.50	54.50
	3 Ticket Subscription (concessionary rate)	77.00	77.00
<b>Environmental Health</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES</b>		
	Boarding Establishment for Cats Licence 1 - 50 enclosures, £20 extra for each additional 50 enclosures (excl Vet Fees)	364.00	372.00
	Boarding Establishment for Dogs Licence 1 - 50 enclosures, £20 extra for each additional 50 enclosures (excl Vet Fees)	364.00	372.00
	Dog Day Care Licence 1-50 dogs, £20 extra for each additional 50 dogs (excl Vet Fees)	330.00	337.00
	Dog Home Boarding (excl Vet Fees)	338.00	345.00
	Dog Home Boarding Franchise Operators (excl Vet Fees) + £160.00 per host	338.00	345.00
	Breeding of Dogs application, first 3 breeding bitches, £20 for each additional 3 breeding bitches (excl Vet Fees)	344.00	351.00
	Exhibition of Animals (excl Vet Fees)	263.00	269.00
	Selling Animals Licence application (excl Vet Fees)	364.00	372.00
	Hiring of Horses fee (excl Vet Fees)	378.00	386.00
	Dangerous Wild Animals Act – 2 year licence (excl Vet Fees)	439.00	448.00
	Zoo Licence (excl Vet Fees)	760.00	776.00

Export Certificates (Trading Standards & Environmental Health)	72.00	74.00
Factual Statements/Immigration Request	206.00	210.00
Food Hygiene Course (Per Person)	71.00	73.00
Food Hygiene Rating Reassessment	163.00	166.00
Business setting up advice Trading Standards & Environmental Health (first 15 minutes free) £65 Per hour, minimum charge two hours	133.00	136.00
Supply of Certificates and stickers	12.50	13.00
Supply of SFFBB Pack	26.00	27.00
Environmental Screening & water sampling for common bacteria (e.coli, entero etc & colony count ). Upto 5 samples, £65 fee for each additional 5 samples taken at the same time.	133.00	136.00
Safer Food Better Business Coaching Visits £70 Per hour, minimum charge two hours	133.00	140.00
Supplier Audits £70 Per hour, minimum charge two hours	133.00	140.00
Contaminated Land and Accoustic pre-planning advice, £70 Per hour, minimum charge two hours	133.00	140.00
Local Authority Environmental Permits (A2 and B) : Fees for applications, variations and subsistence	-	-
Facilities cleaner (per cleaner per hour)	36.00	37.00
Inspector of Weights & Measures Officer rate	82.00	84.00
Metrology, Allergen and Food Standards Training courses cost per candidate	72.00	75.00
Claibration Services	68.00	71.00
Exhibition of Animals(excl Vet Fees)	-	-
Pet Shop Licence application (excl Vet Fees)	364.00	372.00
Primary Authority Officer rate	68.00	70.00
Hiring of Horses fee (excl Vet Fees)	-	-
Unsound Food (Fee for examination of food and issuing certificate – disposal is at businesses expense)	147.00	150.00
Zoo Licence (excl Vet Fees)	-	-
<b>Ear Piercing/ Acupuncture/ Tattoos/ Electrolysis</b>		
Registration of a person or premises Ear Piercing/ Acupuncture/ Electrolysis (using a hygienic piercing instrument as defined in the by-laws)	128.00	131.00
Registration of a person or premises Tattooing / body piercing / semi-permanent skin colouring (except for use of hygienic piercing as defined in by-laws)	179.00	183.00
Initial registration Ear Piercing/ Acupuncture/ Electrolysis (1 Premise & 1 Person) (using a hygienic piercing instrument as defined in the by-laws)	204.00	208.00
Initial application Tattooing / body piercing / semi-permanent skin colouring (1 person and 1 premise) (except for use of hygienic piercing as defined in by-laws)	306.00	312.00
Administrative changes to existing registration	31.00	32.00
Addition of further activities to existing registration (person or premises)	107.00	109.00

	<b>Pest Control Charges</b>		
	Commercial insect identification service (refundable against treatment or contract)	57.00	58.00
	Domestic Bedbugs (Max of 3 Visits)	284.00	290.00
	Domestic insect identification service	-	-
	Domestic pest control (Rats) two visits	89.00	91.00
	Domestic Pest Control (Mice) two visits	89.00	91.00
	Domestic Pest Control (Wasps/Fleas/Ants)	89.00	91.00
	Domestic pest control Cockroach maximum of four visits	162.00	164.00
	I-Procurement Rate for LA Departments (Rats/Mice/Cockroaches) maximum four visits	144.00	147.00
	I-Procurement Rate for LA Departments (Fleas/Ants/Wasps) maximum two visits	144.00	147.00
	Non-domestic one-off treatments for Fleas/Wasps/Bedbugs/Rats/Mice/Ants/Cockroaches) initial assessment / treatment half hourly rate	67.00	68.00
	Non-domestic one-off treatments for Fleas/Wasps/Bedbugs/Rats/Mice/Ants/Cockroaches) initial assessment / treatment hourly rate	101.00	103.00
	Insect identification (for Bedbugs this fee is deducted from treatment if service booked)	57.00	58.00
	Environmental Information Regs (Commercial) (per 15 Minutes) Photocopies at 50p	39.00	40.00
	Environmental Information Regs (Public) (per 15 Minutes) Photocopies at 50p	7.00	7.50
	Works in Default / Remedial Action	-	-
	Charge per hour for using powers to carry out works eg: to silence an alarm or carry out works required by a statutory notice that has not been complied with.	44.00	45.00
	<b>Private Water Supply Charges</b>	-	-
	Audit monitoring	POA	POA
	Check monitoring	POA	POA
	Investigation (per hour)	POA	POA
	Sample analysis	POA	POA
	Sampling visits	POA	POA
	Undertake risk assessment	POA	POA
	Environmental Housing Act notices	-	-
	Housing Act Notices - enforcement time hourly rate	44.00	45.00
<b>Housing Services</b>	Private Sector Housing		
	Empty Property Grant Assistance (Charged per grant deducted from total cost of grant.)	218.54	223.14
	Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing 1 yr license (Charged per HMO plus £30.00 for each unit above 5)	250.00	250.00
	Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing 3 yr license (Charged per HMO plus £30.00 for each unit above 5)	650.00	650.00

Houses of Multiple Occupation Licensing 3 yr license paper application (Charged per HMO plus £30.00 for each unit above 5)	750.00	750.00
Housing Act Notices (Charged at cost of officer time per hour including on costs)	- 50.00	45.83
Penalty Charge Notice re.the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 - first notice (£500.00 if paid within 14 days)	1,000.00	1,000.00
Penalty Charge Notice re.the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 - any subsequent notice	1,000.00	5,000.00
Work In Default (Charged at cost of officer time per hour including on costs)	41.20	45.83
Advice for HMO Licencing or technical requirements per hour of officer time. First 15 mins free, Min 1.5hrs	44.58	45.83
Heating and Renovation loans up to £10,000	44.58	334.70
Heating and Renovation loans over £10,000 up to £30,000	327.82	669.41
Selective Licensing Scheme 2015 (full fee for a 5 year license ) with early application discount applied	655.64	n/a
Selective Licensing charge for copy of full register	50.00	50.00
Selective Licensing 2015 (full fee for a 5 year license per property)	695.00	n/a
Selective Licensing 2015 Applicants with previous property management/standards contraventions, 1 year license	695.00	n/a
Selective Licensing 2015 Applicants with previous property management/standards contraventions who have had no further contraventions during the 1st year	£250 for remaining term of license	n/a
Selective Licensing 2015 additional charge for yearly direct debits	45.00	n/a
Selective Licensing 2015 for applications made in last 6 months of Selective Licensing designation	347.50	n/a
Selective Licensing 2015 reduced fee for accredited properties within 3 months of ownership and early application discount	395.00	n/a
Selective Licensing Scheme (Scheme 2) 2019 (full fee for a 5 year license ) with early application discount applied	545.00	545.00
Selective Licensing 2019 (full fee for a 5 year license per property)	645.00	645.00
Selective Licensing 2019 reduced fee for accredited properties within 3 months of ownership and early application discount	445.00	445.00
Reduction in Selective Licensing Fee for second and multiple properties	- 50.00	50.00
Selective Licensing additional charge per property for yearly direct debits	50.00	50.00
Selective Licensing 2019 for applications made in last 6 months of Selective Licensing designation	322.50	322.50
Selective Licensing Scheme (Scheme 3) 2020 (full fee for a 5 year license ) with early application discount applied	495.00	495.00

	Selective Licensing 2020 (full fee for a 5 year license per property)	595.00	595.00
	Selective Licensing 2020 reduced fee for accredited properties within 3 months of ownership and early application discount	395.00	395.00
	Selective Licensing 2020 for applications made in last 6 months of Selective Licensing designation	297.50	297.50
	Assistance to complete SL or HMO licence application (first 15 mins free)	40.00	40.00
	Mandatory HMO licensing charge for copy of full register	40.00	40.00
	Disabled Adaptation Service	-	-
	Disabled Facility Grants	15% for all works	15% for all works
	Private Works	15% for all works	15% for all works
<b>Archives</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	-	-
	Commercial Filming Facility Fee – per day	60.00	60.00
	Commercial Reproduction of image fee – large scale	Free copy of publication	Free copy of publication
	Commercial Reproduction of image fee – small scale	Free copy of publication and £60.00 per image	Free copy of publication and £60.00 per image
	Duplicate Original Documents for Sale	-	-
	Acts, Bye-laws, Mayor's invitation cards (small)	0.60	0.60
	Official Handbooks	3.60	3.60
	Acts, Bye-laws, Mayor's invitation cards (large)	1.20	1.20
	<b>Items for Resale</b>		
	A6 Postcards	0.48	0.48
	A5 Postcards	3.60	3.60
	A4 Postcards	5.40	5.40
	A3 Postcards	7.20	7.20
	1598 Map	7.20	7.20
	<b>Photography</b>		
	own camera Day Licence - 1-10 photographs	3.60	3.60
	own camera Day Licence - 11-20 photographs	7.20	7.20
	own camera Day Licence - 21-30 photographs	10.80	10.80
	own camera Day Licence - over 30 photographs	12.00	12.00
	own camera Weekly licence	12.00	12.00
	own camera Annual Licence	48.00	48.00
	Remote Researcher Service and Reporting	-	-
	Per hour (up to a maximum of 5 hours)	24.00	24.00
	Service for commercial companies – per hour or part	48.00	48.00
	<b>Reprographics - in Wirral Archives</b>		
	Photocopying – Black & White A4 copy per sheet	0.60	0.60

	Photocopying – Black & White A3 copy per sheet	0.90	0.90
	Photocopying – Black & White A4 Library book	0.15	0.15
	Photocopying – Black & White A3 Library book	0.25	0.25
	Photocopying – Black & White Searchroom computer print outs per A4 sheet	0.15	0.15
	Photocopying – Black & White Searchroom computer print outs per A3 sheet	0.25	0.25
	Photocopying – Black & White A4 Microfilm reader print out	n.a.	n.a.
		2.40	2.40
	Photocopying – Colour A3 copy per sheet	3.60	3.60
	Photocopying – Colour A4 Library book	1.20	1.20
	Photocopying – Colour A3 Library book	1.80	1.80
	Photocopying – Colour Photographic quality paper	7.00	7.00
	Photocopying – Colour Handling charge for images	20% of cost or £6.00 minimum	20% of cost or £6.00 minimum
	Photocopying – Colour Postage of photocopying	£2.40 minimum	£2.40 minimum
	<b>Large Copies produced by the Hamilton Street plotter or externally by ServicePoint</b>		
	Map or plan - A2 - hard copy	12.00	12.00
	Map or plan - A1 - hard copy	18.00	18.00
	Map or plan - A0 - hard copy	24.00	24.00
	Ships plan - up to 3m - hard copy	36.00	36.00
	Ships plan - up to 6m - hard copy	48.00	48.00
	Ships plan - up to 9m - hard copy	60.00	60.00
	Map or plan - A2 - scan	6.00	6.00
	Map or plan - A1 - scan	9.00	9.00
	Map or plan - A0 - scan	12.00	12.00
	Ships plan - up to 3m - scan	18.00	18.00
	Ships plan - up to 6m - scan	24.00	24.00
	Ships plan - up to 9m - scan	30.00	30.00
<b>Law and Governance</b>	<b>CONVEYANCING - all charges are minimums which may be increased for more complex matters</b>		
	<b>Agricultural Agreement</b>		
	Fixed term Agricultural Agreement	300.00	327.00
	Certificate of Title	-	-
	Completing a Certificate of Title (e.g. Improvement Grants)	75.00	81.75
	<b>Copy Documents</b>		
	Administration costs in providing copy documents	30.00	32.70
	<b>Court of Protection</b>		
	Court of Protection House Disposals (0.15% of consideration or a min of £350.00)	350.00	381.50
	<b>Deed of Covenant</b>		
	Deeds of Covenant	250.00	272.50

	Release of Covenant	350.00	381.50
	<b>Deed of Variation</b>		
	Deed of Variation (Commercial)	350.00	381.50
	Deed of Variation (Shop Units etc)	250.00	272.50
	Deed of Rectification/ariation	350.00	381.50
	<b>Deferred Payments Agreement</b>		
	Deferred Payments Agreement	250.00	272.50
	<b>Development Agreement</b>		
	Development Agreement	1,700.00	1,853.00
	Option Agreement	300.00	327.00
	Overage Agreement	300.00	327.00
	<b>Easement</b>		
	Easement (Commercial)	700.00	763.00
	Easement (Non-commercial)	250.00	72.50
	Wayleave Agreements (except statutory undertakers utility services)	175.00	190.75
	<b>Freedom of Information Requests</b>		
	Requests for Information under Freedom of Information Act 2000	No charge	No charge
	Highway Agreements	-	-
	Section 38 Agreement	1,000.00	1,090.00
	Supplemental Highway Agreements	400.00	436.00
	<b>Lease</b>		
	Agreement Before Lease	350.00	381.50
	Birkenhead Market Lease	350.00	381.50
	Deed of Guarantee	350.00	381.50
	Leasehold Enquiry	75.00	81.75
	Lease for Charitable Organisations (fee may be waived)	250.00	272.50
	Commercial Lease & Tenancy Agreement	350.00	381.50
	Non-Commercial Lease	350.00	381.50
	Rent Deposit Deed	350.00	381.50
	Schedule of Dilapidations	350.00	381.50
	<b>Licence</b>		
	Licence for a seasonal trading site	300.00	327.00
	Licence to Assign and/or change of use	300.00	327.00
	Licence for Charitable organisations (fee may be waived)	100.00	109.00
	Licence to Occupy (Commercial, e.g. site compound licence)	350.00	381.50
	Tenancies at Will / Licence to Occupy	350.00	381.50
	Licence to Permit Alterations (Commercial)	350.00	381.50
	Licence to Sublet	350.00	381.50
	Notice of Assignment	-	-
	Notice of Assignment	75.00	81.75
	Removal of Restriction	-	-
	Removal of Restriction	100.00	109.00
	Rent Review	-	-
	Memorandum of Rent Review	75.00	81.75
	<b>Sales</b>		

	Auction Sales. (Legal fees are 1% of the consideration subject to a minimum charge of £600.00)	600.00	654.00
	Freehold Sales (Excludes Auction Sales) (Commercial)	600.00	654.00
	Freehold Sales (Excludes Auction Sales) (Non-Commercial)	400.00	436.00
	Sales of Freehold Reversions	500.00	545.00
	Surrender of Lease	-	-
	Surrender of Lease (Commercial)	300.00	327.00
	Surrender of Lease (e.g. Shop Units)	200.00	218.00
	Vacation of Mortgage	-	-
	Vacation of Mortgage/removal of Charge	100.00	109.00
	<b>Section 106</b>		
	Section 106 Planning Agreement Non Commercial minimum charge	750.00	817.50
	Section 106 Planning Agreement Commercial minimum charge	1,000.00	1,090.00
	Section 106 Planning Agreement hourly charge for additional solicitors work if more than 12 hours	125.00	136.25
	Section 106 Planning Agreement hourly charge for additional non-solicitors work if more than 12 hours	80.00	87.20
	Section 278	-	-
	Section 278 Highways Agreement Non Commercial minimum charge	750.00	817.50
	Section 278 Highways Agreement Commercial minimum charge	1,000.00	1,090.00
	Section 278 Highways Agreement hourly charge for additional solicitors work if more than 12 hours	125.00	136.25
	Section 278 Highways Agreement hourly charge for additional non-solicitors work if more than 12 hours	80.00	87.20
<b>Elections</b>	<b>Election data</b>		
	Copies of Election Expenses documents - charge per side	20.00	20.00
	<b>Copies of Marked Electoral Registers &amp; Postal Vote Lists – Charge for data version:</b>		
	fixed fee	10.00	10.00
	variable fee per 1,000 electors or part thereof	1.00	1.00
	<b>Copies of Marked Electoral Registers &amp; Postal Vote Lists – Charge for paper version:</b>		
	fixed fee	10.00	10.00
	variable fee per 1,000 electors or part thereof	20.00	20.00
	<b>Electoral Registration</b>		
	Purchase of both Full and Edited versions of the Electoral Register – Charge for data version:	-	-
	fixed fee	10.00	10.00
	variable fee per 1,000 electors or part thereof	1.50	1.50
	<b>Purchase of both Full and Edited versions of the Electoral Register – Charge for paper version:</b>		
	fixed fee	10.00	10.00

	variable fee per 1,000 electors or part thereof	5.00	5.00
	<b>Purchase of list of Overseas Electors – Charge for data version:</b>		
	fixed fee	20.00	20.00
	variable fee per 100 electors or part thereof	1.50	1.50
	<b>Purchase of list of Overseas Electors – Charge for paper version:</b>		
	fixed fee	10.00	10.00
	variable fee per 100 electors or part thereof	5.00	5.00
<b>Planning</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>		
	Other changes of use	462.00	462.00
	<b>All Outline Applications</b>		
	If the site area exceeds 2.5 hectares	11,432.00	11,432.00
	If the site does not exceed 2.5 hectares, the price per 0.1 hectares	462.00	462.00
	fee Plus for each 0.1 hectares in excess of 2.5 hectares subject to a maximum of £125,000	138.00	138.00
	<b>Full Applications and First Submissions of Reserved Matters</b>		
	Alterations/ extensions to 2 or more dwellings	407.00	407.00
	Alterations/ extensions to a single dwelling- includes garages, fences, walls, extensions	206.00	206.00
	<b>Erection of Dwellings</b>		
	An additional charge for each dwelling in excess of 50 dwellings to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	When greater than 50 dwellings created	22,859.00	22,859.00
	Where 50 or less dwellings created (per dwelling)	462.00	462.00
	<b>Erection of buildings (other than dwellings, buildings for agricultural use or plant and machinery)</b>		
	Additional charge for each 75 sq.m in excess of £3750 sq.m up to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	Gross floor space exceeds 40 sq.m up to 75 sq.m	462.00	462.00
	Gross floor space exceeds 75 sq.m up to 3750 sq (charge per 75 sq.m)	462.00	462.00
	Gross floor space up to 40 sq.m	234.00	234.00
	Gross floorspace exceeds 3750 sq.m	22,859.00	22,859.00
	Where no floor space is to be created by the development	234.00	234.00
	<b>Erection of buildings (on agricultural land to be used for agricultural purposes)</b>		
	Gross floorspace exceeds 4215 sq.m	22,859.00	22,859.00
	Gross floorspace exceeds 465 sq.m up to 540 sq.m	462.00	462.00
	Gross floorspace exceeds 540 sq.m up to 4215 sq.m (cost per unit, first 540 sq.m and then each 75 sq.m or part of in excess of 540 sq.m to maximum £16,750)	462.00	462.00
	Gross floorspace up to 465 sq.m	96.00	96.00

	Plus an additional charge per each 75 sq.m over 4215 sq.m up to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	<b>Erection of glasshouse on land used for the purposes of agriculture</b>		
	Gross floorspace exceeds 465 sq.m	2,580.00	2,580.00
	Gross floorspace up to 465 sq.m	96.00	96.00
	Erection/ alterations/ replacement of plant and machinery	-	-
	Plus an extra charge per each 0.1 hectare in excess of 5 hectares, to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	Where the site area does not exceed 5 hectares (charge per 0.1hectares)	462.00	462.00
	Where the site area exceeds 5 hectares	22,859.00	22,859.00
	<b>Prior Approval</b>		
	Agricultural and forestry buildings and operations	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use from Amusement Arcades/Centres and Casinos, (Sui Generis Uses) and any land within its curtilage to Dwellinghouses (Class C3)	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use from Amusement Arcades/Centres and Casinos, (Sui Generis Uses) and any land within its curtilage to Dwellinghouses (Class C3), and Associated Building Operations	206.00	206.00
	Change of Use from Shops (Class A1), Financial and Professional Services (Class A2), Betting Offices, Pay Day Loan Shops and Casinos (Sui Generis Uses) to Assembly and Leisure Uses (Class D2)	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use from Shops (Class A1), Financial and Professional Services (Class A2), Betting Offices, Pay Day Loan Shops and Casinos (Sui Generis Uses) to Restaurants and Cafes (Class A3)	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use from Shops (Class A1), Financial and Professional Services (Class A2), Betting Offices, Pay Day Loan Shops and Casinos (Sui Generis Uses) to Restaurants and Cafes (Class A3), and Associated Building Operations	206.00	206.00
	Change of Use from Storage or Distribution Buildings (Class B8) and any land within its curtilage to Dwellinghouses (C3)	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use of a building from a Retail (Use Class A1 or A2) Use of a Mixed Retail and Residential Use to a use falling within Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) where there are no associated building operations	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use of a building from a Retail (Use Class A1 or A2) Use or a Mixed Retail and Residential Use to a use falling within Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) and associated building operations	206.00	206.00
	Change of Use of a Building from Office (within Use Class B1) Use to a use falling within Use Class C3 (Dwellinghouse)	96.00	96.00
	Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) and associated building operations	206.00	206.00

Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a flexible use within Shops, Financial and Professional Services, Restaurants and Cafes, Business, Storage or Distribution, Hotels, or Assembly or Leisure	96.00	96.00
Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a State Funded School or Registered Nursery	96.00	96.00
Change of Use to State Funded School or Registered Nursery	96.00	96.00
Change of Use of Agricultural Building to a Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) where there are no associated building operations	96.00	96.00
Communications (previously referred to as 'Telecommunications Code System Operators')	462.00	462.00
Development consisting of the Erection or Construction of a Collection Facility within the Curtilage of a Shop	96.00	96.00
Temporary Use of Buildings or Land for the Purpose of Commercial Film-Making and the Associated Temporary Structures, Works, Plant of Machinery required in Connection with that Use	96.00	96.00
Installation, Alteration or Replacement of other Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the Roofs of Non-domestic Buildings, up to a Capacity of 1 Megawatt	96.00	96.00
<b>Application for Works other than Building Works</b>		
Car Parks, service roads or other accesses for existing uses	234.00	234.00
<b>Disposal of refuse, waste materials, deposit of materials remaining after mineral extraction, storage of minerals in the open</b>		
plus an additional charge per 0.1 hectare in excess of 15 hectares to a maximum of £65,000	138.00	138.00
Where the site area does not exceed 15 hectares (charge per 0.1 hectare of the site area)	234.00	234.00
Where the site area exceeds 15 hectares	34,934.00	34,934.00
<b>Other Engineering or operations in association with winning and working minerals</b>		
plus an additional charge for each 0.1 hectare in excess of 15 hectares up to a maximum of £65,000	138.00	138.00
Where the site area does not exceed 15 hectares (charge per 0.1 hectare of the site)	234.00	234.00
Where the site area exceeds 15 hectares	34,934.00	34,934.00
<b>The carrying out of any operations connected with exploratory drilling or natural gas</b>		
plus an additional charge for each 0.1 hectares up to a maximum of £250000	151.00	151.00
Where the site area does not exceed 7.5 hectares (charge per 0.1 hectare)	508.00	508.00
Where the site area exceeds 7.5 hectares	38,070.00	38,070.00
<b>Operations (other than exploratory drilling) for the winning and working of oil or natural gas</b>		

	plus an additional charge for each 0.1 hectares up to a maximum of £65,000	257.00	257.00
	Where the site area is more than 15 hectares	38,520.00	38,520.00
	Where the site area is not more than 15 hectares (charge per 0.1 hectare)	257.00	257.00
	Other Operations (not coming within any of the above categories)	-	-
	Any site area (charge per 0.1 hectare up to a maximum of £1,690	234.00	234.00
	<b>Lawful Development Certificate</b>		
	Existing Use – in Breach of a Planning Condition	Full planning application fee	Full planning application fee
	Existing Use – Lawful not to comply with a particular conditions	234.00	234.00
	Proposed Use	half planning application fee	half planning application fee
	<b>Approval/Variation/Discharge of Condition</b>		
	Variation or removal of a condition following grant of planning permission	234.00	234.00
	<b>Change of use of a single dwelling to 2 or more separate dwellings</b>		
	Change of use to 50 or less dwelling houses (charge per dwelling house)	462.00	462.00
	Change of use to more than 50 dwelling houses	22,859.00	22,859.00
	Plus an additional charge per dwelling for each dwelling in excess of 50 to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	<b>Change of use of a building to use as one or more separate dwellings</b>		
	Change of use to 50 or less dwelling houses (charge per dwelling house)	462.00	462.00
	Change of use to more than 50 dwelling houses	22,589.00	22,589.00
	Plus an additional charge per dwelling for each dwelling in excess of 50 to a maximum of £250,000	138.00	138.00
	<b>Confirmation of compliance with condition attached to planning permission</b>		
	Where the request relates to a householder permission, charge per request	34.00	34.00
	Where the request relates to a non-householder permission, charge per request	116.00	116.00
	<b>Householder planning application fees</b>		
	Alterations/ extensions to single dwelling (inc garages, fences, walls, extensions)	172.00	172.00
	<b>Application for consent to display advertisements</b>		

	Advance signs, directing the public to a business which is not situated on or visible from the site.	132.00	132.00
	Other advertisements	462.00	462.00
	Relating to the business on the premises	132.00	132.00
	<b>Application for a New Planning Permission to replace an Extant Planning Permission</b>		
	Applications in respect of householder developments	57.00	57.00
	Applications in respect of major developments	575.00	575.00
	Applications in respect of other developments	195.00	195.00
	<b>Application for a Non-Material Amendment Following Grant of Planning Permission</b>		
	Applications in respect of householder developments	34.00	34.00
	Applications in respect of other developments	234.00	234.00
	<b>Application for Permission in Principle (valid from 1 June 2018)</b>		
	For each 0.1 hectare (or part thereof)	402.00	402.00
	<b>Provision of Ordnance Survey map extracts (A4)</b>		
	6 Copies (Advert or Householder Application)	25.00	25.00
	6 Copies (Full Planning Application & Building Regs Application)	25.00	25.00
	6 Copies (Full Planning Application or Listed Building Consent)	25.00	25.00
	6 Copies (Householder Planning Application & Building Regs Application)	25.00	25.00
	<b>PLANNING – PRE-APPLICATION ENQUIRIES</b>		
	Householder Developments (a site visit will be carried out if it is considered necessary by the officer required)	110.00	110.00
	Householder Developments (additional meeting)	82.00	82.00
	<b>Permitted Development Enquiries</b>		
	<b>Minor Developments</b>		
	Each additional meeting with written advice if required	420.00	420.00
	1 No. Dwelling (inc. up to 2 meetings & 2 pieces of written advice)	200.00	200.00
	Between 2 & 4 dwellings (inc. up to 2 meetings & 2 pieces of written advice)	300.00	300.00
	Between 5 and 9 No Dwellings (inc. up to 2 meetings & 2 pieces of written advice)	600.00	600.00
	Non-residential development of up to 499 sq ms or less than 0.5 hectares (inc. up to 2 meetings & 2 pieces of written advice)	425.00	425.00
	Non-residential development between 500 sq ms to 999 sq ms (inc. up to 2 meetings & 2 pieces of written advice)	725.00	725.00
	<b>Other Applications</b>		
	Each additional meeting with written advice if required	105.00	105.00
	Changes of Use where no operational development and floor area upto 1,000 sq ms (up to one meeting and one piece of written advice if required)	110.00	110.00
	Advertisements	110.00	110.00

Alterations where no floor space is created	110.00	110.00
Telecommunications	110.00	110.00
Renewable Energy (including wind turbines etc. up to a site area of 1 Ha)	110.00	110.00
Liste Building Consents (where written advice, redesign or a site visit is needed)	110.00	110.00
<b>Small Scale Medium Developments</b>		
Each additional meeting with written advice if required	400.00	400.00
Residential 10 to 19 houses/up to 1.99 Ha (inc. up to 2 meetings and 2 pieces of written advices where required)	960.00	960.00
Residential 20 to 30 houses/up to 1.99 Ha (inc. up to 2 meetings and 2 pieces of written advices where required)	1,440.00	1,440.00
Site Area between 1 to 1.5 Ha	600.00	600.00
Commercial/Non-residential floor space up to 3,500 sq ms or between 1 and 1.5 hectares(inc. up to 2 meetings and 2 pieces of written advices where required)	600.00	600.00
Commercial/Non-residential floor space between 3,500 and 4,999 sq ms or between 1.5 and 1.99 hectares (inc. up to 2 meetings and 2 pieces of written advices where required)	960.00	960.00
<b>Medium Scale Major Developments</b>		
Each additional meeting with written advice if required	575.00	575.00
Residential 31 to 149 Dwellings or Site Area of 2 to 3.99 Ha (inc. up to 4 meetings and 4 pieces of written advices where required)	2,400.00	2,400.00
Commercial/Non-residential development of between 5,000 sq ms and 9,999 sq ms or site area of 2 to 3.99 Ha (inc. up to 4 meetings and 4 pieces of written advices where required)	2,400.00	2,400.00
<b>Large Scale Major Development</b>		
Each additional meeting with written advice if required	575.00	575.00
Residential greater than 150 Dwellings or Site Area over 4 Ha (inc. up to 4 meetings and 4 pieces of written advices where required)	4,146.00	4,146.00
Commercial/Non-residential development of over 10,000 sq ms or site area over 4 Ha (inc. up to 4 meetings and 4 pieces of written advices where required)	4,146.00	4,146.00
Significant Minerals and Waste Development	4,146.00	4,146.00
Environmental Impact Assessment Development	4,146.00	4,146.00
<b>Tree Enquiries</b>		
Works to Trees (with a meeting)	-	-
Works to Trees (without a meeting)	-	-
All further requests for written advice or meetings in addition to those above - charge per hour or part thereof	-	-
<b>Charges for Planning Performance Agreements</b>		
Standard Major Planning Applications of 10 to 99 Dwellings or 1,000 sq ms to 9,999 sq ms floorspace	7,000.00	7,000.00
Large Major Planning Application of 100 to 249 Dwellings or 10,000 sq ms to 24,900 sq ms floorspace	10,000.00	10,000.00

	Very Large Major Planning Application of 250 to 750 Dwellings or 24,900 sq ms to 75,000 sq ms floorspace	19,000.00	19,000.00
	Large Scale Major Planning Application of 750 + Dwellings or 75,000 + sq ms floorspace	Negotiable	Negotiable
	<b>Development Management</b>		
	Copy of Enforcement or Stop Notice	37.00	37.00
	Copy of Tree Preservation Order	37.00	37.00
	Copying of Planning Applications - forms & up to 4 Plans	37.00	37.00
	Each additional plan	4.00	4.00
	Ordinance Survey Maps 6 copies	26.00	26.00
	Photocopying - first page	4.00	4.00
	Planning Decision Notice	37.00	37.00
	Request for specific information charge per hour	62.00	62.00
	Section 106 Agreement or similar	37.00	37.00
	Photocopying - subsequent pages	2.00	2.00
<b>Registrars</b>	<b>Birth Fees</b>		
	Birth Certificate	11.00	11.00
	Priority 2 Hour Issue of Birth Certificate	35.00	35.00
	<b>Citizenship Fees</b>		
	Citizenship (per Delegate) Monies paid direct from Home Office)	80.00	80.00
	<b>Death Fees</b>		
	Death Certificate	11.00	11.00
	Priority 2 Hour Issue of Death Certificate	35.00	35.00
	<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership Fees</b>		
	If ceremony is at 5.00pm or 6.30 pm extra £100.00 is charged	100.00	100.00
	Marriage & Civil Partnership Certificate	11.00	11.00
	Marriage/C.P Ceremony Wallasey Town Hall (Mon - Thu)	150.00	150.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Birkenhead Town Hall (Fri)	198.00	198.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Birkenhead Town Hall (Mon - Thu)	150.00	150.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Birkenhead Town Hall (Sat)	237.00	237.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Outside Venues (Mon - Fri)	459.00	459.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Outside Venues (Sat)	518.00	518.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Outside Venues (Sun & Bank Hol)	597.00	597.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Wallasey Town Hall (Fri)	198.00	198.00
	Marriage/CP Ceremony Wallasey Town Hall (Sat)	237.00	237.00
	Notice of Marriage/Civil Partnership	70.00	70.00
	Priority 2 Hour Issue of Marriage/ CP Certificate	35.00	35.00
	Provisional Booking Fee for Marriages	43.00	43.00
<b>Council Tax and Business Rates</b>	Legal Charges		

	Committal to Prison	305.00	305.00
	Liability Order (inc £3 to Courts)	43.00	43.00
	Summons Costs	81.00	81.00
	Warrant of Arrest	145.00	145.00
	Warrant of Arrest Bail	145.00	145.00
<b>Customer Services</b>	<b>RECOVERY OF HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS</b>		
	<b>Amount of Overpayment to be recovered</b>		
	£1,000.01 - £1,500 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	80.00	80.00
	£1,000.01 - £1,500 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	70.00	70.00
	£1,500.01 - £3,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	95.00	95.00
	£1,500.01 - £3,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	80.00	80.00
	£100,000.01 - £150,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	885.00	885.00
	£100,000.01 - £150,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	n/a	n/a
	£15,000.01 - £50,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	395.00	395.00
	£15,000.01 - £50,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	340.00	340.00
	£150,000.01 - £200,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	1,080.00	1,080.00
	£150,000.01 - £200,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	n/a	n/a
	£200,000.01 - £250,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	1,275.00	1,275.00
	£200,000.01 - £250,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	n/a	n/a
	£250,000.01 - £300,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	1,475.00	1,475.00
	£250,000.01 - £300,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	n/a	n/a
	£3,000.01 - £5,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	120.00	120.00
	£3,000.01 - £5,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	100.00	100.00
	£300.01 - £500 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	50.00	50.00
	£300.01 - £500 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	35.00	35.00
	£5,000.01 - £15,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	245.00	245.00
	£5,000.01 - £15,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	210.00	210.00
	£50,000.01 - £100,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	685.00	685.00
	£50,000.01 - £100,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	595.00	595.00
	£500.01 - £1,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	70.00	70.00
	£500.01 - £1,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	60.00	60.00
	more than £300,000 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	1,670.00	1,670.00
	more than £300,000 (if recovered via money claim/ gateway)	n/a	n/a

	up to £300 (Court Issued Claim standard charge)	35.00	35.00
	up to £300 (if recovered via money claim/govt gateway)	25.00	25.00
<b>Licencing</b>	<b>GAMBLING ACT</b>		
	<b>Existing Casino Premises Licence</b>		
	Annual Fee	2,400.00	2,400.00
	Application for reinstalment	1,080.00	1,080.00
	Application to transfer	1,080.00	1,080.00
	Application to Vary	1,600.00	1,600.00
	<b>Bingo Club Premises Licence</b>		
	Annual Fee	800.00	800.00
	Application for a Provisional Statement	2,800.00	2,800.00
	Application for reinstalment	960.00	960.00
	Application to transfer	960.00	960.00
	Application to Vary	1,400.00	1,400.00
	Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)	960.00	960.00
	New Applicants	2,800.00	2,800.00
	<b>Betting Premises Licence (Excluding Tracks)</b>		
	Annual Fee	480.00	480.00
	Application for a Provisional Statement	2,400.00	2,400.00
	Application for reinstalment	960.00	960.00
	Application to transfer	960.00	960.00
	Application to Vary	1,200.00	1,200.00
	Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)	960.00	960.00
	New Applicants	2,400.00	2,400.00
	<b>Betting Premises Licence (Tracks)</b>		
	Annual Fee	800.00	800.00
	Application for a Provisional Statement	2,000.00	2,000.00
	Application for reinstalment	760.00	760.00
	Application to transfer	760.00	760.00
	Application to Vary	1,000.00	1,000.00
	Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)	760.00	760.00
	New Applicants	2,000.00	2,000.00
	<b>Family Entertainment Centre Premises Licence</b>		
	Annual Fee	600.00	600.00
	Application for a Provisional Statement	1,600.00	1,600.00
	Application for reinstalment	760.00	760.00
	Application to transfer	760.00	760.00
	Application to Vary	800.00	800.00
	Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)	760.00	760.00
	New Applicants	1,600.00	1,600.00
	<b>Adult Gaming Centre Premises Licence</b>		
	Annual Fee	800.00	800.00
	Application for a Provisional Statement	1,600.00	1,600.00
	Application for reinstalment	960.00	960.00
	Application to transfer	960.00	960.00
	Application to Vary	800.00	800.00
	Licence Application (Provisional Statement Holders)	960.00	960.00

New Applicants	1,600.00	1,600.00
<b>General Gambling</b>		
Copy Licence	20.00	20.00
Notification of Change	40.00	40.00
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit	-	-
Annual Fee	50.00	50.00
Change of Name	25.00	25.00
Copy of Permit	15.00	15.00
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	100.00
Grant	150.00	150.00
Transfer	25.00	25.00
Variation	100.00	100.00
<b>Licensing Premises Automatic Notification Process</b>		
Notification	50.00	50.00
<b>Club Gaming Machine Permit</b>		
Annual Fee	50.00	50.00
Copy of Permit	15.00	15.00
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	100.00
Grant	200.00	200.00
Grant (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	100.00
Renewal	200.00	200.00
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	100.00
Variation	100.00	100.00
<b>Club Machine Permit</b>		
Annual Fee	50.00	50.00
Copy of Permit	15.00	15.00
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	100.00
Grant	200.00	200.00
Grant (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	100.00
Renewal	200.00	200.00
Renewal (Club Premises Certificate Holder)	100.00	100.00
Variation	100.00	100.00
<b>Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine</b>		
Change of Name	25.00	25.00
Copy of Permit	15.00	15.00
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	100.00
Grant	300.00	300.00
Renewal	300.00	300.00
<b>Prize Gaming Permit</b>		
Change of Name	25.00	25.00
Copy of Permit	15.00	15.00
Existing Operator Grant	100.00	100.00
Grant	300.00	300.00
Renewal	300.00	300.00
<b>Small Society Lottery</b>		
Grant	40.00	40.00
Renewal	30.00	30.00

<b>HACKNEY CARRIAGE &amp; PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES</b>			
<b>Licences</b>			
Hackney carriage/ private hire driver licence	£132.00 for 3 years	£132.00 for 3 year	
Initial Licence application (incl CRB)	£64.00 + £43.00 DBS	£64.00 +£43.00 DBS	
New Hackney carriage vehicle licence (12 months)	192.00	192.00	
New Hackney carriage vehicle licence (6 months)	105.00	105.00	
New private hire vehicle licence (12 months)	192.00	192.00	
New private hire vehicle licence (6 months)	105.00	105.00	
Renewal Hackney carriage vehicle licence (12 months)	187.00	187.00	
Renewal Hackney carriage vehicle licence (6 months)	100.00	100.00	
Renewal Private hire vehicle licence (12 months)	187.00	187.00	
Renewal Private hire vehicle licence (6 months)	100.00	100.00	
<b>Private Hire Operator</b>			
1 vehicle - since 2015, fee is for 5 years	528.00	528.00	
2-10 vehicles - since 2015, fee is for 5 years	934.00	934.00	
11 - 50 vehicles - since 2015, fee is for 5 years	1,177.00	1,177.00	
51+ vehicles - since 2015, fee is for 5 years	1,419.00	1,419.00	
Extra Premises	58.00	58.00	
Replacement Driver Badge	10.00	10.00	
Replacement Licence	10.00	10.00	
Replacement Vehicle Licence Plate	35.00	35.00	
Vehicle Licence transfer	23.00	23.00	
Change of vehicle on vehicle licence	35.00	35.00	
<b>LICENSING ACT</b>			
<b>Premises Licence</b>			
Annual Fee Band A	70.00	70.00	
Annual Fee Band B	180.00	180.00	
Annual Fee Band C	295.00	295.00	
Annual Fee Band D	320.00	320.00	
Annual Fee Band E	350.00	350.00	
Annual Fee Multiplier – Band D	640.00	640.00	
Application Band A	100.00	100.00	
Application Band B	190.00	190.00	
Application Band C	315.00	315.00	
Application Band D	450.00	450.00	
Application Band E	635.00	635.00	
Fee Multiplier – Band D	900.00	900.00	
Fee Multiplier – Band E	1,905.00	1,905.00	
Interim Authority Notice	23.00	23.00	
Minor Variation	89.00	89.00	
Notification of Change of Name or Address	10.50	10.50	
Notification of Interest	21.00	21.00	
Provisional Statement	315.00	315.00	
Variation of Designated Premises Supervisor	23.00	23.00	
Licence or Summary	10.50	10.50	

Licence Transfer	23.00	23.00
Annual Fee Multiplier – Band E	1,050.00	1,050.00
<b>Personal Licence</b>		
Copy of Licence	10.50	10.50
Grant	37.00	37.00
Notification of Change of Name or Address	10.50	10.50
Renewal	No Charge	No Charge
<b>Club Premises Certificate</b>		
Change of Registered Address of Club	10.50	10.50
Certificate Application Band A	100.00	100.00
Certificate Application Band B	190.00	190.00
Certificate Application Band C	315.00	315.00
Certificate Application Band D	450.00	450.00
Certificate Application Band E	635.00	635.00
Certificate Copy of Certificate or Summary	10.50	10.50
Certificate Notification of Change of Name	10.50	10.50
Certificate Notification of Change of Rules	10.50	10.50
Certificate Minor Variation	89.00	89.00
Certificate Provisional Statement	315.00	315.00
Certificate Annual Fee Band A	70.00	70.00
Certificate Annual Fee Band B	180.00	180.00
Certificate Annual Fee Band C	295.00	295.00
Certificate Annual Fee Band D	320.00	320.00
Certificate Annual Fee Band E	350.00	350.00
<b>Additional Fee Exceptionally Large Events for Premises Licences and Club Premises Certificates</b>		
10,000 to 14,999	2,000.00	2,000.00
15,000 to 19,999	4,000.00	4,000.00
20,000 to 29,999	8,000.00	8,000.00
30,000 to 39,999	16,000.00	16,000.00
40,000 to 49,999	24,000.00	24,000.00
5,000 to 9,999	1,000.00	1,000.00
50,000 to 59,999	32,000.00	32,000.00
70,000 to 79,999	48,000.00	48,000.00
80,000 to 89,999	56,000.00	56,000.00
60,000 to 69,999	40,000.00	40,000.00
90,000 and over	64,000.00	64,000.00
<b>Temporary Event</b>		
Copy of Temporary Event Notice	10.50	10.50
Temporary Event Notice	21.00	21.00
<b>Sex Establishment Licences</b>		
Licences Application Fee	1,316.00	1,316.00
Licences Renewal Fee	1,316.00	1,316.00
<b>Marriage Premises Approval</b>		
Application Fee (Renewable every 3 years)	1,030.00	1,030.00
<b>Collector's Licence</b>		
Copy of Licence	12.00	12.00
Grant	207.00	207.00

	Renewal	207.00	207.00
	Licence Variation – Collector’s Licence to Site Licence	191.00	191.00
	<b>Site Licence</b>		
	Additional Site	191.00	191.00
	Grant – multiple sites	£368.74 plus £127.36 per additional site	£368.74 plus 127.36 per additional site
	Grant – one site	371.00	372.00
	Renewal – multiple sites	£368.74 plus £127.36 per additional site	£368.74 plus £127.36 per additional site
	Renewal – one site	370.00	370.00
	Site Manager	245.00	245.00
	Variation – Site Licence to Collector’s Licence	66.00	66.00
	Site Licensee’s Details	66.00	66.00
	Copy of Site Licence	12.00	12.00
	Pavement Café Licence	-	-
	Initial Licence Application Fee	223.00	223.00
	Renewal	73.00	73.00
	<b>Licensing of Street Traders</b>		
	Initial Consent Application Fee	217.00	217.00
	Renewal	71.00	71.00
	Temporary Consent	70.00	70.00
<b>Adult Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>Care Home Placement</b>		
	Nursing	524.00	In Consultation
	Nursing EMI	542.00	In Consultation
	Respite rate – standard – pension age	134.45	In Consultation
	Respite rate – standard – under pension age	80.70	In Consultation
	Short term standard rate pending financial assessment	134.45	In Consultation
	Short term standard rate pending financial assessment – under pension age	80.70	In Consultation
	Residential	484.00	In Consultation
	Residential EMI	540.00	In Consultation

	<b>Deferred Payment Charge</b>		
	Arrangement Fee if Council arranging package of care, not care home, for a person with resource above the financial limit of £23,250	60.00	In Consultation
	Set Up a Deferred Payment agreement	250.00	In Consultation
	Change or stopping a Deferred Payment agreement	100.00	In Consultation
	Early repayment of a Deferred Payment agreement	200.00	In Consultation
	Repayment of a stopped Deferred Payment agreement	200.00	In Consultation
	<b>Extra Care</b>		
	Domiciliary Care Band 2	34.00	In Consultation
	Domiciliary Care Band 3	102.00	In Consultation
	Domiciliary Care Band 4	170.00	In Consultation
	Domiciliary Care Band 5	238.00	In Consultation
	Extra Care	6.80	In Consultation
	<b>SUPPORTED LIVING</b>		
	Supported Living	15.55	In Consultation
	Night sitting – sleeping – per night	105.27	In Consultation
	Night sitting – waking – per night	-	In Consultation
	<b>SUPPORT AT HOME</b>		
	1 Hour	16.31	In Consultation
	15 mins	4.08	In Consultation
	Day Care - one day	50.00	In Consultation
	Day care - one session	25.00	In Consultation
	Mobile nights per hour	33.80	In Consultation
	Transport –flat rate per journey	5.00	In Consultation
	1/2 hour	-	In Consultation
	Assistive Technology per week	2.50	In Consultation

<b>Building Control</b>			
	*Building Regulation Completion Certificate/Letter enquiry (inc one copy of any certificate/letter)	41.00	41.00
	*Building Regulation Decision Notice Enquiry (inc one copy of notice)	41.00	41.00
	*Site history search: minimum charge (each subsequent hour or part of)	54.00	54.00
	*Site history search: minimum charge (up to first hour)	54.00	54.00
	Administrative processing cost for refunding Building Regulation fees being subject to the status of the application and the advancement of the works.	Individually determined cost recovery basis	Individually determined cost recovery basis
	Dangerous structures call out charges	54.00	54.00
	Letter confirming enforcement action will not be taken due to expiry of time limits.	165.00	165.00
	Notice of Intended Demolition/Issue of Counter Notice	£54.17 - Hourly charge or part thereof	£54.17 - Hourly charge or part thereof
	Pre-application site inspections	27.00	27.00
	Process request to re-issue completion certificates	27.00	27.00
	Re-directing invoices due to the failure to provide the correct billing name/address on the application form	£67.50 per visit	£67.50 per visit
	Process request to retrieve archived file, undertake research, further inspection(s) for the purposes of issuing completion certificate in respect of a project, following a period of at least 3 years since last inspection of the work.	41.00	41.00
	Provision of a letter of exemption from the provisions of the Building Regulations	54.17	54.17
	To provide a copy of site inspection records to owners on request following completion of works and issuing of completion certificate.	£54.00 first hour, £41.00 each subsequent hour	£54.00 first hour, £41.00 each subsequent hour
	Research, retrieval and examination of Building Regulation and Dangerous Structures file/record to provide "search type" information from the file/record	£54.17 - Hourly charge or part thereof	£54.17 - Hourly charge or part thereof
	Provision of pre-submission consultancy advice (1st hour free of charge).	41.00	41.00
	Administration charge in dealing with returned or "bounced" cheques	80.00	80.00
	Scaffold/Hoarding Permit (7 days) (per property)	135.00	135.00
	Scaffold/Hoarding Permit (7 days – 1 month) (per property)	215.00	215.00

Scaffold/Hoarding Permit (1 month – 3 months) (per property)	270.00	270.00
Scaffold/Hoarding Permit (3 months – 6 months) (per property)	0.14	0.14
Copies of any additional correspondence required in relation to enquiries A4	0.26	0.26
Copies of any additional correspondence required in relation to enquiries A3	3.12	3.12
Copies of any additional correspondence required in relation to enquiries A2	4.12	4.12
Copies of any additional correspondence required in relation to enquiries A1	-	-
<b>LAND CHARGES</b>		
CON 29 Component questions	5.00	5.00
Copy/Duplicate Property Search	104.20	104.20
LLC1 Plus CON 29. Subject to national legal review	81.70	81.70
Requisition Property Search - 1 Parcel of Land CON 29. Subject to national legal review	22.50	22.50
Standard Property Search fee Subject to national legal review	-	-
<b>Schedule of Street Naming and Numbering</b>		
<b>SNN1: Addressing of a new development/conversion consisting of:</b>		
1 Unit	£120.00 for first unit plus £30.00 per additional unit	£120.00 for first unit plus £30.00 per additional unit
2-10 Units	£120.00 for first unit plus £25.00 per additional unit	£120.00 for first unit plus £25.00 per additional unit
11-50 Units	£120.00 for first unit plus £20.00 per additional unit	£120.00 for first unit plus £20.00 per additional unit
Over 50 units	£30.00 per unit affected	£30.00 per unit affected
SNN2: Development renumbering/renaming due to plot numbers or plot positions	30.00	30.00
SNN3: Existing individual property naming/renaming or renumbering.	£120.00 plus £30.00 per unit	£120.00 plus £30.00 per unit

	SNN4: Renaming or renumbering of an existing street were requested by residents.	£30.00 per unit	£30.00 per unit
	SNN5: Confirmation of an individual property address to solicitors/conveyancers/occupiers or owners.	-	-



<b>Building Control</b>	<b>Plan Charges Inc. VAT</b>	<b>Inspection Charge Inc. VAT</b>	<b>Building Notice Charge Inc. VAT</b>
<b>New dwellings - Creation or conversion - Low Rise (Under 11m in height - Maximum 300m<sup>2</sup>)</b>			
Detached/Semi-Detached /Terraced (Site/1st house type)	281.00	386.00	700.00
New purpose built flats (Site/1st block/1 Flat type/Max 2 flats)	345.00	609.00	1,002.00
Conversion to flats (Site/1st block/1 Flat type/Max 2 flats)	227.00	445.00	705.00
<b>Domestic extensions, other domestic buildings and loft conversions to a single dwelling</b>			
Single storey ground floor extension - floor area not exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup>	168.00	254.00	444.00
Single storey ground floor extension - floor area exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup>	188.00	384.00	600.00
Single storey ground floor extension - floor area exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 100m <sup>2</sup>	233.00	513.00	784.00
Two storey extension - floor area not exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup>	181.00	348.00	556.00
Two storey extension - floor area exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup>	207.00	419.00	657.00
Two storey extension - floor area exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 100m <sup>2</sup>	259.00	560.00	860.00
First floor extension - floor area not exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup>	149.00	233.00	401.00
First floor extension - floor area exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup>	168.00	293.00	484.00

First floor extension - floor area exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 100m <sup>2</sup>	220.00	353.00	601.00
Basement extension - floor area not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup>	240.00	384.00	655.00
Loft conversion without dormers and floor area less than 40m <sup>2</sup>	233.00	267.00	525.00
Loft conversion with dormers and floor area less than 40m <sup>2</sup>	259.00	267.00	552.00
Detached non-habitable building with total floor less than 40m <sup>2</sup>	162.00	267.00	450.00
Erection of an attached garage, carport or covered way up to 40m <sup>2</sup>	162.00	267.00	450.00
<b>Domestic alterations and other works to a single dwelling</b>			
Other works with a construction value up to £1,000	32.00	92.00	131.00
Other works with a construction value between £1,001 and £5,000	65.00	104.00	177.00
Other works with a construction value between £5,001 and £10,000	78.00	158.00	248.00
Other works with a construction value between £10,001 and £20,000	136.00	213.00	366.00
Conversion - Existing attached garage into a habitable room(s)	130.00	213.00	359.00
Conversion - Existing attached exempt conservatory into habitable use	130.00	213.00	359.00
Conversion - Existing residential property back to a single dwelling (no structural alts)	78.00	158.00	248.00
Replacement windows - Per installation up to 10 units	32.00	104.00	143.00

Replacement windows - Per installation > 10 units		158.00	200.00
	32.00		
Underpinning of existing foundations for every 5m run or part of		267.00	348.00
	65.00		
Renovation of thermal element - construction value up to £5,000		158.00	200.00
	32.00		
Installation of a heating appliance (Boiler, woodburning, oil, coal or gas fires) or Renewable energy source (eg solar panel, ground source heat pump etc) not under CPS scheme		158.00	234.00
	65.00		
Notifiable electrical installation undertaken by a non Part P - Qualified electrician.(Supplementary charge to undertake competency check)			32.00
	32.00		
<b>Non domestic new build and extensions</b>			
Floor area not exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup>		358.00	600.00
	214.00		
Floor area exceeding 10m <sup>2</sup> but not exceeding 40m <sup>2</sup>		454.00	742.00
	253.00		
Table E - Non domestic alterations and other works			
Replacement windows - Per installation up to 10 units			120.00
	114.00		
Replacement windows - Per installation > 10 units			176.00
	168.00		
Other works with a construction value up to £5,000			176.00
	168.00		
Other works with a construction value between £5,001 and £10,000			214.00
	204.00		
Other works with a construction value between £10,001 and £15,000			353.00
	336.00		
Other works with a construction value between £15,001 and £20,000			428.00
	408.00		

Renovation of thermal element - construction value up to £5, 000	174.00	183.00
Renovation of thermal element - construction value £5,001 up to £50,000	234.00	246.00
Renovation of thermal element - construction value £50,001 up to £100,000	354.00	372.00

# **Discretionary Rate Relief Policy**

## **Wirral Council**

### **2021/2022**

## **INDEX**

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Charitable Bodies</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCS)</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Non profit making organisations</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Hardship Relief</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Part Occupation Relief</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Supporting Small Business Relief</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Support for local newspapers</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Business Rate Retail Discount Scheme</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appeals</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Interest of Members and Officers</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Policy Review</b>	<b>Page 14</b>



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of its role in the administration of National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) (more commonly referred to as Business Rates) Wirral Council has several areas where it can exercise its discretion to provide reductions to the amounts of business rates that are due to be paid.
- 1.2 Since April 2017, the Council has participated in the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme. This means that at present under the Pilot:
- Mandatory Relief is financed 99% by the Council and 1% by the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
  - Discretionary Relief is financed 99% by the Council and 1% by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
- 1.3 This policy outlines the areas of local discretion and the Council's approach to the various awards. This approach has regard to the impact
- of granting Discretionary Rate Relief on the Council's wider financial position and Council Tax payers;
  - on the organisations and businesses that currently receive or may apply for relief in the future;
  - for Wirral residents if relief is awarded and the regeneration benefits to the borough.
- 1.4 The principal consideration when making an award is that any relief granted is in the best interests of the residents and taxpayers of Wirral and produces a local benefit.
- 1.5 In addition the Council also operates a number of schemes which are funded fully by the government summarised at 2.3 below.

## 2. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME

2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Council to maintain a Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme to award Business Rates Relief of up to 100% to certain organisations who operate within specified criteria.

2.2 This includes:

- Charitable bodies (who receive 80% relief) The Council has further discretion to “top up” this relief to 100% of the rates due.
- Registered community amateur sports clubs (CASC’s) (who receive mandatory 80% relief). The Council has further discretion to “top up” this relief to 100% of the rates due.
- Non-profit making organisations. The Council has further discretion to grant “standard” discretionary rate relief of between 0 to 100% of the business rates due.
- Hardship Relief. Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act allows the Council to exercise its discretion to provide either partial or full relief from Non-Domestic Rates in cases of hardship where it would be reasonable to do so having due regard to the interests of council tax payers in general.
- Part Occupation Relief. Section 44(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows the Council to exercise its discretion to grant relief on business premises that are partly occupied, as long as this situation is for a short time

2.3 There are also four schemes administered by the Council, where any relief granted is wholly funded by central government subject to specific criteria. The Council will be using its discretionary powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as amended to grant relief. Central government will fully reimburse the Council using a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

- The Supporting Small Business Relief scheme for ratepayers who are losing some or all of their small business rate relief as a result of a large rateable value increase following the 2017 revaluation. The scheme is available for 5 years from 1 April 2017. The relief is fully funded fully via Section 31 Grant.
- Relief for Local Newspapers. The Council has discretion to award a discount of £1,500 office space occupied by local newspapers, up to a maximum of one discount per local newspaper title and per hereditament. The relief is fully funded via Section 31 Grant. This relief will cease at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, unless extended further by legislation.
- 100% business rates relief for new full-fibre infrastructure for a 5 year period from 1 April 2017. This is designed to support roll out to more homes and businesses.

- The Business Rates Retail Discount Scheme for 2019-20 and 2020-21. Properties that will benefit from the relief will be occupied hereditaments with a rateable value of less than £51,000, that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments. The Government will, in line with the eligibility criteria set out in their guidance, reimburse local authorities that use their discretionary relief powers, via Section 31 Grant. For 2021-22 no scheme has been announced but the Council will follow government guidance on any new scheme.

### **3. CHARITABLE BODIES**

3.1 A Mandatory Rate Relief of 80% is granted to charities in the following circumstances. Where the:

- ratepayer of a property is a charity or the trustees of a charity; and
- property is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes (including charity shops, where the goods sold are mainly donated and the proceeds are used for the purpose of the charity).

3.2 The Council does not have discretion regarding awarding Mandatory Rate Relief, however the Council must be satisfied that the statutory criteria has been met. For this purpose the Council will use guidance provided in both the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and by reference to other enactments and case law.

3.3 Registration under the Charities Act 1993 is conclusive evidence of charitable status and the Council will refer to the Charity Register for evidence of this. Absence from the register does not mean an organisation has not been established for charitable purposes as certain organisations are exempt from registration under the Charities Act 1993.

3.4 In cases where a charity is in receipt of mandatory rate relief of 80%, the Council has discretion to grant up to 20% additional rate relief. This is known as Discretionary Rate Relief top up.

3.5 The Council will consider applications for a Discretionary Rate Relief top up from charities based on their own merits, on a case by case basis. However the principal consideration is that the relief is in the best interests of the residents and taxpayers of Wirral and produces a local benefit as the Council must contribute to the cost of each award. As such, top up will be awarded to only the following type of registered charities:

- Scouts, guides, cadets and other clubs/associations for young people;
- Community schemes encompassing organisations providing support for those over the age of retirement, community transport, those based on volunteering and residents associations;
- Organisations providing support in the form of advice, training for employment, counselling;

- Organisations that provide services that address the consequences of ill health and disability;
- Charitable sporting clubs;
- Locally based leisure and cultural organisations;
- Armed forces veterans associations
- Locally based charities;
- Charity shops (operated by either locally based or national charities);
- Local child care providers registered as charities.

3.6 Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief can be made via the online Discretionary Rate Relief Form

3.7 Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief top up must be supported by, and include:

- The applicant organisation's main purposes and objectives, as set out in, for example, a written constitution, a memorandum of association, or set of membership rules;
- A full set of audited accounts relating to the two years preceding the date of application. Where audited accounts are not available, projected figures should be provided instead;
- Details of how the organisation meets the criteria outlined in these guidelines.  
Objectives

3.8 In determining the application, the following matters will be taken into consideration:

- How the charity supports and links into the Council's Corporate Objectives:
- The purpose of the charity and the specific activity carried out within the building for which the relief is requested:
- Whether the charity operates at a local or national level and where appropriate, the local and national funding streams and financial position of the charity

3.9 Registered Social Landlords, universities, further education colleges and independent schools are specifically excluded from receiving discretionary rate relief as per Cabinet decision dated 10 January 2008.

3.10 If an organisation in receipt of Discretionary Rate Relief top up ceases to meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy, it will cease to receive Discretionary Rate Relief. The Council will give such organisations twelve months written notice prior to the withdrawal of the Discretionary Rate Relief top up

- 3.11 The Council delegates the decision making power for Discretionary Rate Relief awards to the Head of Customer Services and the Section 151 Officer.
- 3.12 The initial recommendations to award or refuse a Discretionary Rate Relief top up will be made by the staff from the Business Rates section.
- 3.13 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application as soon as possible.
- 3.14 The granting of relief will be reviewed annually and those in receipt of Discretionary Rate Relief may be asked to supply or confirm relevant information for the purpose of the review.
- 3.15 The Council recognises that there will be occasions when the applicant body does not appear to satisfy the criteria generally applied but where the Council may choose to award relief. The Council has the ability to depart from its general policy as to granting relief if it sees fit to do so, taking into account the facts of each case and the interests of residents and Council Taxpayers.

#### **4. REGISTERED COMMUNITY AMATEUR SPORTS CLUBS (CASC)**

- 4.1 A mandatory rate relief of 80% is granted to registered community amateur sports Clubs (CASC). To qualify as a CASC, a sports club must fulfil all of the following criteria. It must be
- Open to the whole community;
  - Run as an amateur club;
  - A non-profit making organisation; and
  - Aiming to provide facilities for, and encourage people to take part in, eligible sport.
- 4.2 In cases where a CASC is in receipt of Mandatory Rate Relief of 80%, the Council has discretion to grant up to 20% additional rate relief as a Discretionary top up
- 4.3 The Council will consider applications for a Discretionary Rate Relief top up from CASCs based on their own merits on a case by case basis. The principal consideration is that any relief is in best interests of the residents and taxpayers of Wirral and produces a local benefit as the Council must contribute to the cost of each award.
- 4.4 Applications for a Discretionary top up can be made through the online Discretionary Rate Relief claim form
- 4.5 Applications for a Discretionary top up must be supported by, and include:
- The applicant organisation's main purposes and objectives, as set out in, for example, a written constitution, a memorandum of association, or set of membership rules;

- A full set of audited accounts relating to the two years preceding the date of application. Where audited accounts are not available, projected figures should be provided instead;
- Details of how the organisation meets the criteria outlined in these guidelines.

4.6 In determining the application the following matters will be taken into consideration:

- How the CASC supports and links into the Council's Corporate objectives;
- A club should have an open access policy. If a club effectively discriminates by only accepting members who have reached a particular standard, rather than seeking to promote the attainment of excellence by enhancing access and the development of sporting aptitude, then it does not fulfil the requirements;
- The extent to which the facilities provided reduce the demand for Council services or produce savings to the council
- Membership must be open to everyone, regardless of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, creed, disability, age, religious affiliation or political belief,
- If the organisation applying for a Discretionary Rate Relief requires membership or an entry fee, the Council will consider whether:
  - The subscription or fee is set at a level which is not prohibitively high and considered to be affordable by most sections of the community
  - Fee reductions are offered for certain groups such as, for example, under 18s or over 60s
  - Membership is encouraged from groups who face social barriers, such as, for example, young people not in employment, education or training; people above working age or people with disabilities
  - Facilities are made available to people other than members

4.7 It should be noted that sports clubs which run a bar are unlikely to be awarded relief if their main purpose is the sale of food or drink. However, if the sale of food or drink by the organisation aids the overall operation and development of the organisation in achieving its objectives, this would be permissible as long as the principal objectives of the organisation meet the eligibility criteria detailed at 4.1. If the bar makes a profit, this profit must be reinvested to support the organisation in achieving its principal objectives. Financial information will be required to evidence any profit and its use.

4.8 The Council delegates the decision making power for Discretionary Rate Relief awards to the Head of Customer Services and the Section 151 Officer.

- 4.9 The initial recommendations to award or refuse a Discretionary Rate Relief top up will be made by the staff from the Business Rates section.
- 4.10 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application as possible.
- 4.11 The granting of relief will be reviewed annually and those in receipt of Discretionary Rate Relief may be asked to supply or confirm relevant information for the purpose of the review.
- 4.12 The Council recognises that there will be occasions when the applicant body does not appear to satisfy the criteria generally applied but where the Council may choose to award relief. The Council has the ability to depart from its general policy as to granting relief if it sees fit to do so, taking into account the facts of each case and the interests of residents and Council Taxpayers.

## **5. NON-PROFIT MAKING ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANIES (CIC)**

5.1 The Council has the power to grant discretionary rate relief of up to 100% for the rates due to non-profit making organisations. The main objectives of the organisation must be related to:

- Relief of poverty;
- Advancement of religion;
- Advancement of education;
- Social Welfare;
- Science;
- Literature;
- Fine arts;
- Recreation

5.2 An organisation must be able to demonstrate how it

- meets local needs and benefit local people; and
- provides a valuable service to the community; and
- is open to all sections of the community; and operates in such a way that it does not discriminate against any section of the community; and
- is not conducted or established for the primary purpose of accruing profit.

5.3 The Council will consider applications for a Discretionary Rate Relief top up from non-profit making organisations based on their own merits, on a case by case basis. The principal consideration is that any relief is in the best interests of the residents and Council Tax payers of Wirral and produces a local benefit as the Council must contribute to the cost of each award. As such, top up will only be awarded to the following type of non-profit making organisations:

- Scouts, guides, cadets and other clubs/associations for young people;
- Community schemes encompassing organisations providing support for those over the age of retirement, community transport, those based on volunteering and residents associations;
- Organisations providing support in the form of advice, training for employment or counselling;
- Organisations that provide services that address the consequences of ill health and disability;
- Locally based leisure and cultural organisations;
- Armed forces veterans associations.

5.4 If the organisation applying for DRR requires membership or an entry fee, the Council will consider whether:

- Membership is open to everyone, regardless of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, creed, disability, age, religious affiliation or political belief.
- The subscription or fee is set at a level which is not prohibitively high and considered to be affordable by most sections of the community.
- Fee reductions are offered for certain groups such as, for example, under 18s or over 60s.
- Membership is encouraged from groups who face social barriers, such as, for example, young people not in employment, education or training; people above working age; or people with disabilities.
- Facilities are made available to people other than members

5.5 Applicants will be encouraged to submit their applications through an online Discretionary Rate Relief Form

5.6 Applications for DRR must be supported by, and include:

- The organisation's main purposes and objectives, as set out in, for example, a written constitution, a memorandum of association, or set of membership rules.
- A full set of audited accounts relating to the two years preceding the date of application. Where audited accounts are not available, projected figures should be provided instead.

- Details of how the organisation meets the criteria outlined in these guidelines.
- 5.7 If an organisation in receipt of DRR ceases to meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this policy, it will cease to receive DRR. The Council will give such organisations twelve months written notice prior to the withdrawal of DRR.
- 5.8. The Council delegates the decision making power for Discretionary Rate Relief awards to the Head of Customer Services and the Section 151 Officer.
- 5.9 The initial recommendations to award or refuse a Discretionary Rate Relief top up will be made by the staff from the Business Rates section.
- 5.10 The granting of relief will be reviewed annually and those in receipt of DRR may be asked to supply or confirm relevant information for the purpose of the review.
- 5.11 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application as possible.
- 5.12 The granting of relief will be reviewed annually and those in receipt of Discretionary Rate Relief may be asked to supply or confirm relevant information for the purpose of the review.
- 5.13 The Council recognises that there will be occasions when the applicant body does not appear to satisfy the criteria generally applied but where the Council may choose to award relief. The Council has the ability to depart from its general policy as to granting relief if it sees fit to do so, taking into account the facts of each case and the interests of residents and Council Taxpayers.

## **6. HARSHIP RELIEF**

- 6.1 The Council has the power under Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to reduce or remit the Non-Domestic Rates charged in certain circumstances where the applicant organisation is enduring temporary financial difficulties. This is known as Discretionary 'Hardship' Relief.
- 6.2 The Council may grant Discretionary Hardship Relief if it is satisfied that:
- The ratepayer would sustain financial hardship if the Council did not do so, and,
  - It is reasonable for the Council to grant relief, with regard to the interests of its residents and Council Tax payers.
- 6.3 Discretionary Hardship Relief is a temporary measure which should not be used to artificially sustain a failing business. Discretionary Hardship Relief will be awarded where the applicant organisation is facing temporary financial difficulties and where the community would be significantly disadvantaged if the business were to close due to these temporary financial constraints.

- 6.4 When deciding to award hardship relief, as well as being confident that the organisation is experiencing hardship, the principle consideration will be that any relief is in the best interests of the taxpayers of Wirral as the Council must bear the cost of any relief granted.
- 6.5 Applicants will be encouraged to submit requests for Discretionary Hardship Relief through the use of an online Discretionary Rate Relief claim form.
- 6.6 Applications for Discretionary Hardship Relief be accompanied by full set of audited accounts relating to the two years preceding the date of application. Where audited accounts are not available for the current financial year, projected figures should be provided instead. It is recommended that applicant organisations submit audited accounts dating back further than two years, if such information is available.
- 6.7 Discretionary Hardship Relief is awarded as a temporary measure in accordance with the applicant organisations circumstances and the anticipated length of the financial difficulties.
- 6.8 The Council delegates the decision making power for Discretionary Rate Relief awards to the Head of Customer Services and the Section 151 Officer.
- 6.9 The initial recommendations to award or refuse a Discretionary Rate Relief top up will be made by the staff from the Business Rates section.
- 6.10 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application as possible.
- 6.11 The granting of relief will be reviewed annually and those in receipt of Discretionary Rate Relief may be asked to supply or confirm relevant information for the purpose of the review.
- 6.12 The Council recognises that there will be occasions when the applicant body does not appear to satisfy the criteria generally applied but where the Council may choose to award relief. The Council has the ability to depart from its general policy as to granting relief if it sees fit to do so, taking into account the facts of each case and the interests of residents and Council Taxpayers.

## **7. PART OCCUPATION RELIEF**

- 7.1 Section 44(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables the council to grant relief on business premises that are partly occupied, as long as this situation is for a short time
- 7.2 The length of this period is at the council's discretion and will be considered on the basis of each application for his relief.
- 7.3 The situation must be happening at the present time, so retrospective claims cannot be considered.

- 7.4 Applications for Part Occupied Relief can be made via the online Discretionary Rate Relief Form
- 7.5 Applications for Part Occupied Relief top up must be supported by, and include
- A plan of the property clearly marking the areas that are occupied and unoccupied.
  - The reasons why the property is unoccupied
  - A plan will also be required to show it is intended to bring the unoccupied part back into use and within what timescales.
- 7.6 The Council delegates the decision making power for Part Occupied Relief awards to the Head of Customer Services and the Section 151 Officer.
- 7.7 The initial recommendations to award or refuse a Part Occupied Relief will be made by the staff from the Business Rates section.
- 7.8 Applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of their application as possible.

## **8. SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS SCHEME**

- 8.1. Within the Spring Budget on 8 March 2017 the Government announced further support to small businesses affected by the 2017 Revaluation; this is to be known as 'Support to Small Business' relief. This relief will help those ratepayers who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation are losing some or all of their Small Business Rates Relief and are facing large increases in their bills. For businesses that qualify their increase in rates will be limited to no more than £600 per annum.
- 8.2. The Council will make the award automatically without the completion of an application form. The award is for 5 years or until they reach the level of charges they would have reached without the scheme.
- 8.3. A change of ratepayer will not affect eligibility for the scheme unless the property becomes vacant or occupied by a charity. Normal European State Aid de-minimis rules apply to the award.
- 8.4. Small Business Support will be awarded under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The authority will be fully reimbursed for the costs of granting this relief under Section 31.

## **9. SUPPORT FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS**

- 9.1. From 1 April 2017 the Government has provided funding to local authorities to provide a discount of £1,500 per year to office space occupied by local newspapers. The relief is specifically for local newspapers and is not available to magazines.

- 9.2. To qualify the property must be occupied by a local newspaper and wholly or mainly used as office premises for journalists and reporters. The amount of relief is limited to a maximum of one discount per newspaper title and per property.
- 9.3 The relief is fully funded by Central Government. This discount will cease at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 unless extended by legislation.

## **10. BUSINESS RATE RETAIL DISCOUNT SCHEME**

- 10.1 The Government announced in the Budget on 29 October 2018 that it will provide a business rates Retail Discount scheme for occupied retail properties with a rateable value of less than £51,000 in 2019-20 and no rateable value limit for 2020-21. In the event that this is extended for 2021-22, the Authority will follow the government guidelines if it is fully funded by Section 31 Grant or referred to Members if not fully funded.
- 10.2 The value of discount will be as determined by the government and must be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs funded by section 31 grants have been applied.
- 10.3 Where an authority applies a locally funded relief, for instance a hardship fund, under section 47 this must be applied after the Retail Discount.
- 10.4 The criteria for the relief has been outlined by the government as follows
- 10.5 Properties that will benefit from the relief will be occupied hereditaments with a rateable value of less than £51,000, that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments. The government guidance on this is:

### **i. Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public:**

- Shops (such as: florists, bakers, butchers, grocers, greengrocers, jewellers, stationers, off licences, chemists, newsagents, hardware stores, supermarkets, etc)
- Charity shops
- Opticians
- Post offices
- Furnishing shops/ display rooms (such as: carpet shops, double glazing, garage doors)
- Car/ caravan show rooms
- Second hand car lots
- Markets
- Petrol stations
- Garden centres
- Art galleries (where art is for sale/hire)

### **ii. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:**

- Hair and beauty services (such as: hairdressers, nail bars, beauty salons, tanning shops, etc)
- Shoe repairs/ key cutting
- Travel agents
- Ticket offices e.g. for theatre
- Dry cleaners
- Launderettes
- PC/ TV/ domestic appliance repair
- Funeral directors
- Photo processing
- Tool hire
- Car hire

**iii. Hereditaments that are being used for the sale of food and/ or drink to visiting members of the public:**

- Restaurants
- Takeaways
- Sandwich shops
- Coffee shops
- Pubs
- Bars

10.6 To qualify for the relief the hereditament should be wholly or mainly being used as a shop, restaurant, cafe or drinking establishment. In a similar way to other reliefs (such as charity relief), this is a test on use rather than occupation. Therefore, hereditaments which are occupied but not wholly or mainly used for the qualifying purpose will not qualify for the relief.

10.7 The list below sets out the types of uses that the Government does not consider to be retail use for the purpose of this relief.

**i. Hereditaments that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:**

- Financial services (e.g. banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, payday lenders, betting shops, pawn brokers)
- Other services (e.g. estate agents, letting agents, employment agencies)
- Medical services (e.g. vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)
- Professional services (e.g. solicitors, accountants, insurance agents/ financial advisers, tutors)
- Post office sorting offices

10.8 The list set out above is not intended to be exhaustive. However, it is provided by Government as a guide to the types of uses that it considers for this purpose to be retail. The Council will determine on a case by case basis whether particular properties/businesses not listed are broadly similar in nature to those above and, if so, to consider them to be retail. Conversely, properties that were not broadly similar in nature to those listed above will not be considered to be retail.

10.9 Retail discount relief will be awarded under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The authority will be fully reimbursed for the costs of granting this relief under Section 31.

## **11 APPEALS**

11.1 There is no statutory right of appeal regarding Discretionary Rate Relief decisions however the council will review decisions if requested to do so by the ratepayer.

11.2 Such a request should include the reasons for requesting the review and evidence in support of that request.

11.3 Such a request must be made within one calendar month of the date the original decision was issued.

11.4 The review will be carried out by officers of the Council who did not make the original decision.

## **12. INTEREST OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

12.1 Members and officers who have an interest in any aspect of an application for relief must not participate in the decision making process and must declare their interest.

## **13. POLICY REVIEW**

13.1 The Council will review the Discretionary Rate Relief policy on an annual basis but the Council reserves the right to review and revise the policy at any time as a result of information gained as a result of operating the policy or in response to Government initiatives.

13.2 Any further amendments to the above scheme for 2021/22 can be approved by the Section 151 Officer in conjunction with the Policy and Resources Committee.

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## Appendix 9

### The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Policy and Resources Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 calculated the Council Tax Base 2021/22 for the whole of the properties in its area as 94,198.6 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);

- a) £156,677,700 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2021/22 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:
  - i) £859,070,000 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and
  - ii) £702,392,300 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- b) £1,663.27 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2021/22. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as above).
- c) That in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

#### Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band

A	B	C	D
£1,108.85	£1,293.65	£1,478.46	£1,663.27
E	F	G	H
£2,032.89	£2,402.50	£2,772.12	£3,326.54

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the Basic Amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set

out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2021/22 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 5% or above, as per the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22. The Settlement included provision for local authorities with social care responsibilities to increase the level of Council Tax by 3% for the Adult Social Care precept; and by up to 2% for the Council element. Where Council Tax is increased at or above 5% a local referendum will be required. The overall proposed increase in the Wirral basic Council Tax is 4.99%, including a Council increase of 1.99%, and is therefore within the Settlement's ceilings.

#### **Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax Comparison for Referendum**

	2020/21	2021/22	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Band D	1,584.21	1,663.27	79.06	4.99

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area. This will be as indicated in the tables which when received will be included in updated tables to Council.

#### **Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside**

A	B	C	D
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
E	F	G	H
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

#### **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority**

A	B	C	D
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
E	F	G	H
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

### Liverpool City Region Combined Authority –Mayoral Precept

A	B	C	D
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
E	F	G	H
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region – Mayoral Precept the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2021/22 for each of the categories of dwellings.

#### Total Council Tax for Wirral

A	B	C	D
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
E	F	G	H
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

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## **APPENDIX 10 - CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER STATEMENT**

### **SUMMARY**

Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Authority's Chief Financial Officer (presently the Director of Resources as the Section 151 Officer) is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council's Budget calculations and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves. Section 25 also requires Members to have regard to this report in making their decisions.

### **BACKGROUND**

Local Authorities decide every year how much they are going to raise from Council Tax. Decisions are based on a budget that sets out estimates of what the Council plans to spend on each of its services in the forthcoming year. The decision on the level of the Council Tax is taken before the financial year begins and it cannot be changed during the year, so allowance for risks and uncertainties that might increase service expenditure above that planned, must be made by:

- a) Making prudent allowance in the estimates for each of the services
- b) Ensuring that there are adequate reserves to draw on if the service estimates turn out to be insufficient.

This Statement is intended to give Members assurance that the Budget has been based on the best available information and reasonable assumptions. In order to meet the robustness requirement a number of key processes have been in place, including:

- Existing and future expenditure pressures are identified by reference to financial monitoring reports for the current year
- The Section 151 Officer provided advice throughout the process
- Ownership by the relevant Policy and Services Committee's and Senior Leadership Team of proposed savings and their achievability
- Identification of financial risks
- Revenue and capital expenditure is differentiated along with appropriate sources of funding, including revenue implications of capital expenditure;
- Consultation with the Members, public and groups as required
- Accountable Service Managers identifying issues, projecting demand and considering value for money and efficiency
- Ongoing development, and refinement, of data and information to monitor service volume and unit costs and track changes in both.

### **RELEVANT RISKS**

A formal Risk Review of the Revenue Budget is undertaken to reflect local circumstances and from this it is proposed that Balances be set at a level

appropriate to the identified risks. The Council needs to have good financial resilience at a time of increasing financial pressures and in difficult economic times. The holding of sufficient funds is to support resilience. The locally and risk based approach to the level of General Fund balance is in line with the achievement of this approach. Risks in relation to the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme flow in part from the assumptions identified and will be kept under review as part of the Financial Monitoring Reports to the Policy and Service Committees and Policy and Resources Committee throughout the 2021/22 financial year.

For 2021/22, additional risks are presented as a result of the Coronavirus. During 2020/21 the Council has had to adapt to a significantly different way of operating, not only in prioritising and providing additional support to vulnerable residents, providing support for the administration of grants and other payments to businesses and residents and for employees adapting to working from home and other forms of agile working.

The budget set a full Council in March 2020 has not been spent in the way that it was originally intended in some cases. Facilities being closed and staff being redeployed into other functions has meant that the full income anticipated for the year and the full range of savings proposals agreed have not been achieved.

For 2021/22, the longer term of the Coronavirus is as yet unknown. The estimates for income and pressures included within the 2021/22 budget are the best that can be provided at this current time. The main areas where additional expenditure is likely to occur in year that is as yet unquantified, is within Social Care and the 2021/22 increase in the Social Care Grant of £3.34m has been held in reserve to service as a mitigation to any future impact.

Income forecasts for facilities re-opening following the relaxing of lockdown are uncertain. It cannot be predicted how much income will be generated during 2021/22 as the date for full reopening of services has not been provided, and it anticipated that facilities will only be allowed to open on a phased basis with a potential for some to not be allowed to open at all due to the inability for social distancing. In addition, public confidence may remain low for some time to come and although allowed to reopen, the levels of demand for income generating services may well still be lower than normal.

Allowing for the extension of the Government's Sales, Fees and Charges compensation scheme, an estimate has been made for income that will not be received during 2021/22. This is based on an assumption for a 40% reduction in the main income generating services such as Leisure and Culture. This will be monitored in-year and any variation will be reported and managed through the Policy and Services Committees

## **ROBUSTNESS OF THE REVENUE ESTIMATES**

The 2021/22 budget is built on a transitional process as a result of the change of governance from the Cabinet system to the Committee System. Ordinarily, the

Policy and Services Committees would review the previous years budget and identify changes for the forthcoming year, including a process to identify, review and assess both growth and savings proposals. However, as the Committee system did not commence until October 2020, Officers have taken the lead in submitting this information to Committees, including the identification of savings proposals for 2021/22 in order to present a balanced budget.

In assessing the robustness of Revenue Budgets the key risks remaining are:

- The delivery of the approved savings and efficiencies;
- The impact of increasing demand for services, particularly care services;
- The impact of Covid-19 on the longer term which as yet is unknown;
- Changes to the Capital Programme and associated revenue costs;
- The generation of capital receipts from the sale of land and buildings;
- The possibility of legal challenge including judicial review;
- On-going review of the risks relating to Council Tax and Business Rates collection levels and appeals.

These assumptions and changing circumstances require forecasts to be regularly reviewed and monitored. This monitoring will take place through the Policy and Services Committees during 2021/22.

## **FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF BUDGETS**

In light of the national Covid-19 it is expected that the Council will continue to face a challenging future while needing to achieve the outcome of the 2025 Wirral Plan. If proposals are delayed or not delivered in a way that produces the benefits anticipated there will be a need to make up the shortfall from other additional reductions elsewhere.

The Council is participating in a no detriment business rates pilot of 100% retention across the Liverpool City Region. The Government is currently considering the operation of the business rates retention system from 2022. It is currently therefore difficult to evaluate what the future changes will mean for the Council.

## **ROBUSTNESS OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The agreed Capital Programme includes projects costed at current year prices with many subject to a subsequent tender process which lead to variance in the final cost. In some areas, the design brief may not yet be finalised, again giving rise to potential price variance. This is a known risk and can be managed through phasing or reduction in specification. In assessing the robustness of the Capital Programme the risk of being unable to fund variations outside of the Programme is minimal mainly due to the phasing of projects. If necessary, the Council can choose to freeze parts of the Programme throughout the year to ensure spend is kept within the agreed budget. The main risks of the Capital Programme are:

- The ability to deliver the Programme within the agreed timescales. The re-profiling and slippage from previous years is fully funded but increases the pressure to deliver the anticipated 2021/22 Programme
- The future Programme includes new starts based on the availability of resources. The programme includes asset disposal and in current economic the capital receipts may be higher or lower than expected.

## **ADEQUACY OF THE GENERAL FUND BALANCES AND RESERVES**

Reserves and balances are sums set aside to meet possible future costs where there is no certainty about whether or not the costs will actually be incurred.

When reviewing the Medium Term Financial Plan and preparing the Annual Budget, local authorities should consider the establishment and maintenance of balances and reserves. These can be held for three main purposes:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of the general fund reserve
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies – this forms part of the general fund reserve
- A means of building up funds, referred to as earmarked reserves to meet known or predicted requirements. Earmarked reserves are accounted for separately but remain legally part of the general fund

Reserves are not to be used to avoid decisions not being taken to recommend a balanced budget to full Council but can be used as a smoothing mechanism where robust plans can be evidenced that permanent alternative arrangements are in place for the following year.

The recommended approach to determining the level of General Fund balances and reserves follows the guidance issued by Grant Thornton (the Council's External Auditor) and CIPFA (the professional organisation responsible for the Accounting Code). The Level of General Fund Balances for 2021/21 is referred to in the main report and stands at £10.7m, which represents 3.25% of the 2021/22 budget. A more robust percentage of general fund balances is 5% or £16.5m.

In their letter to the Chief Executive in 2020, Grant Thornton stated that 'In my view, it is not prudent for Council's to use non-recurrent money to fund recurrent expenditure' and that 'I do not consider that reducing the general fund reserve would be appropriate and this would leave the Council exposed should a financial crisis occur.

In their independent financial review report, the Local Government Association noted that in 2018/19, 'Wirral has consistently fewer reserves compared to the average English metropolitan council and these have steadily declined in recent years. Furthermore, unallocated general fund (working) balances at 3% (of net revenue spend 2018/19) are the second lowest of all metropolitan councils' The LGA also stated Given the increased use of one off resources in recent years, it is prudent for

stated 'Given the increased use of on-off resources in recent years, it is prudent for the CFO to consider increasing reserves particularly general fund (working) balances'

### **OVERALL CONCLUSION**

In overall view is that the 2021/22 budget is sound response to continuing challenging financial circumstances, which maintains services as far as possible, maximises efficiencies and responds to future financial challenges.

My advice to Members is to take steps to increase the General Fund Balance to 5% of the net Revenue Budget to ensure a reduce risk to the Council's future financial sustainability.

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**Appendix 11**

**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY  
AND RESILIENCE PLAN  
2021 -2026**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Context.....	3
3. Our Challenges .....	5
4. Budget Strategy .....	8
5. The Council’s Service Strategy .....	9
6. Reducing Costs.....	20
7. Resource for Service Revenue Budgets .....	21
8. Wirral Response to the Financial Challenges .....	21
9. Conclusion .....	22
<b>Financial Resilience Plan .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and establishes the framework for the 2021/22 budget. It is based upon a financial forecast over a rolling five year timeframe from 2021/22 to 2025/26, which will help to ensure resources are aligned according to the priorities outlined in the Wirral Plan 2025. The MTFS will also set the financial context for the Council’s resource allocation process and budget setting, whilst ensuring we have a balanced budget.

The Council has shown that through collaborative working, new partnerships, innovation and transformation it can improve the quality of life and economic climate of the borough. The borough is being transformed with focus on key areas such as Birkenhead and the waterfront; we have been successful in securing funding to support the growth projects and new investors whilst protecting the Council’s own borrowing for these significant investments. The Council has set itself high standards to achieve in delivering these projects that will deliver good quality housing and business premises whilst importantly addressing the economic and climate issues of the borough.

## 2. Context

The MTFS is a key part of the Council’s Budget and Policy Framework which aims to ensure that all financial resources are directed towards the delivery of Council priorities which are aligned to the Wirral Plan 2025. The financial proposals in this MTFS aim to allow Wirral to have a balanced annual budget and successfully plan for a financially resilient future.



The MTFS focuses on the improvement of the lives of Wirral residents by delivering and investing in key public services and regeneration.

It also recognises the need to respond to the financial challenges in a planned way through examination of four inter-related areas:



The outcome of this activity has resulted in a budget for 2021/22 which is:

- Balanced, sustainable and legal; and
- Continues to deliver vital services.

This MTFS sits against a backdrop of considerable financial uncertainty and unprecedented challenges for all local authorities, from funding changes, Covid-19 and growing pressures on key services. The 2019 Spending Round announced by Central Government in September 2019 confirmed the continuation of a number of temporary funding streams into 2020-21 but provided no certainty beyond that. It was anticipated at that point that a multi-year funding settlement would follow for 2021-22 and beyond, which would have provided certainty for the Local Government sector in terms of future year funding.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the government announced in April that the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) publication would be delayed, and was not formally launched until July 2020, they also announced that the Fair Funding Review would be delayed. Business Rates Retention was also scheduled to take effect in 2021-22, with new funding baselines for all councils having been determined through the Fair Funding Review, both of these, have now been delayed as a result of the impact of Covid-19.

The government announced a one-year settlement in November with a plan for multi-year settlements to come from 2022/23

### 3. Our Challenges

As a result of the impact of Covid-19, the nation is facing an unusual and unprecedented time and Wirral Council is not immune from this. The Government has spent billions of pounds to support the country, protect jobs and services and to keep people safe. Wirral Council has received funds to directly support its residents, passing grants from central government to businesses, the self-employed, residents and those in need of support. Wirral Council continues to face challenges in supporting Covid-19 and continuing to provide good quality services whilst operating within a financial envelope. In order to meet these challenges, our Medium Term Financial Strategy outlines the plans for delivery, which will stretch over several years.

The MTFS has two main elements:

- Provides an overview of the approach to the period 2021/22- 2025/26
- A Financial Resilience Plan.

Our challenge for 2021/22 and beyond is to support the Borough through Covid-19, expansion of services to protect the vulnerable, rising demand, delivery of the Wirral Plan, funding changes, digitisation possible of the services, organisational cultural change of the Council, and the impact of Brexit. The Wirral Plan through the prevention agenda, regeneration, neighbourhood working and partnerships within the health system will go some way to alleviate these challenges.



The Council is seeing more demand and different challenges of which the following are anticipated:

- Vulnerable residents will have more complex needs
- Demand for statutory services will increase at an accelerated rate
- The risk that local economy may shrink and local business may need support to recover

These challenges pose a financial risk to the Authority and are in addition to the usual challenges which are:

- Demand for services through demographic growth (an aging population)
- Cost increases through inflation.

However, through the short, medium and long terms strategies within the MTFS a balanced budget can be forecast over the next five years.

### **Short to Medium Term Strategies**

- New homes will make a contribution to income streams through council tax payments.
- Review of how services are delivered, what is delivered and to whom.
- Investment in community groups to support families providing family and parenting support, health and wellbeing service, realigning service delivery and youth support.
- Increased preventative support for domestic abuse.
- Greater support for children for example those with complex needs.
- Ensuring services are providing value for money for residents and delivering outcomes.
- With the establishment of new businesses, income streams will also grow through business rates, including an increase in fees and charges.
- Proposals for savings will need to address the increasing funding gap, whilst also acknowledging that not all services will continue to be provided in the same way.

### **Long Term Strategies**

The Council plans to change its approach so that more income can be generated through its own revenue streams, to ensure further independence to residents and to redesign its cultural and leisure offer around residents' need. This will be achieved through:

- Growth in Council Tax revenues, linked to growth in Local Plan targets until 2037 to meet housing requirements.
- Growth in Business Rates as a result of regeneration activity to increase the number of businesses operating in the area.
- Using intelligence to predict service use requirements in to ensure services are fit for the future.
- Investing in commercial activities to generate returns.
- Significant programme of Regeneration across the whole of the borough
- New Neighbourhood model and community partnerships

**The Council aims to:**

**Change how the Council operates to improve service, deliver pledges and reduce costs.**

**Implement a prevention strategy that meets the needs of our residents early, this will reduce costs of statutory services and allows monies to go further.**

**Working with partners, such as through our Community Wealth Building Strategy, and residents to provide the tools to help people into employment. Doing so will provide better life outcomes & a reduced need for social care.**

#### **4. Budget Strategy**

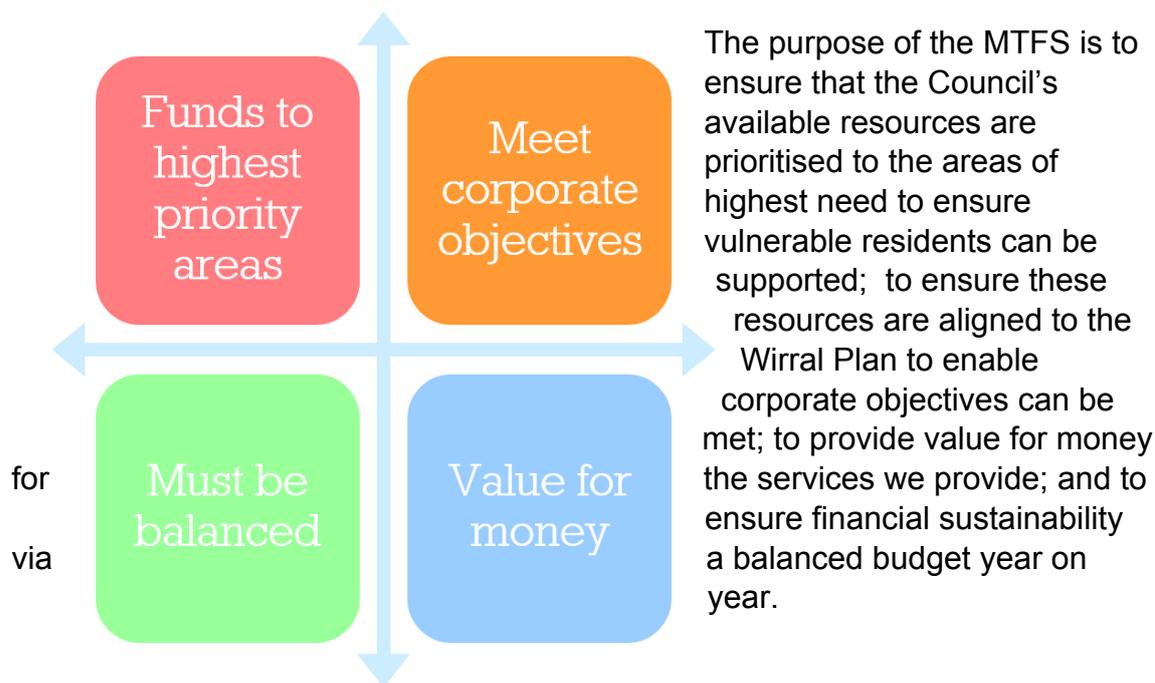
Each year we set an annual budget for the next financial year, which in this case is the year to 31 March 2022 (2021/22). The first year of the five year MTFS is aligned to resources of the Council, to the objectives as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget. This is an iterative process, with proposals submitted as and when they are identified to enable consultation and scrutiny to take place so that the impact of the proposals can be assessed.

It is important that the Council aligns resources to the highest priority areas within the Wirral Plan, as well as being able to meet its overall corporate objectives. The budget must be balanced in terms of matching expected funding to expected costs, so that no gap is created which could bring the Council's financial future into question.

It is also essential to demonstrate good financial management, control and financial planning to ensure value for money can be demonstrated.

This MTFS considers how the Council will make the most of the financial resources available, directing funding to Council priorities, identifying areas of growth, pressures, saving, unavoidable costs such as increases in levies, pension costs and what should be included in the budget such as inflationary factors.

However, it must be acknowledged that the Council is striving to deliver the best for residents against a background of challenging circumstances of uncertainty and additional financial pressures. Decisions and choices will have to be made as part of agreeing the 2021/22 budget and the 2022/26 MTFP and MTFS refresh, how to balance the impact of short-term decisions we face and align to the financial sustainability of the Council. The financial strategy needs to ensure the MTFS and plan is not unachievable and is capable of managing future pressures.



## 5. The Council's Service Strategy



### 5.1 Empowering Communities

It has long been recognised by Members and Officers of Wirral Council, that our residents and community organisations are amongst the finest assets Wirral has, evidence has been prevalent during Covid-19 that they are responsive, capable and effective at delivering what the residents of Wirral need. The humanitarian effort has been significant and our relationship with the community and voluntary sector as better than they have ever been.

A number of plans are in progress which access and enhance this relationship to ensure we can continue to build on this relationship and enable those sectors to have more engagement in the provision of services:

- North West Mutual Bank
- Community Wealth Strategy
- Community Asset Transfer

By enabling and supporting our communities, we can deliver more cost efficient and valued services. The neighbourhood model will seek the views of communities as to how we can work better together to provide services that are of most value to them and provide the most efficiency.



## 5.2 Driving Income Generation

The Council has a traded service function where it looks at how we use our assets and direct growth of the Council to generate income, which allows further investment in supporting essential services. This function becomes more increasingly important as a means of making the Council self-sufficient.

The use of benchmarking and predictive modelling technology, CFO insights will assist with this approach. The tool provides a three-dimensional way in which to understand Council income and spend by category, the outcomes for that spend and the socio-economic context within which a Council operates. This enables for comparison against others, not only nationally but in the context of their geographical and statistical neighbours.

Communities need assurance that we are providing value for money for the taxes they pay and allocating resources to the areas that matter most to them, in the most cost efficient way. To enable this, we will review services and functions to ensure they are providing value for money, streamlining processes and remove duplication by centralising services to gain benefits. Using benchmarking and intelligence information on other Councils' operations, we will review the cost and configuration of all services to determine whether our services are below or above average and take appropriate actions on the outcome.

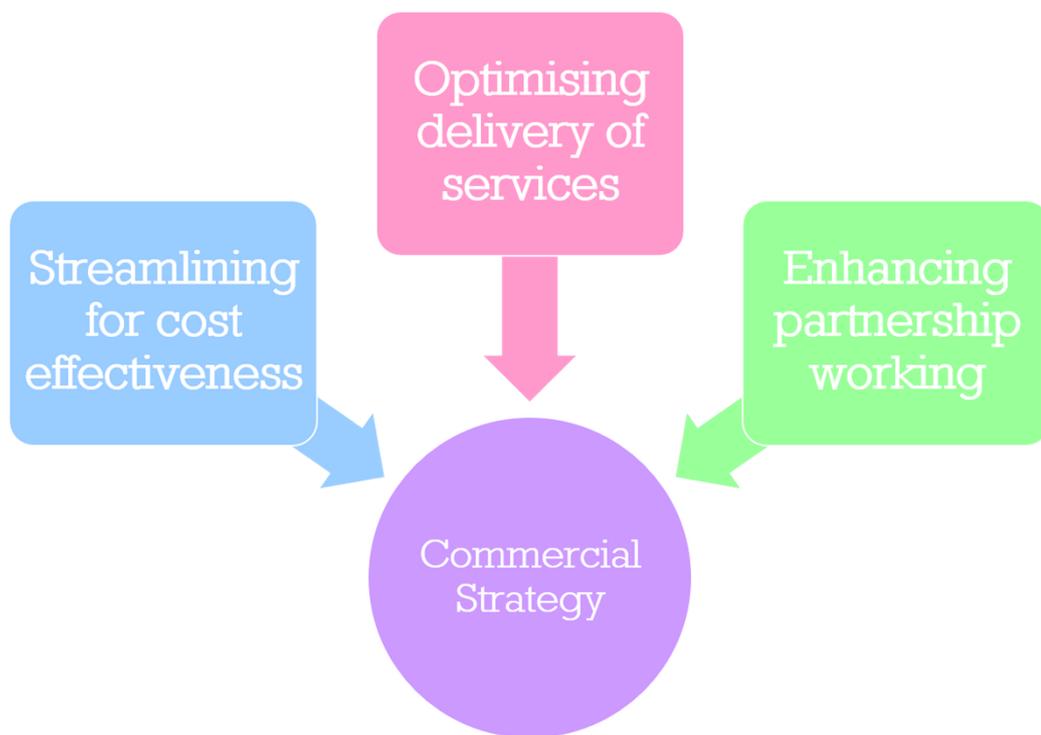
**For Our Commercial Strategy This Will Mean** - The introduction of new income sources through charges and trading, for example with local businesses, where appropriate.

Review of fees and charges and ensuring they take account of costs, demand and comparable charges made by other local authorities for similar services.

Providing concessions where necessary so that all charged for services are accessible to all.

### **The Aims Are:**

- To become more efficient and assess value for money, making sure that we deliver our services in the most cost effective way possible. Streamlining processes, joining up our back office functions and not



spending money on administration that could be invested in line with our priorities.

- Review mechanisms for delivering services to obtain the best fit for delivery to the residents of Wirral.



### 5.3 Managing Service Demand

- Explore and enhance partnership working. Collaborating more with others in the public, community, voluntary and faith sectors, as well as reducing duplication and delivering better outcomes for residents.

To ensure the Council's main objective of reducing inequality across the borough, the key priorities are:

- Prevention. Tackling the root cause of inequalities and demand on Council Services so that residents get the right support at the right time.
- Getting it right first time so that information and services are readily available to residents so they do not need to contact us
- Maximising self-serve options for accessing Council services for those who can.
- Independence. Enabling individuals, families and communities to help themselves and each other.
- Use of data and insight to monitor, predict and respond to demand.

The operation of the Council services are being reviewed to ensure that they are as effective as they can be. The Council is continually reviewing its services to ensure they are fit for purpose. This will be done by:

- Testing if the service is providing value for money for residents, that it is performing well, and delivering improved outcomes.
- For those that do need intensive type care and support the cost of care should be at a rate that reflects providers' actual costs and consideration of local factors. We will undertake cost of care exercises in relation to all key areas of provision. Benchmarking costs against other Councils in the region and nationally to understand comparative costs and outcomes.
- Using insight and intelligence to predict what the service use requirements are over the long term, to ensure we redesign services that are fit for the future.
- Consulting customers on what they think of the service and whether they value it as important to them.
- Considering whether to divest in the service where it is not meeting customer needs or providing value for money.
- Investing in approaches that enable people to be more independent, using technologies and other creative solutions to enable them to keep safe and manage their own lives without too much intervention from public services.
- Examining whether services should be provided in an alternative way and/or by an alternative provider.
- Partnering with other organisations enables us to provide the right services in the right way, as supplying better services is not about the organisation we work for, it's about the communities we serve.

The Council recognises some demand as a failure to enable people to be as independent as they can be, and to achieve the best outcomes that they can. Our approach is to provide people with the education, training and or support that they need to require less regular support from care services in the longer term.

Early intervention and prevention services have a key role in intervening before people come to need intensive support by recognising key factors that contribute to increasing independence and aiming to put support and or advice in to mitigate against these factors. Public Health and our community voluntary and faith sector organisations also play a key role in this.

The total financial resources of the Council and wider partners needs to be maximised, prioritised and channelled to the right areas and activities. All financial planning activity will be targeted towards ensuring that statutory services continue to be delivered and that services provide the best value formoney.

The Council and its partners will work together as a whole system in Wirral to ensure partners' resources contribute to improved outcomes for our residents to keep them independent, safe and well for longer. The Health and Wellbeing Board will lead the delivery of improved outcomes for the Borough.



## **Sports and Physical Activity on Wirral**

Following approval at Tourism, Leisure and Communities Committee November 2020, the Council has set out the basis for a future strategy for “Sport and Physical Activity” on Wirral (formerly the Leisure Strategy). The key focus of the strategy is to set out the priorities for sport and leisure facilities, services and activities and seeks to redress the balance between being a provider of facilities and tackling inequality through preventative, outreach and early intervention and prevention work across services.

It is not a statutory requirement to have a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, but it is seen as good practice to outline the Council’s plans for leisure services for the period 2020-2025 based on the evidence base and emerging COVID19 landscape.

The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy will guide and influence both internal and external teams as well as external partners and investors including Planning Teams, Public Health, Constituency Team, Children’s and Adult Services, national governing bodies, local sports clubs, and community groups. It will also link, support, and complement other strategic documents across Council services - children’s, adults, and regeneration to name but a few, both established and in development. The Vision for the Strategy is: “To work with our residents and partners to provide accessible and affordable services that help to make physical activity a part of everyone’s everyday lives”. The strategy will therefore represent an important next step in how we help our residents to take up physical activity and remain active throughout their lives. The strategy will cover four key strategic priorities:

- Active people
- Active partnerships
- Active places
- Active open spaces

By engaging with our communities across these themes, we aim to engage with all our residents across the borough, ensuring a collaborative and inclusive approach to meet the needs of our communities. This strategy will support in the reduction of inequalities across the borough, from a sport and physical activity perspective.

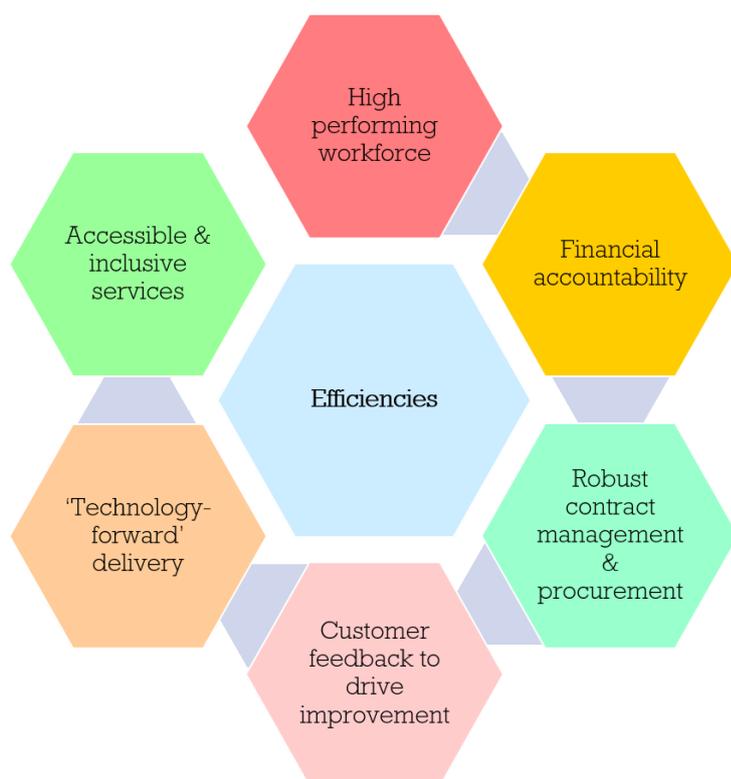
Within the last 12 months, many services have been brought together within the newly created Neighbourhood Services Directorate, bringing together these services to drive efficiencies and realign service provision and deliver objectives of the Wirral Plan. This approach, will help to secure the best future for our residents, inspired to achieve community prosperity, and level up inequalities, through our excellent people and services.

The Council has examined and challenged the way services are delivered, and so we are looking for improvements in the effectiveness of services to produce savings. We has also challenged the methods of delivery and which departments are delivering the most cost effective services to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Covid-19 has brought about an increase in demand for example in adult's services and this will inform the future transformational plans to ensure services and resources are used in the most effective way.



The key efficiencies we are prioritising are:

- Through ensuring we have a high-performing, flexible and skilled workforce who role model our values (Customer focused, accountable, ambitious, professional)
- By placing customers at the heart of everything we do
- Ensuring our services are accessible and inclusive and cater for the different needs of residents and communities.
- Using customer feedback and insight to drive continuous improvement.
- Culture of financial accountability and ownership
- Conducting lean reviews of ways of working, systems and processes to ensure we are as efficient as possible and to eliminate 'waste'
- Making the best use of technology and identifying innovative ways to deliver differently.
- Reviewing our approach to contract management and procurement to ensure it is as robust as possible.
- Empowering all staff to continuously improve services and customer experience.
- The Target Operating Model of the Council is fit for the future.



Through the Children and Families Improvement Programme, the Directorate received a much improved report from Ofsted. While there is still significant work to be done to improve in this area, progress has clearly been made as a result of recent investment in Children’s services.

Closer integrated health and care services has enabled people to have more rapid responses to deliver the right care at the right time in the right place. The aim is to reduce bureaucracy and to enable people to tell their story once.

Self-assessment and coordinated local neighbourhood care teams support increased value to be delivered across health and care with a strong focus on services that develop skills after an illness and provide essential equipment for example rapidly to meet peoples’ needs.

- Regular review and support from social care that focusses on local support networks and what people can do for themselves will help to mitigate demand pressures of circa £52m of the medium term financial horizon.
- The Worksmart project enables smarter and more efficient working practises, therefore staff are able to work anywhere in the borough at any time which suits their work-life balance.
- Over 10 years, our workforce has declined by 35%. Services are not provided the same way they were a decade ago. Customers are demanding different ways of interacting with the Council, some of which do not require human interaction.



## 5.5 The Change Programme

The new Target Operating Model sets out the organisation we aim to become, so that we are fit for purpose and can best deliver outcomes for residents with the resources available. The model builds on the vision for Wirral 2025. It starts with equity and tackling health inequalities but is also about ensuring we are financially sustainable in the future. It is informed by context and the external environment such as perma-austerity, the on-going pandemic, changing legislation, technological advances and an ageing population.

It creates a common understanding of how the council will operate, within and across functions, to deliver against the Wirral Plan 2025 Vision and sets out the overarching design principles that will guide this. The model shows how we will deliver against our strategic priorities and outcomes in the most efficient and effective way, it brings together existing transformation business cases and serves as a platform for new ones, aligning them to an end state.

Digitalisation continues to play a major part in providing better value for Council services. The past decade has seen the Council digitalise as much of the service as possible to make the customer journey as smooth as possible.



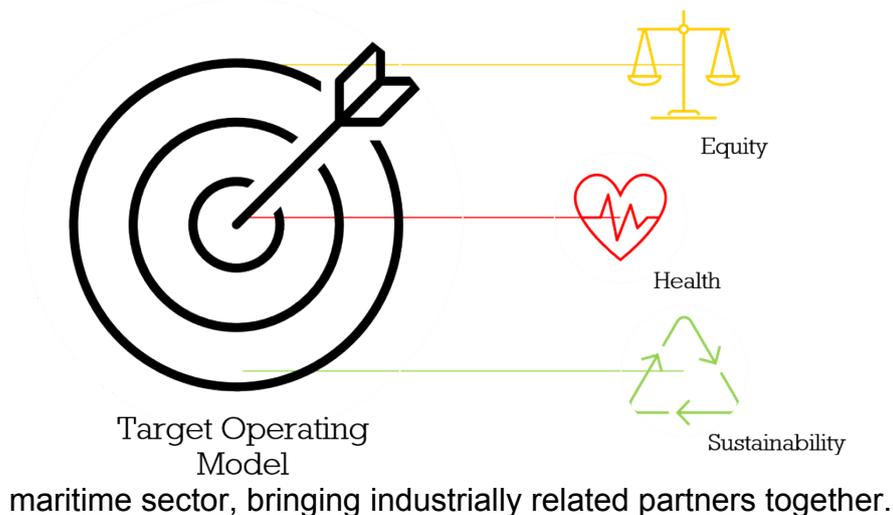
## 5.6 Boosting Economic Growth

The importance of economic growth is underpinned by the delivery of comprehensive regeneration plans, which will in turn secure jobs and a prosperous future whilst helping to avoid the need for difficult choices.

There are over £5bn of potential regeneration projects in the pipeline projected to deliver over 21,000 new homes and over 970,000sqm commercial floorspace, alongside significant public realm and environmental enhancements and the large-scale creation of new jobs.

The regeneration pipeline reflects the Local Plan Development Strategy, with a focus on renewing previously developed land largely to the east of the Borough. The pipeline will support the delivery of the Wirral Plan to 2025 and Local Plan priorities through a focus on sustainable approaches to new development; enhancing green infrastructure and active travel routes; creating vibrant mixed-use town centres; delivering new homes; securing skills development and employment opportunities for local residents; and creating the right environment for indigenous and new businesses to grow.

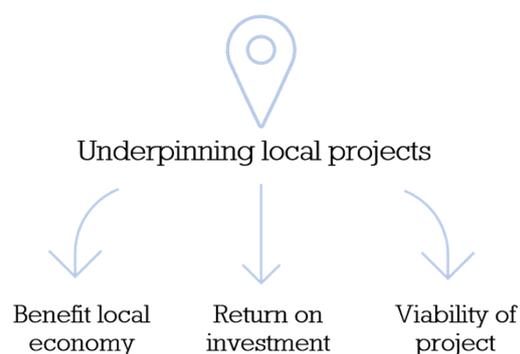
Working with Peel Land and Property, some 1,000 new homes are being developed at Wirral Waters on brownfield sites and the council is also working with Peel to bring forward a range of other projects such as the Maritime Knowledge Hub, which will create an iconic physical hub as a catalyst for the



Projects at West Float for the Modern Methods of Construction programme which seeks to support the delivery of new and retro-fitted sustainable housing. The programme will support the transition to a low carbon future and will create skills development and employment opportunities, as well as much needed homes, for local people.

The Council has secured £24.6m through the Future High Streets Fund. The funding will support the delivery of high quality homes, improved accessibility into the town centre and a new modern facility for Birkenhead Market. The Birkenhead Town Deal Investment Plan has been submitted to the Government to secure around £45m in investment to further drive forward regeneration in line with key priorities including delivering cultural, education and health & well-being infrastructure.

The Council also recognises the importance and regeneration potential of a number of areas across the borough including a provisional funding offer of £3.2 million to support the renewal of New Ferry. A Liscard Masterplan is being developed to set out a new vision for the sustainable future of Liscard, providing a more diverse offer with the community at its core. A masterplan for New Brighton has been commissioned, to harness New Brighton's potential as a special place to live, visit and do business, and to identify potential opportunities for enhancement, and is intending to develop a masterplan for West Kirby to support its future sustainability.



Comprehensive projects will realise high-quality, sustainable commercial offices, highly desirable, cutting-edge designs in residential properties, exciting cultural and leisure amenities, including developing the Argyle Street creative quarter and new retail, food and drink venues.

Supporting schemes to enhance digital and transport connectivity will add to a progressive growth environment which will lead to renewed opportunities for revenue, sustainable jobs and an improved quality of life and long-term prosperity for our communities.

### **Climate Emergency**

Following the Council's Environment and Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019 The organisation has been working on the development of a climate emergency action plan and policy, which sets out our ambitions and proposes that the Council as an organisation aims to achieve 'net carbon neutrality by 2030.'

The development of the Council's Environment and Climate Emergency has been supported by third party climate change experts, Local Partnerships, who

have confirmed that the Council achieving net carbon neutrality in 10 years is ambitious but possible. Through the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Council will lead the way locally and regionally in seeking the to be net zero carbon in 10 years.

The emerging Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan sets out the Council's journey to becoming carbon emissions neutral within the decade. Many actions have already been undertaken with key aspects of the Action Plan already in place such as the creating the Climate Emergency Team and launching the Tree, Woodland and Hedgerow Strategy earlier this summer. All aspects of the Council's function, ways of working, decision making, and service delivery will change as the Environment and Climate Emergency Policy and Action Plan are established.

The headline areas for delivery are:

- reduce emissions to net zero;
- fully informed decision making;
- becoming a carbon literate organisation;
- embrace home working;
- active transport (provision for cycling and walking);
- sustainable ways of operating;
- communication and engagement;
- carbon storage;
- climate resilient Wirral;
- preparing future generations; and
- measuring progress along the journey.

Already, the new ways of working which have been necessary because of the Covid-19 restrictions have created some unforeseen environmental benefits and opportunities. Many aspects of the way in which the Council works and provides services have fundamentally changed because of Covid-19 restrictions. These provide an opportunity to change the way we operate in the future.

## **6.0 Financial Challenges**

The MTF5 sets out the strategy for the next five years. The Council has a budget gap for 2022 onwards and the mitigating actions are continually under review and for 2021/22 the Council goes to the Borough for consultation and these are taken into account when setting the budget.

The budget gap for 2021 onwards has been exacerbated by to Covid-19. The Council has made an application to HM Treasury for a capitalisation directive for 2021/22 and 2022/23 through what is called an Exceptional Financial Support application. This application allows us to capitalise revenue costs

through borrowing. If the capitalisation directive is not approved then the Council will need to look at using its reserves, sell assets, stop services to balance the budget. If these actions above do not balance the budget then the Director of Resources would have to issue a s114 notice which only then allows us to provide statutory services and stop non-essential spend.

The MTFS projections contain anticipated growth in demand for services and changes that the Council has to manage and investment infrastructure.

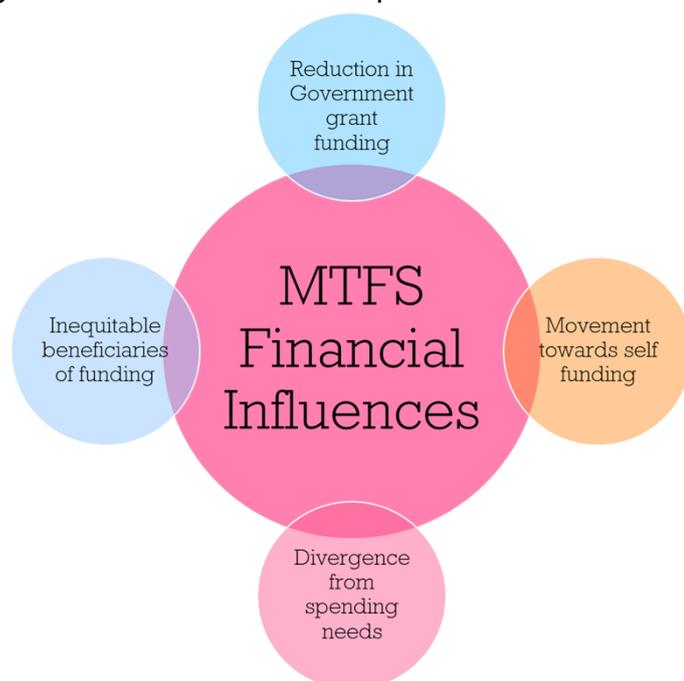
Our main expected expenditure areas are:

- Demographic
- Policy
- Economic
- Covid-19

There are areas where there may be additional costs to the Council in future years, however these remain uncertain at present.

Key areas to be addressed in the period of the MTFS is containment of demand for services, cost pressures and growth as a result of the impact of Covid-19. Achieving this objective will require a focus on prevention, integration and digitalisation, seeking to find solutions through prevention, efficiencies and innovation, as well as seeking to generate additional income.

Covid-19 is seeing resources redirected to other areas of the Council and to support the community while the Authority also continues with its day-to-day tasks and responsibilities. Covid-19 has had an impact on the planned saving whilst we continue to deliver on the prevention plans and saving, which are now being delayed into future years.



Forecasts are kept under constant review as changes occur and decisions are taken. Changes can result from inflation, financial pressures and variations in expected levels of income such as Council Tax. The biggest influences historically on the Council's budget are the continuation of reduction in government grant funding and a movement

towards self-funding for all Councils, we now have the impact of COVID and Brexit with respect to workforce in specific sectors.

Wirral continues to be a participant in a pilot scheme operating across the Liverpool City Region, which allows the Council to retain 100% of all business rates paid. Other Councils who are not participating in the scheme only retain up to 50% of business rates revenues, supported by other Government grants.

However, the Government is considering plans to move to a 75% retention scheme which could result in a 25% reduction in Wirral's income from business rates unless compensating grant income is provided to bridge the gap on transition.

The aim of reforms to the Business Rates Retention Scheme is to provide stronger financial incentives for Council's to boost local economies and tackle the underlying drivers of spending need.

However, changes may see income resources of Councils diverge from their spending needs. This is currently being considered as part of the Fair Funding Review (FFR):

- Commenced in late 2017;
- The outcomes of which are expected to be implemented in 2022/23, following delay;
- Further consultation regarding the Council's ability to generate income will be undertaken.

The outcome of the FFR is anticipated to have a major impact on the distribution of funding between Councils in England. The paper is a key part of the development of a new funding formula that will assess the spending needs and available resources in every Council.

The Council is determined to mitigate future demand pressures through a large share in growing business rate incomes, council tax and fees and charges. In addition to this, the Council will continue to restrain its costs as far as possible.

Despite costs being contained, the Council still continues to face an increase in expenditure and unavoidable financial demands. The assumption is that inflation is absorbed within budgets and only specific contracts receive budgeted inflationary increases.

Inflationary challenges are one element of the financial pressures faced. The continuous rise in demand led pressures for social care both in Children's and Adults Services adds to the pressures faced by the Council.

There are also unavoidable future years increases such as levy changes and pension increases. The Council has little influence in some of these areas over the costs it must incur.

The Council will continue to invest its financial resources on Statutory services and key Wirral priorities; annual expenditure will be focussed on those areas that are most important to ensure a five year balanced forecast.

## **Investments and Capital**

The Council investment strategy set outs the criteria which the Council invests, and this also includes the level of risks such as who it will invest with, subsidiaries, joint ventures, partners of the Council. It sets out the risks such as inflation, interest, legal, regulatory, credit and liquidity, the length of time the Council will lend for to avoid the risk of losses.

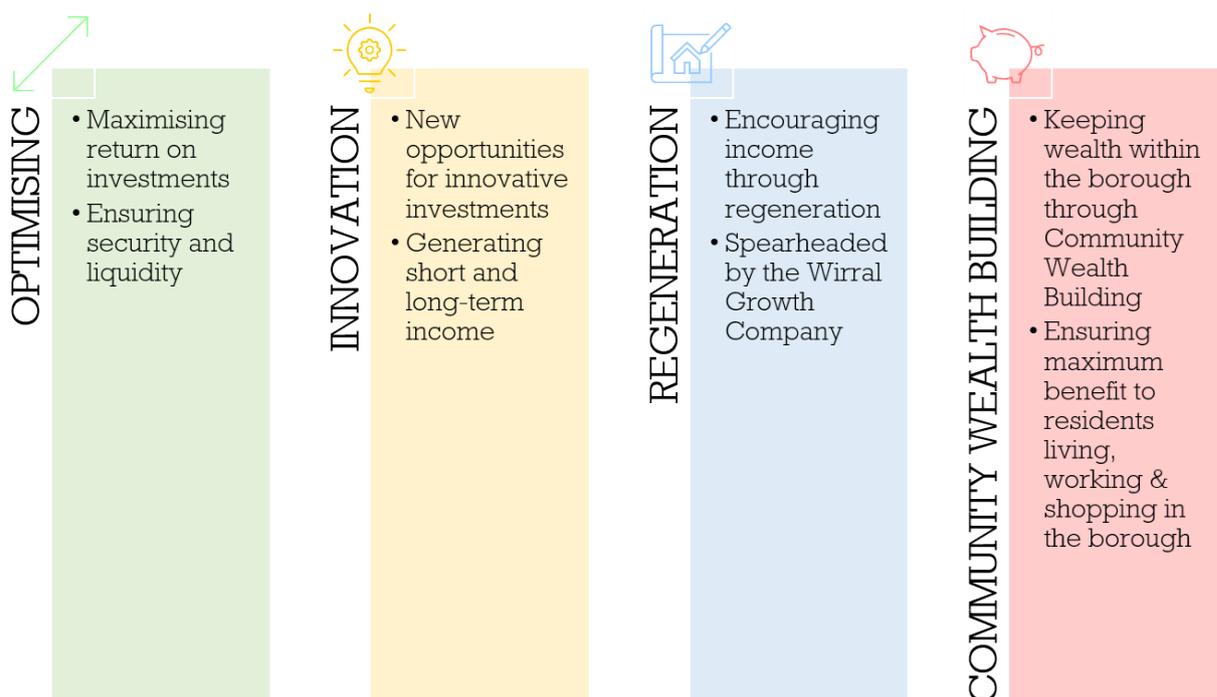
Investment in commercial properties is part of the Council portfolio and this consists of local commercial, industrial, leisure and residential sites. These investments allow the income to be reinvested in supporting services. The investment of the Wirral Growth Company Ltd is a joint venture with Muse and will bring future regeneration, jobs, income, and economic wealth to the borough. All investments whether financial investments or property carry risk, and these are assessed and where required an impairment loss will be recognised in the revenue budget.

### **This Will Mean:**

- The optimisation of returns on investments whilst ensuring security and liquidity.
- Examination of new opportunities for innovative investments, balancing risk with opportunity to be more risk aware to generate short and long-term income.
- Use of prudential or other borrowing where it is supported by a sound business case in accordance with the principles of the Treasury Management Strategy.
- Ensure that treasury management is recognised as a major contributor to the Council's overall financial standing, whilst operating within relevant guidelines and regulations.
- Income into the Council through regeneration of the borough by the Wirral Growth Company.
- An increase in economic growth through major investment generating income from rental agreements.
- Keeping the wealth within the borough as part of the Community Wealth Building Programme to ensure opportunities are available for local people to live, work and shop in the local area.

The capital programme should continue to invest in existing operational assets and the development of the large-scale infrastructure programmes with our partners. Capital expenditure is undertaken primarily from borrowing and the sale of assets and the use of their capital receipts to reinvest in further capital development. Borrowing is reviewed annually and is set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. Both the Treasury Management Strategy and the Investment Strategy are taken to Full Council in March for approval.

Capital development is key to the delivery of the Council improvement programme and the Council has been successful in being awarded funding for



regeneration of the Borough commencing in Birkenhead.. There are a number of sites across the Borough where significant development is being undertaken to bring new and support existing business and families to the area. We are doing this by using existing assets, land and building and acquisitions through prudential borrowing. These investments are critical to the priorities of the Council and is reflected in the funding growth to support our budgets.

**This Will Mean:**

- Focusing on our core purpose and supporting the Council’s priority outcomes.
- Taking a holistic view and ensuring a strategic fit.
- Being risk aware.
- Ensuring the capital programme is deliverable.
- Identifying opportunities.

## 7. Reducing Costs

Improving and modernising the Council is about understanding and responding to the needs of our residents. This means getting services right on a daily basis.

Communities need assurance that we are providing value for money for the taxes they pay and allocating resources to the areas that matter most to them.

To enable this we will review all services to ensure they are providing value for money. Drawing on benchmarking and intelligence information on other Council's operations, we will review the cost and configuration of all services.

The use of benchmarking and predictive modelling technology, CFO insights will assist with this approach. The tool provides a three-dimensional way in which to understand Council income and spend by category, the outcomes for that spend and the socio-economic context within which a Council operates. This enables for comparison against others, not only nationally but in the context of their geographical and statistical neighbours.

We have also taken action over the past two years to reduce our reliance on agency staff and consultants.

### **The Aims Are:**

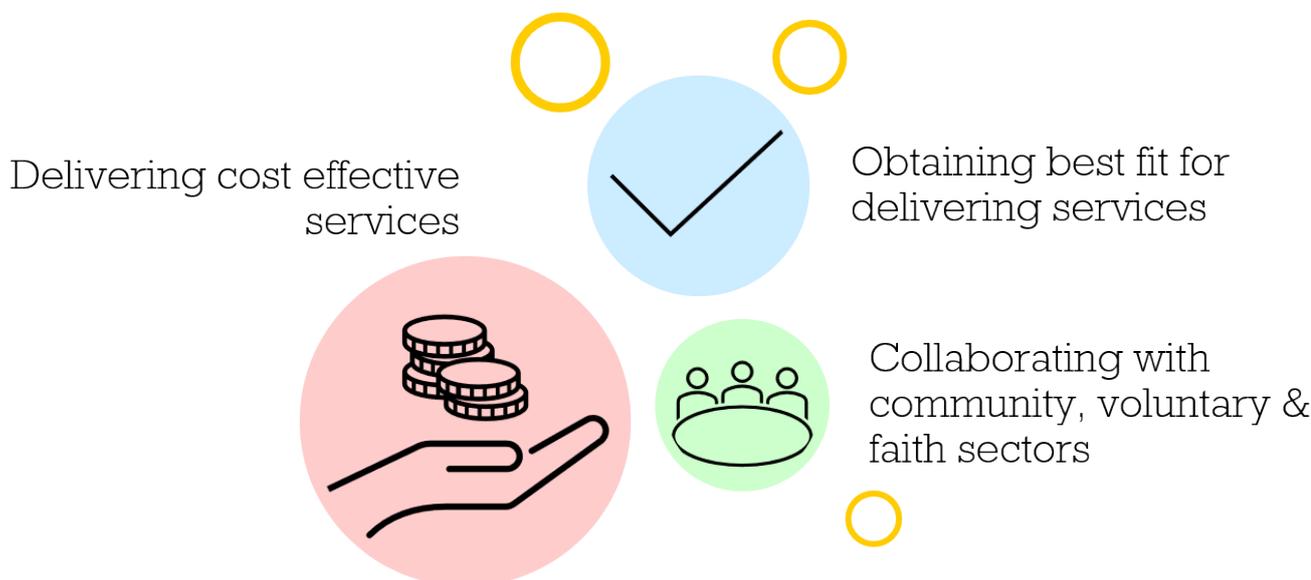
- To become more efficient and assess value for money, making sure that we deliver our services in the most cost effective way possible. Streamlining processes, joining up our back office functions and not spending money on administration that could be invested in line with our priorities.
- Review mechanisms for delivering services to obtain the best fit for delivery to the residents of Wirral.
- Explore and enhance partnership working. Collaborating more with others in the public, community, voluntary and faith sectors, as well as reducing duplication and delivering better outcomes for residents.

## 8. Wirral Response to the Financial Challenges

The Council has a sound plan in its response the future uncertainty that may bring additional financial challenges. As described, plans for regeneration will leverage more investment from government and private sector to boost the overall economy of the Borough.

A long term plan for prevention will see leisure and cultural activities become more outreach focussed to enable residents to access services to improve their own mental and physical health. Promoting independence should see less demand for social care services and utilising the improved and revitalised relationship with communities will see them take more accountability for local decision making and service they need.

The emphasis for future years will be on the challenging services the

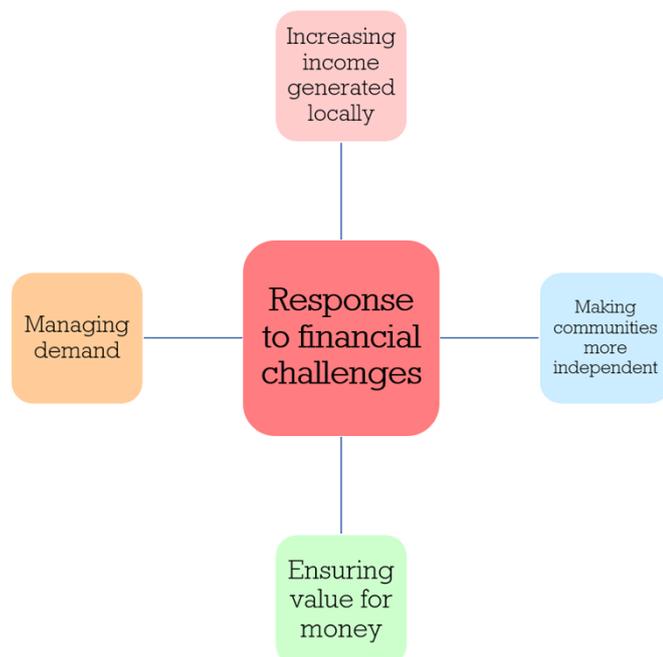


Council continues to fund, integrating with partner organisations to focus on the overall ‘public purse’ and ensuring that efficient ways of working are at the heart of the organisation.

To be successful the Council will call on all Wirral residents to play their part. For example, becoming an active presence in the community and supporting local shops and businesses.

The Council’s Strategic Response to the funding gap is as follows:

- Increasing income generated locally.
- Reducing costs: Ensuring value for money.
- Reducing Costs: Managing



demand and making communities more independent.

## 9 Conclusion

To respond to and deliver the Wirral Plan 2025, over the period of the MTFS, Wirral Council will increase income, invest in services, manage demand and review service provision through supporting local communities to be more independent.

The total financial resources of the Council and its partners needs to be maximised, prioritised and channelled to the right areas and activities. All financial planning activity will be targeted towards ensuring that resources are matched to the priorities identified in the Wirral Plan, ensuring that services continue to be delivered and represent best value for money.

Successful delivery of the Wirral Plan and the MTFS in this challenging period is dependent on:

- Continuation of a new and focussed approach to economic development in the borough. Driving jobs and growth being the key to increasing funding levels. Economic development will also improve wellbeing for residents and bring individual organisations financial stability.
- A community approach to decisions and delivery with active community involvement, resulting in communities finding their own solutions.
- Focus on early help and prevention to support independence and reduce demand on services.
- Prioritisation of resources to key areas.
- A successful model for engaging neighbourhoods

## Financial Resilience Plan

### Management of Expenditure and Income



### Introduction

The financial position for Local Councils continues to be challenging. To respond over the period, improving and maintaining financial resilience is a requirement that the MTFS seeks to address. To be able to cope with financial shocks and unpredictable events is key. There are a number of ways of building resilience:

- Management of resources.
- Increase reserves.
- Income generation.
- Forecasting and management of expenditure.
- Developing a holistic view of expenditure and spending.
- Rethinking the way services are delivered.
- Anticipating what might take place.

In improving our financial resilience, two methods emerge as the most effective in doing so:

- Improved Financial Management - A major aspect of financial resilience is managing in changing conditions and contexts.
- Increased Income - The diversification of our income through various Council approaches such as regeneration and commercialisation.

## Financial Resilience

Financial resilience is a key part of the MTFs period through to 2026 for the following reasons:

- Increasing financial pressures:

This pressure on Local Government is raising the profile of financial resilience in the sector. The unknown longer term impact of Covid-19 could exacerbate future pressures.

- Reliance on one-off funding:

The reliance on one-off funding such as capital receipts and in year solutions have previously mitigated any adverse financial pressures that have developed in major service areas part way through the financial year, however such a reliance is not sustainable and should be avoided for recurrent pressures and expenditure.

Following this, key issues have been identified:

- Reserves and balances need to be increased,
- The budget for 2021/22 is based on a single year's funding, as confirmed in the Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2020 which makes longer term planning difficult.

## Vision for Wirral and its Finances

Building our resilience is a key part of the MTFs planning for our finances. A major part of this is getting the basics of financial management right, especially given the challenges and changes over recent years.

Within this context, the MTFs and the annual budget will continue to prioritise the objectives of the Wirral Plan 2025, protecting our services for the most needy and vulnerable. Operating in an environment of reduced Government funding and striving towards becoming a self-funding body means that the Council needs to plan for a resilient budget that includes strong income sources to protect key services for our residents.

Over the period of the MTFs, the Council will seek to accomplish:

- A balanced annual budget.
- Growing and diversifying income generation, sustainably.
- Maximising returns from Council investments with a prudent approach.
- Maintaining investment in key services and outcomes that support the Wirral Plan 2025.
- Maintaining the right level of earmarked reserves and general fund balances to protect Council services and mitigate against future risks.
- A capital programme aligned to achieving the outcomes in the Wirral Plan 2025 and maximising investments to save opportunities.

- Maximising income generation and collection.
- Using best practise financial management and control of Council budgets.
- Minimising fraud and corruption.
- Fit for purpose annual accounts.

Across the MTFs period the Council will continually review and improve its financial resilience to ensure it can demonstrate long term financial stability and achieve what it is seeking to accomplish over the period.

There are four key elements to our financial resilience strategy:

- Getting routine financial management right.
- Routinely benchmarking our services.
- Clear plans for delivering savings.
- Prudent use of reserves.

The key areas for development over the period are as follows:

- The future delivery of the MTFs and annual budgets.
- Members setting a tone that financial discipline is important.
- Focusing the finite resources of finance and audit on key areas of financial risk.
- Further developing enablers that provide effective financial management. This includes budget holder training, improving management information availability, modernising the financial management system and embedding the financial business partner structure.

### **General Fund Balancing & Earmarked Reserves**

The maintenance of General Fund Balances and Earmarked Reserves at an appropriate level is part of the Council's strategic financial planning and approach to the management of risks it will face in the future. Both need to be maintained at sufficient levels to ensure that unforeseen financial pressures can be met without jeopardising the viability of the Council.

The Council's approach to how it manages its reserves are based on Wirral's local circumstances and more recently the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's reserves. The amount held is decided by the Council in line with its perceived future local demands. This is particularly important in an environment where future funding remains uncertain.

In determining the appropriate level of reserves, the section 151 officer assesses several local factors. In determining the appropriate level for the General Fund Balance, the Council has to consider the strategic, operational and financial risks facing it.

This approach is supported by Grant Thornton (the Council's external auditors) and by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy - a professional body which issues guidance in this area). The auditors wrote to the Council in October 2020 addressing the financial sustainability, whilst acknowledging the work being undertaken to address the issues and the difficult decisions this brings.

The Council adopts a risk based approach to financial planning, which is used to determine the minimum level of reserves required.

The aims of this approach are to:

- Ensure the General Fund Balances are set at a reasonable level. This is the Council's last line of defence and should only be used if unforeseen difficulties emerge.
- Ensure Earmarked Reserves are set at a reasonable level to cover specific financial risks faced by the Council. This may also be used on a short term temporary basis for other purposes, provided the funding is replaced in future years.

Over recent years the overall level of available reserves has continued to decline. Previously, one-off funding and the use of flexible capital receipts has been used to close the budget gap. In future years, the budget gap will be closed through the implementation of new financial proposals, additional income, and reducing pressures.

### **General Fund Balances**

Wirral Council's risk based strategy is applied in the context of the current state of the economy, other financial risks facing the Council and the underlying financial assumptions within the MTFS.

The setting and justification of the General Fund Balance, at a minimum of £10m for 2021/22, is part of the MTFS and is consistent with previous years. It is crucial the Council has sufficient contingency in this reserve to maintain financial standing and resilience. For Local Councils there is no statutory minimum level and it is for each Council to take local circumstances into consideration. CIPFA guidance issued in 2014 states the chief financial officer should take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing their authority. The assessment of risks should include internal and external risks. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 states that Councils are required to consider their levels of reserves at least once a year.

In their paper, 'Local Authority Reserves and Balances', CIPFA state the following factors as relevant to determining the level of balances:

- Treatment of inflation and interest rates.
- Treatment of demand led pressures.
- Treatment of planned efficiency savings / productivity gains.

- The financial risks inherent in any new funding partnerships, major outsourcing agreements or major capital developments.
- The availability of reserves, Government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions.
- The general financial climate to which the authority is subject.

In determining the appropriate level of General Fund balances, the Council takes account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the Council. In planning the financial future and the level of reserves, the Council considers the main risks and uncertainties including:

- Legislative changes.
- Inflation.
- Grants and partnerships.
- Volume and demand changes.
- Budget savings.
- Insurance and claims.
- Energy security and resilience.

The foundations for determining the level of General Fund balances are consideration of risks, available funding and a percentage factor, which will vary according to the level of risk to produce a value.

This has been Wirral Council's approach since November 2012 and is reviewed in line with CIPFA guidance. A consideration of the risks and the financial circumstances that might be faced by Wirral for 2021/22 has been made. The risk factors used in the Council's assessment follow CIPFA guidance.

Level of General Fund is currently £10m however due to the impact of Covid-19 and the future uncertainty of its impact it is now advised that General Fund balances should be increased to a more sustainable level.

## **Earmarked Reserves**

The Council maintains Earmarked Reserves in addition to General Fund Balances which are set aside for specific purposes. The Council is obliged to maintain a number of legally restricted reserves (sums of money that the Council is required to set aside for legally defined purposes). These reserves are set aside by the Council to meet future expenditure such as decisions causing anticipated expenditure to be delayed. As such they are only available to be spent on specific purposes.

The key categories for Earmarked Reserves are as follows:

### 1. Insurance & Taxation:

Assessed liabilities including potential cost of meeting outstanding Insurance Fund claims.

### 2. Business Rates:

To cover potential costs of appeals and retention rate risk.

3. Schools Related:

Which can only be used by schools and are not available to pay for Council services

4. Support Service Activities and Projects:

Includes Government Grant funded schemes when a grant is received and the sum of money is earmarked for the completion of programmes.

A robust reserves strategy is a key part of the financial resilience of the Council and provides the first line of defence in underpinning the statutory requirement to set an annually balanced budget. Adequate reserve levels help to prevent local authorities from overcommitting themselves financially, mitigate against risk and provide organisational stability in the event of unanticipated, unforeseen or emergency spending being required. An assessment of the adequacy of reserves is a key statutory requirement to be undertaken at least annually.

## **Risk**

Risk is an integral part of financial resilience and is embedded in all that we do. To enable the Council to monitor its financial resilience it needs to take an assessment of risk across all activities to ensure that where corporate risks have been identified that these are being mitigated and monitored on a regular basis. The Council's Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed and updated.

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## APPENDIX 12 - SCHOOLS BUDGET 2021-22

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 1.1 The Schools Funding Allocations were issued by the Department for Education on 17th December 2020. The format of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is unchanged with Local Authority allocations determined by the National Funding Formula (NFF) for Schools, High Needs and Early Years.

In summary, the main factors driving DSG in 2021-22 are as follows:

- school funding increased by 4% overall with every secondary school allocated at least £5,415 per pupil and every primary school allocated at least £4,180 per pupil
  - funding from the teachers' pay grant and the teachers' pension employer contribution grant (TPG/TPECG) has been added to the formulae from 2021-22 and equates to £180 per pupil for primary schools and £265 per pupil for secondary schools
  - local authorities will continue to set a Minimum Funding Guarantee in their local formulae, which for 2021-22 is between +0.5% and +2.00% (previously +0.50% to +1.84%)
  - the incorporation of the 2019 update to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), ensuring that the deprivation funding through the NFF continues to target schools most likely to need additional funding
  - the Schools Block continues to be ring-fenced with limited flexibility to transfer up to 0.5% of the schools' block to High Needs with Schools Forum approval
  - Early Years hourly rates paid to local authorities will increase by £0.08 for 2-year old's and £0.06 for 3&4-year old's
  - High needs funding is increasing by a further £730m ensuring that every local authority receives an increase of at least 8% per head of population
  - central schools services funding in 2021 to 2022 will increase by 4% for the ongoing responsibilities that local authorities continue to have for all schools, while funding for historic commitments within this block will decrease by a further 20% for those local authorities in receipt of this funding
- 1.1 The budget allocations to services do not take account of any financial pressures related to COVID-19. In preparing the schools budget for 2021-22 it has been assumed that any consequences of and/or requirements associated with COVID-19 will be separately funded or manageable within existing resources.

### 2.0 GRANT FUNDING

#### 2.1 Pupil Premium

In addition to DSG, Pupil Premium provides funding targeted towards deprivation. It has been confirmed that Pupil Premium will continue for 2021-22 although the rates will remain at 2020-21 levels.

## 2.2 Other Grant Funding

2.2.1 The funding for Primary PE and Sport Premium, Year 7 Catch-up Premium, and Extended Rights to Home to School Transport are expected to continue in 2021-22, although this is still to be confirmed.

2.2.2 The teachers' pay grant and teachers' pension employer contributions grant is now included in the NFF for schools and high needs. Maintained nursery schools, and schools and academies with early years pupils will continue to receive these as separate grants for 2021-22. Allocations will be published in Spring 2021.

## 2.3 Dedicated Schools Grant

2.3.1 From April 2018 DSG has been made up of 4 blocks including the Central Schools Services Block and with restrictions on moving funding between the blocks, as described above. The blocks indicate the level of expenditure anticipated in each budget area. The allocation for 2021-22 indicates a £24.5m increase (excluding Early Years) which is an overall increase of 8.9%. The budgets presented have not transferred any funding between block allocations.

2.3.2 The Blocks in their current format are summarised as follows:

<b>Block</b>	<b>2020-21 £</b>	<b>2021-22 £</b>	<b>Change £</b>	<b>Change %</b>
Schools Block	211,908,043	230,289,791	18,381,748	8.67%
Early Years	21,354,340	21,644,246	289,906	1.36%
High Needs	40,792,890	46,623,200	5,830,310	14.29%
Central Schools	2,139,153	2,153,432	14,279	0.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>276,194,426</b>	<b>300,710,669</b>	<b>24,516,243</b>	<b>8.88%</b>

2.3.3 The allocations for the Schools and Central Schools Services funding blocks have been updated for changes in pupil numbers. Pupil numbers are those recorded in the October 2020 census, and have changed as follows:

<b>Pupil Numbers</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>All-Through</b>	<b>Total</b>
October 19 census	25,391	17,555	1,007	43,953
October 20 census	25,253	17,875	988	44,116
Increase / (Decrease)	(138)	320	(19)	163

2.3.4 Early Years funding is based on a combination of the census in January 2020 and January 2021 and thus will not be confirmed until Spring 2021. The funding of £21.644m announced in December is based on the January 2020 census and is to be reviewed in Spring 2021 thus the funding available is indicative at this time.

2.3.5 The High Needs Block provides resources to fund high needs students up to the age of 24, including the Hospital School. Additional funding has been provided to

meet growing needs across all authorities. For Wirral, an additional £5.8m has been included for this. Growth can be used flexibly to adjust locally to high needs places as well as to the top ups provided. Several changes are described later in this report.

### **3.0 BUDGET ALLOCATIONS**

#### **3.1 Schools Block £230.3m**

3.1.1 This budget reflects the delegated budgets allocated to both maintained and academy mainstream primary and secondary schools. In November 2019, Schools Forum supported this block being redistributed to maintained schools using the formula factor rates used in the National Funding Formula thus this is the basis on which funding will be allocated to individual schools.

#### **3.1.2 Academies**

Currently there are 16 secondary academies and 13 primary academies. Academies are independent from the local authority and are funded directly from the ESFA, however Regulations require Wirral to continue to calculate their budgets which are then deducted from Wirral's DSG.

#### **3.1.3 Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)**

Local Authorities have discretion over the level of MFG in their local formula as part of the 'soft' formula. For 2021-22 LAs can apply MFG of between plus 0.5% and plus 2.00% per pupil to protect schools from large formula changes. Following a consultation with all primary, secondary, and special schools, School Forum in November 2020 supported a plus 1.25% Minimum Funding Guarantee for the 2021-22 mainstream schools funding formula.

#### **3.2 Early Years Block £21.6m**

3.2.1 This Block funds the costs of Early Years Education for 2, 3 and 4-year-old children in schools, nurseries, and private voluntary and independent providers for both the universal and extended entitlement. Most of this funding is directed through the Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF). This is allocated to Local Authorities based on an hourly rate which, for 2021-22, has increased by £0.08 for 2-year old's, and £0.06 for 3- and 4-year-olds.

3.2.2 There are small elements covering SEN costs and some central Early Years support costs. Amounts held centrally are within the nationally defined limits of 5%.

3.2.3 This Block also includes allocations for Maintained Nurseries (MNS) to enable local authorities to protect the level of funding to MNS prior to the introduction of the EYNFF, Disability Access Fund and Pupil Premium.

#### **3.3 High Needs Block £46.6m**

This budget covers a range of related activities. The allocation of funding to each activity is based on the "place plus" funding system introduced by the DfE in April 2013 and includes:

- Special schools (pre- and post-16), and non-maintained special schools, both of which receive a base level funding of £10,000 per place.

- School bases which receive £6,000 per place.
- Alternative Provision Bases funding of £10,000 per place.
- Place funding in Wirral's FE provision at Wirral Met College and Birkenhead 6<sup>th</sup> Form College of £6,000 per place.
- Additional funding over and above that provided for places in the form of "top ups" is provided on a per pupil basis. The top up, or "plus" element of funding, takes account of the agreed assessed needs of pupils and is paid by the "commissioner" responsible; this may be Wirral Children's Services, a school, or another Local Authority. Wirral's top up system uses 5 bands to allocate funding across special schools, resourced bases, and alternative provision. Non-maintained Special Schools also receive a top up.
- The costs of Top Ups for all education and training for post 16 specialist provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD) in colleges and private providers.
- The Hospital Schools budget.
- The cost of placements in Independent Special Schools.
- The costs of Education, Health and Care Plans / Statements.
- The central provision of SEN support.

### 3.4 **Central School Services Block £2.2m**

This block provides funding for LAs to carry out central functions on behalf of pupils in state-funded maintained schools and academies in England. Funding previously allocated to LAs for Education Services Grant (ESG) retained duties is included within this block, together with funding for historic commitments.

Funding allocated to Local Authorities for historic commitments, which for Wirral are the contribution to combined budgets and schools retirement costs (school closure), has been reduced by 20% in line with the DfE's expectation that these costs will unwind over time.

The funding for ongoing responsibilities includes:

- School Licenses
- Admissions
- Schools Forum
- Former ESG retained duties
- Capital Expenditure from Revenue (PFI costs)

The treatment of these budgets, which are considered in further detail later in this report, is in accordance with national guidance.

## 4.0 **2021-22 BUDGET CHANGES**

### 4.1 **Individual Schools Budget**

#### 4.1.1 **Primary, Secondary and Academy Budgets £8.920m increase**

The significant changes within this area are as follows:

- There is a net increase in school rolls, which results in an overall budget increase of £1.04m. There are 163 more pupils on roll in October 2020 compared to October 2019. Primary numbers have reduced by 131 from 25,778 to 25,647 (a 0.51% reduction) while Secondary numbers have increased by 294 from 18,175 to 18,469 (a 1.62% increase).
- There has been an increase in the estimated Business Rates payable of £36.9k resulting from inflation and re-assessment of the liability for 3 schools.
- The PFI Affordability Gap delegated to schools has been increased by the estimated cost of inflation (£23.7k). This will be updated once the December 2020 RPI rate is published.
- There is Headroom within the budget, which arises from a difference in the pupil funding received in DSG and the funding allocated within the ISB. This totals £7.815m (3.73%) and has been split proportionately between primary and secondary budgets.

#### 4.1.2 **6<sup>th</sup> Form Funding**

The Schools Budget includes funding for High Needs students in 6<sup>th</sup> Forms. All other post 16 funding is through the National Funding Formula for 6<sup>th</sup> Forms.

#### 4.1.3 **High Needs Places £0.390m increase**

Places in specialist provision within Local Authority areas continue to be determined by each LA in consultation with schools and providers. There is flexibility to adjust this so that places broadly reflect take up by pupils and this has resulted in a net reduction of 5 places at SEN bases.

In December 2020, 142 places in specialist provision Year 7 September 2021 were expressed preferences by parents/carers. The final allocation for Year 6 Year 7 key transfer will not be known until 15 February 2021 (statutory deadline). In addition to these 142 requests, it is anticipated that there will be additional requests for specialist provision after 15 February and before 31 August 2021. There are (approximately) 135 potential places available in specialist provision in September 2021. There are therefore more pupils due to leave primary special schools year 6 in August 2021 than will be leaving secondary special schools.

In addition, need has been identified for an additional KS2 base, an SEMH base, a CAMHS step-down base and a further class at an existing special school. Further need may be identified during the financial year 2021-22.

For 2020-21 this growth in demand was addressed by including additional places in the budget and a further 40 places have been set aside for this purpose in the 2021-22 budget and will be allocated via a commissioning process.

All changes have been reported to the ESFA where necessary and have been reflected in the budget as follows:

#### **Full Year Effect of changes made in 2020-21**

- Bebington Sports College increase by 5 places to 30
- Woodchurch High Engineering College reduce 5 places to 15
- Oldershaw reduce by 5 places to 30

## Changes from April 2021

- Additional places introduced – 40 places

### 4.1.4 Teachers Pay and Pension Employer Contribution Grants £10.303m increase

Funding previously received through the Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grants (TPECG) supplementary fund, has been allocated through the schools NFF and High Needs funding. The impact of this is to increase funding for mainstream schools by £180 per Primary school pupil and £265 per Secondary school pupil. Similarly funding for special schools has been increased by £661 per pupil based on actual cost in 2020-21.

This will streamline the way in which the funding through the grants is delivered, as well as recognising the fact that these grants are part of schools' core funding.

### 4.1.5 Early Years £0.436m increase

Early Years funding for 2021-22 will be based on census counts in January 2021 (5/12ths) and January 2022 (7/12ths). The final allocation will not therefore be known until June/July 2022. Early Years funding announced in December 2020 is based on the January 2020 census but will be updated to reflect 2021 census data once it becomes available. The budget has been set on the basis that take-up will be around 98% of the pupil numbers identified in the January 2020 census and will be flexed during 2021-22 as census information is updated.

The January 20 census showed a falling roll for 2-year olds and universal - & 4-year-olds compared to the January 19 census, mirroring a drop in birth rates for the related period. A further drop in numbers is predicted for the January 2021 census, although this will be kept under review.

The extended offer of an additional 15 hours for working parents was introduced from autumn 2017, with the DfE's expectation being that extended hours claimed would eventually be around 60% of universal hours. 2021-22 funding is expecting this take-up to be 48.8% reflecting a 3% increase from 2020-21. The 2021-22 budget has been set on the basis that take-up of the extended offer will be 48.8%.

Pupil numbers	Jan-20	Jan-19	Change
2-year olds (PTE)	1,027	1,055	-28
3/4-year olds (universal PTE)	4,680	4,814	-134
3/4-year olds (extended PTE)	2,283	2,204	79

As outlined above in paragraph 4.2.1 the hourly rates paid by DfE to Wirral will increase by £0.08 to £5.38 for 2-year olds and £0.06 to £4.45 for 3&4-year-olds. The expenditure budget relates to the payments to providers and this will aim to maximise the pass-through of funding to providers whilst ensuring that the service can respond to need and uncertainty.

## 4.2 High Needs Top-Ups £2.560m

The proposed budget for SEN Top-ups is £29.4m, an increase of £2.5m from 2020-21 which is made up as follows:

- **Statements £0.291m** – a net increase of £91.1k for personal budgets and 0.52m plus £200k for units of resource for out of borough placements. These increases reflect the current/on-going level of demand.
- **Special Schools £0.368m** – special school top-ups budgets are under increasing pressure, with increased complexity of need being reflected in the application of higher rate top-up bands. The budget also assumes all special schools are full throughout the year and this includes the additional 40 places identified in 5.2.3.
- **FE and 6<sup>th</sup> Form £0.367m** – increasing demand and complexity has put pressure on this budget and the increase will support the current level of on-going plans plus potential further growth of around 30 new plans.
- **Exceptional Need £0.568m** – this budget has been increased to reflect the growth in applications from September 2020 plus potential growth for a further 20 new applications.
- **Independent Special Schools £0.986m** – there has been an increase of in this budget to reflect the funding currently committed resulting from increase in demand, as well as an estimate of further placements made during 2021-22.
- **Nursing Support (£0.060m)** – this net reduction is made up of a reduction of £200k for the Clinical Psychology Team to reflect how the service is currently delivered. The £200k reduction has been partially offset by the additional funding that replaces the Teachers Pay and Pension Employer Contribution Grants in relation to centrally employed teaching staff and additional funding for medical equipment and specialist 'learning beds.
- **Home Tuition £0.000m** – the budget for the Home Tuition service remains unchanged for 2020-21, despite projected overspends in 2019-20. This is due to a planned review of the service and charges during 2021.
- **Contingency £0.040m** – this budget has been increased by £50k and covers the potential cost of:
  - The 90% guarantee to maintained mainstream schools to limit the demands on low-cost high incidence SEN budgets used to support statements (£145k).
  - Any unforeseen consequences arising from top-ups, places, or exceptional cases (£265k).

These changes are summarised in the table below, and together with the place changes previously outlined, mean that the pressures estimated on the High Needs budget total £2.950m.

	2021-22 budget £	2020-21 budget £	Change £
<b>Statements</b>			
Early Years	450,000	450,000	0
Primary	3,243,600	3,243,600	0
Secondary (including 5th Forms)	2,323,600	2,323,600	0
Primary & Secondary - out of borough	200,000	0	200,000
Personal Budgets	200,000	108,700	91,300
Other	111,100	111,100	0
	<b>6,528,300</b>	<b>6,237,000</b>	<b>291,300</b>
<b>Top-ups</b>			
Special Schools (& 6th Forms / Hospital)	8,867,600	8,427,900	439,700
SEN Units (resourced & AP)	976,300	1,048,600	(72,300)
Alternative Provision	1,318,200	1,318,200	0
Further Education (6th form college & providers)	2,050,000	1,683,200	366,800
Exceptional Need	1,350,000	782,000	568,000
Nursing Support	160,000	159,900	100
Contingency	400,000	360,000	40,000
Independent Non-maintained Special Schools	5,120,000	4,134,000	986,000
Home Tuition	400,500	400,500	0
	<b>20,642,600</b>	<b>18,314,300</b>	<b>2,328,300</b>
<b>Others</b>			
SEN Support	2,132,300	2,192,200	(59,900)
Special Schools Transport	58,200	58,200	0
	<b>2,190,500</b>	<b>2,250,400</b>	<b>(59,900)</b>
<b>High Needs Total</b>	<b>29,361,400</b>	<b>26,801,700</b>	<b>2,559,700</b>

### 4.3 Central School Services £226.2m increase

4.3.1 **De-delegated budgets** - as in previous years the budgets held for Contingency, Special Staff (maternity, paternity, and trade union duties), the School Library Service, Insurance (Governors Aided), and Behaviour Support have been delegated to schools, and a decision will be required for any de-delegation from existing school budgets for these services. A decision will also be required for de-delegation of costs associated with former General Duties of the Education Services Grant and School Improvement.

4.3.2 **Central School Services block** - the centrally held budgets for 2021-22, mainly funded by the Central Schools Services Block of DSG have increased by £0.226m. The services delivered by these budgets are explained below along with the reasons for any changes to the budget for 2021-22.

- School Admissions (£380,000). This budget is required to meet the costs of supporting and administering the authority's school admissions process including the 11 plus. A small increase of £7.8k has been applied to this budget to reflect forecast staff costs.

- School redundancy costs (£81,000). This budget covers the continuing cost of premature retirement of teachers and staff that have arisen from closing schools. There is no change to this budget.
- Licences and Subscriptions (£243,800). The DfE purchases a single national licence for all state funded schools. Licences cover areas such as the Copyright Licence Agency, the Education Recording Agency, the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society, and a School Printed Music Licence. The 2021-22 budget has reduced by £1,100 to reflect the costs announced by DfE in December 2020.
- Schools Forum (£10,600). Unchanged from 2020-21).
- Contingency (£7,600). This relates to the 'headroom' within the Central School Services Block for 2021-22.
- Contributions to combined budgets (£700,500). Unchanged from 2020-21.
- Early Years (£518,700 funded from the Early Years block). Unchanged from 2020-21.
- The Authority's contribution to the PFI Affordability Gap (£1,459,642, an increase of £211,942, funded by the LA and subject to change based on the December RPI% when it is available.
- Retained duties of the former Education Services Grant (ESG) (£730,000, unchanged from 2020-21). Overall, DSG contributes £1.2m towards the cost of services that were previously funded from ESG. In 2020-21 Forum agreed to de-delegate £500,000 on behalf of Maintained Primary, Secondary and Special Schools towards the full year costs of ESG General Duties. The table below identifies the services delivered and the funding source.

<b>Estimated cost of ESG services</b>	<b>£</b>
Education Welfare	454,800
Asset Management	152,600
Statutory/Regulatory duties	998,600
Premature retirement/redundancy	128,300
Monitoring national curriculum assessment	65,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,799,300</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
School budget retained duties	730,000
General duties (de-delegation)	504,800
Council funded	564,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,799,300</b>

#### 4.3.3 Contributions to combined budgets

School Funding Regulations continue to allow contributions to support services that would otherwise fall outside the Schools Budget. These budgets combine with other council resources for the educational benefit of children.

There must be no new commitments or increases in expenditure from that agreed in 2012-13, and DfE expect that these costs will unwind over time. For this reason, funding from DfE has been reduced by 20% for 2021-22. However,

the net increase to the current cost element of the Central Schools Service Block off-sets the 20% reduction. It is proposed, therefore, that there be no reduction in the combined budgets. These contributions are as follows:

**- Discretionary Rate Relief (£85,280)**

This budget funds continuing costs for Discretionary Rate Relief in Voluntary Aided schools.

**- School Improvement (£264,000)**

This budget supports the continued funding for School Improvement staff with permanent contracts.

**- Local Safeguarding Children's Board (£24,000)**

The LSCB provides governance of child protection arrangements, undertakes serious case reviews, training and employs a Designated Officer for Allegations. The Board is funded from partner organisations including Social Care, Schools, Police, Health and Probation

**- School Intervention (£108,800)**

This budget supports the continuing funding for the consultant Headteacher role supporting primary and secondary schools.

**- PFI – City Learning Centres (£54,800)**

The 3 City Learning Centres closed in summer 2016 after which budgets for running costs were delegated to schools. There is an ongoing requirement to fund PFI costs for 2 of the 3 buildings. Provision has been made within the council for some costs (£118,400) and the Home Tuition Service (£40,000). This residual budget is required until a more lasting solution is found.

**- PFI Support (£49,440)**

A small team within Asset Management manages the PFI contract on behalf of the Council and provides support / advice to PFI schools. This budget provides part of the funding needed to support the ongoing contract management.

**- LACES (£112,400)**

The service reviews the educational progress of Looked After Children, provides training to staff and some direct support to pupils.

**- Governors Forum (£1,780)**

## **5.0 USE OF RESERVES**

5.1 The DSG reserve position brought forward on 1 April 2020 reflects a deficit position of £1.3m and was agreed as part of the year end accounts for 2019-20. The £1.1m deficit is a net position after ring-fencing Early Years Disability Access Fund underspends of £178,140 for future use.

5.2 The Schools Budget for 2020-21 is forecast to deliver an in-year deficit of £1.4m resulting in a cumulative deficit of £2.4m by the end of 2020-21. The majority of the overspend relates to pressures in the high needs block. The budget proposes the transfer to reserve of the £2.7m unallocated High Needs funding for 2021-22. This will result in a broadly balanced reserve position.

## 6.0 INFLATION

- 6.1 Although the mainstream schools' budget has received increased funding, there is no specific provision in the budget for pay awards. The cost of pay awards for 2021-22 is expected to be low given the public sector pay freeze announced in November 2020 for all but those employees earning less than £24k per annum. Any additional cost over and above any increase in budget allocations and Teachers Pay Grant will need to be met from existing budgets.
- 6.2 There is no general provision for price inflation, although costs for school rates and PFI continue to reflect RPI increases.

## 7.0 2021/22 BUDGET

- 7.1 The budget for 2021-22 is compiled from the base budget for 2020-21 approved by Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 and updated for any issues identified in this report. The projected budget (DSG and council contribution) is £299,487,100 and is summarised below. A more detailed analysis of the 2021-22 budget is shown in Annex 1. A comparison of the 2021-22 and 2020-21 budgets are summarised in Annex 2.

	<b>2021-22 Budget £</b>
Schools Block	230,289,800
Central School Services Block	3,613,100
High Needs Block	43,940,000
Early Years Block	21,644,200
<b>TOTAL BEFORE CONTRIBUTION TO RESERVE</b>	<b>299,487,100</b>
Contribution to Reserves (High Needs)	2,683,100
<b>TOTAL AFTER CONTRIBUTION TO RESERVE</b>	<b>302,170,200</b>
<b>Funded by:</b>	
DSG	300,710,700
Council (PFI Affordability Gap)	1,459,500
<b>NET TOTAL FOR HIGH NEEDS BLOCK</b>	<b>302,170,200</b>

- 7.2 As described, the DSG reserve is expected to end 2020-21 with a cumulative deficit of £2.4m. The High Needs block of the DSG grant has increased by £5.8m for 2021-22 (paragraph 3.3.5), and the budget changes described in this report result in surplus High Needs funding of £2,683,134 for 2021-22. It is proposed that this is transferred to the DSG reserve to offset the deficit.

**Appendix 1 - Schools Budget changes 2021-22**

	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
2020-21 Schools adjusted base budget		175,150
Add back Academy recoupment		<u>101,502</u>
<b>2020-21 Gross Schools budget</b>		<b>276,652</b>

**Budget changes:****Individual Schools Budget**

Net increase in number of pupils on roll	1,044	
Rates	37	
PFI Affordability	24	
NFF changes (headroom)	7,815	
Special school/SEN base places	390	
TPG/TPECG	10,303	
Early years rate change	<u>436</u>	
	<u>20,049</u>	

**High Needs Pupils**

Out of borough units of resource	291	
Special school top-ups	368	
FE & 6th Form top-ups	367	
Exceptional needs	568	
Independent provision	986	
Nursing Support	(60)	
Contingency	<u>40</u>	
	<u>2,560</u>	

**Central School costs**

Admissions	8	
Contingency	8	
Licenses and subscriptions	(1)	
PFI Affordability Gap	<u>212</u>	
	<u>226</u>	

**Total budget changes** **22,835**

<b>2021-22 Gross Schools budget</b>	<b>299,487</b>
2021-22 Dedicated Schools Grant	(300,711)
Contribution to reserve	<u>2,683</u>
<b>2021-22 Net Schools budget</b>	<b><u>1,460</u></b>

## Appendix 2 - Schools Budget 2021-22

	2021-22 Proposed Budget £	2020-21 Net Budget (Jan 2021) £
<b>Individual Schools Budget</b>		
Primary	116,038,300	82,980,000
Secondary	114,251,500	25,293,000
Special	12,622,600	11,368,300
Wirral Hospitals School	1,412,000	1,354,300
SEN Bases	958,000	962,200
Sixth Form/Further Education	36,000	36,000
Early Years	20,675,500	20,239,300
Growth and Falling Rolls Fund	0	466,000
<b>Individual Schools Budget Total</b>	<b>265,993,900</b>	<b>142,699,100</b>
<b>Central School Costs</b>		
Early Years	518,700	518,700
Admissions	380,000	372,200
School Redundancy Costs	81,000	81,000
Licenses and subscriptions	243,800	244,900
Schools Forum	10,600	10,600
Contingency	7,600	0
Contribution to combined budgets	700,500	700,500
PFI Affordability Gap	1,459,600	1,247,700
Retained duties (ex-ESG)	730,000	730,000
<b>Costs delegated to/de-delegated from schools</b>		
Library Service	0	188,200
Insurances	0	25,600
School Specific contingencies	0	66,100
Special Staff Costs	0	701,400
Behaviour Support	0	107,000
School Improvement	0	150,700
Retained duties (ex-ESG)	0	504,800
<b>High Needs Pupils</b>		
Statements	6,528,300	6,237,000
SEN top-ups	14,722,100	13,419,800
High Needs contingency	400,000	360,000
Independent Special Schools	5,120,000	4,134,000
Home Tuition	400,500	400,500
Support for SEN	2,132,300	2,192,200
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200
<b>Non-school and school delegated Total</b>	<b>33,493,200</b>	<b>32,451,100</b>

<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>299,487,100</b>	<b>175,150,200</b>
<b>Funding</b>		
Dedicated School Grant	(300,710,700)	(174,546,400)
Contribution to DSG Reserve (High Needs)	2,683,100	643,900
<b>Funding Total</b>	<b>(298,027,600)</b>	<b>(173,902,500)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,459,500</b>	<b>1,247,700</b>

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 69 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-26

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report on the draft Capital Programme 2021/26 for consideration and referral to Council for approval. The report also included information regarding the revenue implications of this Programme and an update on the latest forecast for capital receipts.

The 2021/26 Capital Programme represented a combination of schemes originally approved as part of the 2020/25 Programme, updated through the Capital Monitoring reports in 2020/21 and new bids for inclusion as detailed in this report.

Shaer Halewood confirmed (see minute 68 ante) that the scheme for Beechwood had now been completed and was therefore no longer required to be in the Capital Programme.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was -

#### **RECOMMENDED – To Council -**

- (1) the approval of the new bids as detailed in Appendix 2 to this report requiring £12.133 million borrowing for inclusion in the Capital Programme;**
- (2) the approval of any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority;**
- (3) the approval of the Capital Programme 2021/26 (as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report);**
- (4) the approval that progress on delivering the Capital Programme will be presented in accordance within the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements.**

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021-26</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides Committee with the draft Capital Programme 2021/26 for consideration and referral to Council for approval. It also includes information regarding the revenue implications of this Programme and an update on the latest forecast for capital receipts.

The 2021/26 Capital Programme represents a combination of schemes originally approved as part of the 2020/25 Programme, updated through the Capital Monitoring reports in 2020/21 and new bids for inclusion as detailed in this report.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decisions in this report are key decisions.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Policy & Resources Committee are requested to: -

1. recommend to Council the approval of the new bids as detailed in Appendix 2 to this report requiring £12.133 million borrowing for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
2. recommend to Council the approval of any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority.
3. recommend to Council the approval of the Capital Programme 2021/26 (as detailed in Appendix 3 to this report).
4. recommend to Council the approval that progress on delivering the Capital Programme will be presented in accordance within the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The purpose of the Capital Programme is to transform the way it operates in the medium to long term by taking opportunities from investment in digitalisation, assistive technology and a modern and efficient asset portfolio. This will enable the Council to prioritise and effectively deliver capital investment that contributes to the achievement of Council objectives.
- 1.2 Links to the revenue budget ensure that revenue funding is provided to meet the financing costs, and any running costs, as a result of the Capital Programme investment.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 For a scheme to be included in the Capital Programme it must be supported by a Business Case which includes consideration of alternative options and has been reviewed by the Capital and Asset Group (CAG) and for further consideration by the Investment & Change Board (ICB).

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **CAPITAL STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Capital Strategy is a key document that sets out the Council's medium to long term ambition. As the Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the plans for revenue, the capital strategy describes the strategic plan for economic growth, digitalisation and the use of assets and how these will support the Council to achieve its objectives.
- 3.2 An extensive and long-term capital programme is the key to prevention, better run services and a reduced revenue commitment over time. Significant investment in assets will enable those assets to be used more efficiently and effectively and where there is a need, to generate a revenue return to support the revenue budget.
- 3.3 The way the Council transacts with staff, residents and business has changed and will continue to do so at pace over coming years. The use of I.T presents an opportunity for staff to work in different ways and from anywhere to be able to reach-out to customers when it is convenient for them. Not all our customers are able to transact with the Council during normal business hours but investing in technology to enable them to do this whenever suits them provides for a more enhanced customer journey and to transact with the Council only once, to a satisfactory conclusion.
- 3.4 We are currently in the process of compiling our Digital Strategy. This will map the digital interaction within and outside the Council and provide a roadmap as to the Council's digital ambition over the medium to long term. The strategy

will provide a tool for the removal of human intervention as much as possible to ensure our systems and processes are fit for purpose into the future. A significant element of this is our critical business systems replacement which will see our internal systems for finance, HR, Procurement, Payroll etc replaced with a smarter integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

- 3.5 Capital planning is one of the main drivers in future cost avoidance. With a population with more complex needs there is an opportunity to explore how we can support people to remain independent at an earlier stage and for longer with smart technology. By using insight and intelligence we can predict with more certainty where capital funding can be targeted to support those to support themselves. By investing early on in things like smart homes this will not only see a reduction in reactive revenue costs in future years but will provide an opportunity for people to remain independent for longer.
- 3.6 Over the term of the last Capital Strategy there has been significant investment in regeneration to support economic growth. The strategic acquisitions programme has enabled the Council to acquire key sites in the Borough to support the longer-term ambition for economic growth and housing. Capital funding is a key deliverable to regenerating the borough over the next decade. The Council's partnership with Wirral Growth Company will see significant investment right across the borough that will enable revenue income to be received that will replace lost grant funding and enable vital services to continue to be provided. As developments start to take shape, further income will be realised from new homes and new businesses in council tax and business rates which in turn will be re-invested to grow the local economy. Capital funding is the catalyst to making this happen.
- 3.7 The Capital Strategy does not stand alone. It is intrinsically linked to a suite of other documents which together will enable the achievement of the Council's long-term strategic ambition. These are:
- The Strategic Asset Management Plan which sets out how the council and its partners will make the best use of its buildings and land in the future. This will be linked to future property purchase or consideration.
  - The Economic Growth Strategy sets out the ambition for growing a strong economy in the Borough in conjunction with support from the Liverpool City Region. The current strategy is being updated.
  - The Treasury Management Strategy which is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved.
  - The Commercial Strategy means ensuring that everything we do inside and outside the Council is done with a commercial mindset that will ensure we either generate a financial return or can demonstrate value for money in all activities.

- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy in supporting the Council to remain financial sustainable by investing in cost saving and income generating projects to avoid high-cost reactive activity in future years

### **CAPITAL AND ASSETS GROUP (CAG)**

3.8 The role of the CAG is to improve the co-ordination and management of the Capital Programme with its remit extended to include the Council's asset portfolio. The Group includes representatives from various Directorates and the Terms of Reference include:

- Develop, monitor and keep under review the Council's capital investment appraisal system.
- To assess, recommend, acceptance or rejection of capital bids in accordance with the above appraisal system.
- Ensure that all bids for capital funding are aligned to Wirral Council strategies and the Wirral 2025 Plan.

### **INVESTMENT AND CHANGE BOARD (ICB)**

3.9 The role of the ICB is to ensure alignment of investments against corporate priorities giving due consideration to risk. Amongst its responsibilities is the development, monitoring and review of the capital investment appraisal system, providing guidance when bids are submitted.

### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

3.10 The Capital Programme details the schemes being undertaken over the medium term which help the Council achieve its objectives. It is aligned to the Wirral Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy. It is reviewed, updated and considered by Council each year as part of the annual budget setting process.

3.11 Government announcements may include grant support for specific themes, but other investment is based upon affordability. Additional grant funding may be announced during the year. The inclusion of any schemes funded from new grant notifications will be reported through the capital monitoring process.

3.12 The Autumn Statement 2015 introduced additional funding flexibility. Capital receipts generated between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2022 can be used to fund Transformation Programmes. It is assumed that new bids requiring Council funding will be financed from borrowing, enabling capital receipts to be used in funding further transformation projects which have a benefit to the revenue budget.

### **NEW SUBMISSIONS**

3.13 Each scheme should be supported by a business case which enables an assessment to be undertaken to ensure that it is either targeted to Council priority areas or fulfils statutory obligations. Individual bids have been scrutinised by the CAG, with suitable bids progressed to the ICB for review.

Schemes that are deemed suitable for progression are then sent on to Policy & Resources Committee before Council for full formal approval as per the requirements of the Council constitution.

- 3.14 Capital bids can be submitted throughout the financial year for consideration, rather than just having one fixed programme at the start of the year. This enables to Council to better react to changing service requirements or incidents as they occur. Likewise, this flexibility in bid submissions allows for the possibility of new bids or supplementary bids, should the resource requirements of an existing bid change after inception. There may also be new opportunities for the Council to bid for external resource e.g. grants that become apparent during the year and the Council needs to be able to react to such potential.
- 3.15 As a consequence of adopting this flexible approach to allowing and assessing bids, the Capital Programme will evolve further as the financial year progresses. This will include new schemes that require funding in the current year as well as potentially funding in future years, along with schemes that then may require re-profiling in terms of their projected expenditure and timing.
- 3.16 The new capital submissions are included within Appendix 1 to this report.

### **2021/26 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

- 3.17 In forecasting a 5-year Programme it is recognised that there are many variables and factors that will impact on future requirements. The Programme will be subject to regular review to ensure the most effective use of resources whilst providing the opportunity to update agreed schemes, bring forward deferred schemes as necessary and add any new schemes which will arise as new funding is identified and delivery plans are developed along with Council partners.
- 3.18 The 2021/26 Capital Programme represents a combination of:
  - a) Schemes approved as part of the 2020/21 Programme and updated through the Capital Monitoring reports in 2020/21. The table below reflects the Quarter 3 position 2020/21.

**Table 1: Capital Programme (per Quarter 3 Monitoring Report)**

<b>Analysis of Capital Programme</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Adult Care & Health	991	5,715	2,467	-
Children, Families & Education	3,614	8,091	3,699	2,500
Cost Cutting Initiatives	17,470	10,680	-	-
Neighbourhoods	34,304	8,299	1,857	34
Regeneration & Place	26,871	40,952	24,391	7,578
Resources	2,754	4,600		
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>86,004</b>	<b>78,337</b>	<b>32,414</b>	<b>10,112</b>
<b>Financing</b>				
Borrowing	52,890	39,651	23,827	344
Capital Receipts	1,200	10,680	-	-
Grants	31,814	27,985	8,587	9,768
Revenue/Reserve Contribution	-	21	-	-
Business Rates (Ring Fenced)	100	-	-	-
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>86,004</b>	<b>78,337</b>	<b>32,414</b>	<b>10,112</b>

- b) New bids for consideration at this meeting. The emphasis has been to ensure that the bids support the delivery of the Wirral Plan 2025 and the priorities within the 5 themes. Appendix 1 to this report provides a brief description of each scheme. Appendix 2 to this report provides details of the borrowing requirement and revenue implications of funding each scheme.

**Table 2: New bids for inclusion in the Programme**

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Neighbourhoods	514	-	-	-	-
Regeneration & Place	4,996	2,010	4,613	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,510</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>4,613</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Note – there are fewer bids to be considered at this meeting compared to in previous years as the bid submission process has been amended to allow bid submission throughout the year, rather than at one deadline for inclusion in this programme setting report. See 3.20 – 3.21 above. A number of new bids are seeking Council approval via the Quarter 3 2020/21 Capital Monitoring report. This would allow works on successful bids to commence in 2020/21 rather than having to wait for 2021/22.

- 3.19 The proposed Capital Programme combines Tables 1 and 2 together with an estimate for continued grant to be received for Schools Modernisation of £2.5 million through to 2025/26. Included in the estimate of 2023/24 is the potential for a food waste scheme, although at this time this scheme is deferred pending

a full review, once complete full details will be presented for approval. The detail of the programme can be found in Appendix 3 to this report.

**Table 3: Proposed Capital Programme 2021/26**

<b>Analysis of Capital Programme</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Adult Care & Health	5,715	2,467	-	-	-
Children, Families & Education	8,091	3,699	2,500	2,500	2,500
Cost Cutting Initiatives	10,680	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhoods	8,813	1,857	3,234	-	-
Regeneration & Place	45,948	26,401	12,191	310	-
Resources	4,600	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>17,925</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,500</b>
<b>Financing</b>					
Borrowing	55,841	25,837	8,157	310	-
Capital Receipts	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	27,985	8,587	9,768	2,500	2,500
Revenue/Reserve Contributions	21	-	-	-	-
Business Rates (Ring Fenced)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>17,925</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,500</b>

### **CAPITAL RECEIPTS**

- 3.20 Capital receipts at 1 April 2020 were £0.51 million. Table 4 assumes the proposed spend in Table 3 is agreed. Longer term projections can be updated as and when more information becomes available e.g. the interaction with the Property Company.
- 3.21 Additional flexibilities regarding the use of receipts were confirmed following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2015. Receipts generated between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2022 can be used to fund agreed Transformation Programmes.
- 3.22 The Council's asset portfolio is constantly under review in order to highlight those assets that Members may wish to consider for disposal, a critical decision given that funding for any Transformation Programmes are reliant upon the generation of capital receipts.

**Table 4: Projected Capital Receipts position**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Opening Capital Receipts Reserve	513	163	563	6,763	6,763	6,763
Cash Received to date	1,200	0	0	0	0	0
Anticipated receipts	0	400	6,200	0	0	0
Required to fund Transformational schemes & EVR	(1,550)	0	0	0	0	0
Required to fund capital programme	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>6,763</b>	<b>6,763</b>	<b>6,763</b>	<b>6,763</b>

Receipts, and their utilisation, for 2021/22 onward are still to be determined.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed 2021/26 Capital Programme is a combination of the currently approved Capital Programme, new bids and estimated Children’s grant. As the Programme stands this will require up to £90.1 million unsupported borrowing from 2021/22 to 2025/26.
- 4.2 The revenue borrowing costs associated with any re-profiled schemes had already been included in the 2020/21 and subsequent revenue budgets and therefore do not represent an additional requirement.
- 4.3 The expenditure and funding of the Capital Programme are linked to Treasury Management. With the low interest available for investments the policy of temporary borrowing from positive internal cash flows has been continued. This policy, and the re-profiling of the Programme, defers the need for external borrowing delivering in-year savings but is not sustainable in the medium term. Where advantageous short-term borrowing will be used to fund the programme.
- 4.4 The revenue impact of the additional borrowing required to fund all the new bids, including those that it is proposed to defer, is:

**Table 5: Additional financing costs to fund new bids**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Additional revenue cost	110	227	342	391	395

- 4.5 It is estimated that these costs will peak in 2041/42 at £0.444 million reflecting the fact that the principal repayment associated with debt (the Minimum

Revenue Provision) increases over the expected life of the asset funded from borrowing.

- 4.6 These projections might change during the year and the Programme and related Prudential Indicators will be updated accordingly.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal issues arising directly from this report, should any such issues arise during an individual scheme, then these matters will be addressed.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 The Programme is about investment into the Council assets so does include schemes relating to IT and assets.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Programme will not be delivered as projected. This could see individual schemes progressing ahead of, or being behind, the projected timetable. The regular monitoring and reporting of the Programme allows action to be taken to manage the financial position.

- 7.2 Capital receipts are below the level estimated. Regular reporting to CAG on progress of asset disposals allows the Capital Programme to be reviewed should this eventuality arise.

- 7.3 Interest rates increase to a level greater than budgeted for. Regular monitoring of economic forecasts should assist in determining the best time to borrow to fund the Programme

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 There has been no specific consultation with regards to this report. In terms of the delivery of schemes consultation will take place as part of the scheme development and implementation.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are none arising directly from this report as they will be identified as each scheme is progressed. Individual schemes within the Programme will have a direct impact upon groups for example the Aids and Adaptations investment within Regeneration.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Capital bids are welcomed that support the Council's Climate Emergency Plan that was compiled following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in May 2019. Within the Capital programme there are elements within

the projects that positively contribute to environmental issues such as 'The Tree Strategy' and 'The Urban Tree Challenge'.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Capital Bids for the 2021/22 Capital Programme

Appendix 2 – Financial Summary of Capital Bids

Appendix 3 – Proposed Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017 Edition)

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet - Capital Programme 2020/25	17 February 2020
Council – Capital Programme 2020/25	2 March 2020
Cabinet / Committee / Council - Capital Monitoring 2020/21	Quarterly reports

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Capital Bids for the 2021/22 Capital Programme**

#### **Modernisation of CCTV System (Funding required £0.170m)**

This bid proposes an 'Invest to Save' opportunity for Wirral Council by modernising the Council's public realm CCTV Systems. This includes an upgrade of the Wirral's CCTV, replacing servers and infrastructure. This will result in longer-term savings due to reduced rental costs, significantly minimising the risk of costly maintenance to ageing systems and provide the potential to generate income from a 'state of the art' Emergency Control Room.

**It is proposed that savings of £0.045m pa generated will support the financing cost of £0.021m pa.**

#### **Arrowe Park Sports Village Redevelopment (Funding required £0.015m)**

This proposal seeks to re-purpose capital money already committed to the 'future of golf' programme to undertake a feasibility exercise for a redevelopment of Arrowe Park into multi-use 'sports village'. Repurposing of funding from capital programme. Budget proposal for Council to cease providing golf service. Feasibility will look at more than just golf, a sports village, more income generation options.

**Inclusion of this bid into the Capital programme is subject to the outcome of the recommendation to Full Council by Policy and Resources Committee on the 2021/22 budget**

#### **Wirral Country Park Car Park Resurfacing (Funding required £0.210m)**

Provision of all-weather car parking bays at Thurstaston Wirral Country Park. The existing grass car park is unable to cater for the existing demand at Wirral Country Park. It is proposed that future income could fund the finance cost, this is dependent upon the outcome of the Parking Strategy in relation to charging at Country Parks.

**It is proposed that additional income generated will support the financing cost of £0.015m pa.**

#### **Moreton Youth Club & Library (Funding required £1.000m)**

Following the conclusion of a detailed options report, that was subject of consultation with Members, a youth offer is best provided at the Moreton Library site. This would be achieved by extending the existing building and remodelling the interior to provide a flexible space that could be open for longer hours to accommodate both uses as well as the ancillary uses within the current library of the One Stop Shop and community Police office. The total capital cost is £1.000 million. £0.500 million is to be potentially funded from the capital receipt from the sale of the adjoining site subject to contract and planning. Approval to use any receipt will need to be granted from the Director of Resources once details of the potential capital receipt become clearer.

### **Castleway & Leasowe Early Years (Capital cost £1.200m)**

This proposal will reduce surplus school places, release land for housing development, allow relocation of Castleway Primary School to the Leasowe Early Years site and provide significant budget savings to the school. The total capital cost is £1.2m. £0.050m will be funded from approved capital school place planning. A further capital receipt of £1.000m is forecast subject to Department for Education approval. In the interim capital borrowing will be required until the receipt is realised.

### **Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund (Funding required £3.950m)**

This proposal is seeking capital funding to progress core projects in the Birkenhead regeneration programme, particularly those where demonstrable progress will be needed as evidence of the Council's ability to deliver the brownfield first approach in the Local Plan. Evidence of delivery will come under scrutiny at the Local Plan Examination in Public which could take place from Autumn 2021 onwards. It will help to deliver the grants which are being secured such as Future High Street Fund.

### **Office Quarter Building Fit-Out (Funding required £5.469m)**

The Birkenhead Commercial District Office Quarter project. In November 2018 Members approved the Business Case for this project on the basis that the future fit-out costs, known as CAT B, of building A1 would be borne by the Council on the basis that the capital costs needed for the works would be off-set by the many economic and service benefits it would deliver to the Authority including reducing down the number of old, costly, sub-standard buildings that the Council currently operates from across the borough.

### **Wirral Way Widening (Funding required £0.134m)**

The Wirral Way is a popular attraction and due to Covid restrictions, complaints have been received that there is insufficient room to abide by the 2m rule. The funding is required to widen sections of the Wirral Way and improve park entrances.

## APPENDIX 2

### Financial Summary of Capital Bids

<b>Description</b>	<b>Borrowing Required £000</b>	<b>Revenue Cost 2021/22 £000</b>	<b>Revenue Cost 2022/23 £000</b>	<b>Revenue Cost 2023/24 £000</b>	<b>Revenue Cost 2024/25 £000</b>	<b>Revenue Cost 2025/26 £000</b>
Modernisation of CCTV System	170	3	19	19	20	20
Wirral Country Park Car Park Surfacing	210	4	13	13	13	13
Moreton Youth Club & Library	1,000	20	30	30	31	31
Castleway & Leasowe Early Years	1,200	24	36	36	37	37
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	3,950	52	105	120	121	122
Office Quarter Building Fit-Out	5,469	4	19	119	164	167
Wirral Way Widening	134	3	5	5	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,133</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>395</b>

The estimated revenue costs factor in both the repayment of capital, via the Minimum Revenue Provision and the estimated interest cost associated with the borrowing required.

Revenue costs will increase year on year due to the nature of the Minimum Revenue Repayment (MRP) repayment calculation, which is based on an annuity repayment profile.

## APPENDIX 3

### Proposed Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2025/26

#### In Summary:

<b>Analysis of Capital Programme</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Adult Care & Health	5,715	2,467	-	-	-
Children, Families & Education	8,091	3,699	2,500	2,500	2,500
Cost Cutting Initiatives	10,680	-	-	-	-
Neighbourhoods	8,813	1,857	3,234	-	-
Regeneration & Place	45,948	26,401	12,191	310	-
Resources	4,600	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>17,925</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,500</b>
<b>Financing</b>					
Borrowing	55,841	25,837	8,157	310	-
Capital Receipts	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	27,985	8,587	9,768	2,500	2,500
Revenue/Reserve Contributions	21	-	-	-	-
Business Rates (Ring Fenced)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>17,925</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,500</b>

**In Detail:**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Adult Care and Health</b>					
Citizen and Provider Portal/Integrated I.T.	60				
Community Intermediate Care	500				
Extra Care Housing	2,764	2,467			
Telecare & Telehealth Ecosystem	2,391				
<b>Total Adult Care and Health</b>	<b>5,715</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Children, Families &amp; Education</b>					
Children's System Development	182	403			
School Remodelling and Additional Classrooms	523				
Special Educational Needs and Disability		796			
Basic Needs	1,385				
Condition/Modernisation	6,001	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
<b>Total Children, Families &amp; Education</b>	<b>8,091</b>	<b>3,699</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>
<b>Cross Cutting Initiatives</b>					
Capitalisation of Salaries					
MHCLG Capitalisation Directive	10,680				
Transformational Capitalisation					
<b>Total Cross Cutting Initiatives</b>	<b>10,680</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

**Neighbourhoods**

Aids to navigation	40				
Bridges-Network rail	150				
Bridges-Lingham Lane Bridge	350				
Quick Win Levy 16-17	25				
Connecting Wirral Waters: Detailed Design	305				
Coronation Park Sustainable Drainage	162				
Modernisation of CCTV System	170				
Moreton Sandbrook Drainage	430				
New cycle infrastructure -Year 2	800				
Street Lighting	2,000				
TAG Bus Case-Wirral Waters outline	338				
TAG Bus Case-A41 Corridor North	265				
West Kirby Flood alleviation	571				
Allotment Sites Expansion	127				
Beach Cleaning - Replacement of equipment	122				
Cemetery Extension & Improvements (Frankby)	153				
Parks Machinery	1,383	1,300			
Parks Vehicles	571	500			
Play Area Improvements	451				
Tree Strategy	56	57	34		



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Neighbourhoods (continued)</b>					
Wirral Country Park Car Park Surfacing	210				
Wirral Way Widening	134				
Food Waste Scheme (deferred until further notice)			3,200		
<b>Total Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>8,813</b>	<b>1,857</b>	<b>3,234</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Place</b>					
65 The Village	124				
Arrowe Country Park - New Machine Shed & Wash Bay	180				
Arrowe Country Park Depot: Re-Surfacing, Material Bays & Electronic Entrance Barrier	40				
Bebington Oval Facility Upgrade	666				
Birkenhead Park Event Infrastructure	164				
Castleway & Leasowe Early Years	1,200				
Concerto Asset Management System	24				
Eastham Library	40				
Energy efficient buildings	1,000				
Floral Pavilion	175				
Health & Safety - Condition Surveys	4,200	5,000			
Heswall Day Centre (part only)	127				
Hoylake Golf works depot demolish and replace	104				
Leasowe Leisure Centre/Evolutions	1885				
Leisure Health & Safety Compliance	859				

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000

**Regeneration & Place (continued)**

Lever Sports Pavilion	80				
Moreton Youth Club & Library	1,000				
New Ferry Rangers Community Clubhouse	650				
Parks and Countryside Accessibility	446				
Pool Covers	50				
Seacombe Library	66				
Soft Play Areas Leisure Centres	410				
Wallasey Library	175				
West Kirby Concourse/Guinea Gap Reception upgrade / improve	351				
Wirral Tennis Centre - Facility Upgrade	772				
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	5,862				
Clearance	150				
Empty Property Grant Scheme	420	310	310	310	
Birkenhead Regeneration Framework	171	85			
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	2,600	1,350			
Office Quarter Building Fit-Out	196	660	4,613		
Community Bank	2,250	2,250			
Eureka	100				
Future High Streets - Birkenhead	11,872	5,291	7,268		
Housing Infrastructure Fund (Enabling Infrastructure)	68				



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Regeneration &amp; Place (continued)</b>					
Investment in properties	2,600				
New Ferry Regeneration Strategic Acquisitions	780				
Town Centre scheme - Liscard	241				
Town Centre scheme - New Ferry	150				
Wirral Waters Investment Fund	3,700				
<b>Total Regeneration &amp; Place</b>	<b>45,948</b>	<b>26,401</b>	<b>12,191</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Resources</b>					
Customer Experience Improvements Project	1,000				
ERP	3,600				
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>4,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Programme</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>14,725</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>2,500</b>

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 70 CAPITAL FINANCING STRATEGY 2021/22

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report on the Capital Financing Strategy. The Authority's treasury management activity was underpinned by CIPFA's 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), in which there was the requirement for Council to approve an annual Capital Strategy. The report fulfilled the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was –

#### **RECOMMENDED – To Council -**

- (1) the approval of the Capital Strategy for 2021/22;**
- (2) the approval of the associated Prudential Indicators to be adopted;**
- (3) the approval of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy.**

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>CAPITAL FINANCING STRATEGY 2021/22</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

The Authority's treasury management activity is underpinned by CIPFA's 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), in which there is the requirement for Council to approve an annual Capital Strategy. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

This matter is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Policy & Resources Committee are requested to:-

1. Recommend to Council the approval of the Capital Strategy for 2021/22.
2. Recommend to Council the approval of the associated Prudential Indicators to be adopted.
3. Recommend to Council the approval of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 In order to demonstrate that the Council takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives and properly takes account of value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability the Council should have in place a capital strategy that sets out the longer-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made. It should give due consideration to both risk and reward and the impact on the achievement of priority outcomes.
- 1.2 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) also places a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to “have regard” to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 CIPFA’s 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the production of annual Capital strategy. The accompanying 2021/26 Capital programme has implications on the levels of borrowing being forecast within this report and resultant prudential indicators. Production of an annual strategy is standard practice however should it become appropriate to amend any key elements of this strategy during the period covered, a revised report will be produced.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Prudential Code 2017 introduced the requirement for a new report, the Capital Strategy, to be approved by Council. The intention is to give a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 3.2 Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are, therefore, subject to both a national regulatory and local policy framework, summarised in this report.

### **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING**

- 3.3 Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10,000 are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

Comparative expenditure figures are shown below and as can be seen in 2021/22, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £71.9 million.

**Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure**

	<b>2019/20 Actual</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimate</b>	<b>2022/23 Estimate</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimate</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Schemes	39,115	77,595	80,467	34,424	14,725
Capital Investments	898	8,409	3,380	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,013</b>	<b>86,004</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>14,725</b>

In 2022/23 a change in the accounting for leases and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) will be introduced. Any impact on the figures quoted above will be reported and revised indicators set.

**Table 2: Significant Schemes included in the 2021/22 Capital Programme**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>£000</b>
Future High Streets - Birkenhead	11,872
MHCLG Capitalisation Directive	10,680
Schools Condition & Modernisation	6,001
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	5,862
Health & Safety - Condition Surveys	4,200
Wirral Waters Investment Fund	3,700
Enterprise Resource Planning System	3,600
Extra Care Housing	2,764
Birkenhead Regeneration Delivery Fund	2,600
Investment in properties	2,600

- 3.4 The Council applied to the MHCLG for a capitalisation directive known also as 'Exceptional Financial Support.' This would allow the Council to charge to capital additional COVID-19 related costs. Under normal accounting convention such costs would be a revenue item, but the exceptional COVID-19 circumstances and financial pressure placed on the Council have required us to seek capitalisation.

The Ministry have indicated that they are content to approve a capitalisation direction up to a maximum value of £14.8m for 2020/21, and £10.7m for 2021/22 subject to conditions. The Policy and Resources Committee as part of the 2021/22 Budget Report, includes a recommendation to Full Council that:

The Council proceeds with the request for exceptional financial support with the conditions outlined in the letter from the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government dated 2 February 2021.

- 3.5 The Council plans to incur £11.8 million of capital expenditure on investments. Of this £10.6 million is to support the Strategic Acquisition Programme (SAP). This aids the key economic goals and aspirations set out in the Wirral Growth Plan and Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF). The balance of £1.2 million is for

Business Investment Grants in support of inward investment and indigenous investment capital projects.

- 3.6 An extensive and long-term capital programme is the key to prevention, better run services and a reduced revenue commitment over time. Significant investment in assets will enable those assets to be used more efficiently and effectively and where there is a need, to generate a revenue return to support the revenue budget.
- 3.7 Capital planning is one of the main drivers in future cost avoidance and there are schemes within the programme where initial investment from the Council will lead to reduced demand on the revenue budget, examples of which include the following:
- Telecare & Telehealth Ecosystem - With a population with more complex needs there is an opportunity to explore how we can support people to remain independent at an earlier stage and for longer with smart technology. Investing early on in things like smart homes this will not only see a reduction in reactive revenue costs in future years but will provide an opportunity for people to remain independent for longer
  - Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System – the replacement of critical business systems with a smarter integrated solution that will not only improve the operational effectiveness of the Authority but will also help rationalise multiple contracts with different suppliers and produce budgetary savings in the process.
- 3.8 Capital funding is a key deliverable to regenerating the borough over the next decade. The Council’s partnership with Wirral Growth Company will see significant investment right across the borough that will enable revenue income to be received that will replace lost grant funding and enable vital services to continue to be provided. As developments start to take shape, further income will be realised from new homes and new businesses in council tax and business rates which in turn will be re-invested to grow the local economy.
- 3.9 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council’s own resources (revenue, reserves, capital receipts and business rates growth generated within the Enterprise Zone) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

**Table 3: Capital Financing**

	<b>2019/20 Actual</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimate</b>	<b>2022/23 Estimate</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimate</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
External Sources - Grants	18,386	31,814	27,985	8,587	9,768
Own Resources - Capital Receipts, Revenue contributions	8,312	1,300	21	-	-
Debt - Borrowing	13,315	52,890	55,841	25,837	4,957
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,013</b>	<b>86,004</b>	<b>83,847</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>14,725</b>

- 3.10 Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP) repayments. Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. The latest planned MRP repayments and use of capital receipts are as follows:

**Table 4: Replacement of Debt Financing**

	<b>2019/20 Actual £000</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast £000</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2022/23 Estimate £000</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimate £000</b>
Minimum Revenue Provision	6,077	6,262	9,174	11,996	12,709
Capital Receipts - General Fund	8,312	1,200	400	6,200	-
Capital Receipts - MRDF	4,469	4,469	4,469	4,469	4,469
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,858</b>	<b>11,931</b>	<b>14,043</b>	<b>22,665</b>	<b>17,178</b>

\*MRDF – Merseyside Residual Debt Fund which is due to be repaid in 2025/26.

The Council's full Minimum Revenue Provision Statement is included at Appendix 1.

- 3.11 The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP repayments and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £41.7 million during 2021/22. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

**Table 5: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement**

	<b>31/3/2020 Actual £000</b>	<b>31/3/2021 Forecast £000</b>	<b>31/3/2022 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31/3/2023 Estimate £000</b>	<b>31/3/2024 Estimate £000</b>
General Fund	347,658	381,812	428,545	440,803	428,088
Capital Investments	898	8,409	3,380	-	-
<b>Total CFR</b>	<b>348,556</b>	<b>390,221</b>	<b>431,925</b>	<b>440,803</b>	<b>428,088</b>

In 2022/23 a change in the accounting for leases and Private Finance Initiative (PFI) will be introduced. Consequently, further assets and liabilities may be brought onto the Council's balance sheet and impact on the figures quoted above will be reported and revised indicators set.

### **Capital Bidding Process**

- 3.12 As part of the overall budget process departments are given the opportunity to put forward new schemes that will be considered for inclusion in the capital programme.

A business case submission form has been devised and refined by the Capital and Assets Group (CAG) and includes:

- The scope of the project
- Benefits, objectives and strategic alignment
- Potential constraints and mitigations
- Timescales
- Financial Implications including any ongoing revenue requirement
- Monitoring and evaluation

3.13 New capital requests are prioritised for schemes relating to the following:

- Essential Health and Safety/Disability Discrimination Act schemes.
- Invest to save schemes, including those developed with the intention of avoiding future cost pressures.
- Those considered to be of a strategic nature, as agreed with the Investment and Change Board.
- Those that support the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in May 2019
- Schemes that reflect Council priorities that could have wider economic benefits that link in with the Wirral Plan.
- Where external grant funding becomes available to fully fund schemes.

## **Governance**

3.14 A Capital and Asset Group (CAG) includes officers from finance and from across the business. The role of this group is:

- To review the Capital Investment Strategy to ensure it achieve the Council's strategic priorities
- To prioritise requests for capital funding to best deliver these priorities
- To have delegated authority to make capital investment decisions within defined parameters
- To monitor the Capital Programme to ensure its effectiveness
- The CAG will refer to the Investment and Change Board (ICB) projects that are recommended for funding

3.15 **Investment and Change Board (ICB)** – The ICB acts as the portfolio board for the Council's overall investment in change and the benefits delivered. Chaired by the Director of Resources / Section 151 Officer, its membership is made up of Senior Responsible Owners of the Council's major strategic programmes. ICB reviews the business cases for major projects as well as monitoring approved projects through implementation.

3.16 **Regeneration & Place Programme Board** – This Board has been set up to provide oversight of all regeneration Programmes that fall within scope of the Regeneration & Place Directorate including Wirral Growth Company, Wirral Waters, Local Plan and Strategic Transport. The Regeneration & Place Board is key to managing the interdependencies of these programmes to ensure alignment. The Board should review 'place-based' business cases before they are taken to ICB.

- 3.17 **Technical Design Authority (TDA)** – Chaired by the Head of Business Change the TDA acts as the gateway for all IT hardware and software proposals to ensure coherence with the digital strategy and Council's target operating model. The TDA reports to ICB.
- 3.18 An overall summary of the various recommendations from ICB is then produced for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) of Chief Officers. This provides the opportunity for any comment/amendment and strategic input prior to a final report being prepared for Members' consideration at Policy & Resources Committee for eventual consideration by and formal approval by full Council.
- 3.19 Capital bids can be submitted throughout the financial year for consideration, rather than just having one fixed programme at the start of the year. This enables to Council to react to changing service requirements or incidents as they occur. Likewise, this flexibility in bid submissions allows for the possibility of new bids or supplementary bids, should the resource requirements of an existing bid change after inception. There may also be new opportunities for the Council to bid for external resource e.g., grants that become apparent during the year and the Council needs to be able to react to such potential.
- 3.20 Full details of the Council's capital programme are presented in a separate report to this Policy & Resources Committee and Council.
- 3.21 Regular monitoring of the capital programme is undertaken by the finance department in liaison with the officers responsible for delivery of the capital projects. This information is presented to the Capital & Assets Group and is formally reported to Policy & Resources Committee and Council on a quarterly basis. This quarterly report also includes any new requests for funding that may have been reviewed by both the Capital & Assets Group and the Investment & Change Board.
- 3.22 **Asset Management**

To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has an asset management strategy in development building on its 2020 Asset Vision. The strategy will set the high-level framework for managing Wirral's Public Sector land and property for the future. It is being developed to guide the collective strategic asset decisions of all partners and seeks to maximise efficiencies through a collaborative approach to the use and management of the whole asset portfolio.

The strategy centres on the continual corporate review the Wirral estate of assets with the aims of:

- explore every opportunity to reduce asset and related costs
- streamlining processes
- improving asset performance
- generate income by adopting a commercial-minded approach to running Council business
- alignment with the significant regeneration plans for the Borough
- flexibility of asset use as service delivery requirements evolve

3.23 Such asset flexibility has been applied throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Council has successfully utilised various sites across the Borough such as in Bromborough and Bebington as part of its emergency response with partner organisations.

The Authority will continue to work with partner organisations to share and develop assets to deliver strategic goals and objectives around business, people and the environment, these include Wirral Chamber of Commerce, private investors, community and friends' groups and other public bodies such as Higher Education, NHS, Police, Fire and Ambulance.

Examples of this sharing of resources to provide improved effective service provision include a co-location project to deliver community police stations from Council premises and a successful Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub operates from a former municipal office with benefits being felt across the partnership. Future plans include sharing accommodation space with health partners.

The Asset Strategy Model:

This consists of the following elements:

- All assets are managed strategically.
- Supports economic growth.
- Supports service delivery.
- A modern commercial business.
- Supports communities and partners.
- Provides value for money.
- Assets are flexible and adaptable.



### 3.24 **Asset Disposals**

When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation projects until the beginning of 2022/23. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council plans to receive £0.4 million of capital receipts in the coming financial year as follows:

**Table 6: Capital Receipts Generated**

	<b>2019/20 Actual</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimate</b>	<b>2022/23 Estimate</b>	<b>2023/24 Estimate</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Asset Sales	7,292	700	400	6,200	TBC
Loans Repaid & Right To Buy	612	500	TBC	TBC	TBC
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,904</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>6,200</b>	<b>-</b>

TBC - To be confirmed.

3.25 The Council's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy is attached at Appendix 2.

### 3.26 **Treasury Management**

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Council is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

3.27 As a consequence of decisions to approve past capital programmes, the Council currently has £210 million borrowing at an average interest rate of 4.73% and £19 million treasury investments (as at 31 December 2020).

### 3.28 **Borrowing Strategy**

The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between low cost short-term loans (currently available at around 0.10%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 1.5% to 2.5%).

3.29 Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases and transferred debt from local government reorganisation are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

**Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement**

	31/3/2020 Actual	31/3/2021 Forecast	31/3/2022 Estimate	31/3/2023 Estimate	31/3/2024 Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Debt	349.9	306.0	358.3	375.0	376.1
Capital Financing Requirement	348.6	390.2	431.9	440.8	428.1

3.30 Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. The level of debt exceeded the CFR by £0.1 million at 31st March 2020. This was due to additional temporary borrowing being taken out to ensure sufficient liquidity to meet operational demand as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. As can be seen from table 7, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term.

### 3.31 Affordable Borrowing Limit

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

**Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt**

	2020/21 Limit £m	2021/22 Limit £m	2022/23 Limit £m	2023/24 Limit £m
Authorised Limit - Borrowing	505	501	489	474
Authorised Limit - PFI and Leases	65	63	61	59
<b>Authorised Limit - Total External Debt</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>533</b>
Operational Boundary - Borrowing	495	491	479	464
Operational Boundary - PFI and Leases	60	58	56	54
<b>Operational Boundary - Total External Debt</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>518</b>

3.32 Further details on borrowing can be found in the treasury management strategy statement.

### 3.33 Treasury Investment Strategy

Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

3.34 The Authority’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash

that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

3.35 Further details on treasury investments can be found in the treasury management strategy statement.

### 3.36 **Treasury Risk Management**

The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

### 3.37 **Treasury Governance**

The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Policy & Resources Committee, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Resources who will act in accordance with the Council's Strategy Statement, Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

3.38 Further details on the "Policy of Delegation" can be found in the treasury management strategy statement.

3.39 The Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close in the form prescribed in its TMPs.

### 3.40 **Investments for Services Purposes**

The Council lends money to its subsidiaries e.g., Edsential Community Interest Co. (by way of a credit facility) and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth. Loans should be self-financing with returns covering financing and administrative costs plus any return.

### 3.41 **Governance of Investments for Service Purposes**

The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. Appropriate due diligence is undertaken on loan applications and collateral sought to offset risk. In order to further limit this risk and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the organisation, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower

have been set. Any such investment must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the Investment Strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

3.42 Further details about these types of investments can be found in the Investment Strategy Statement.

### 3.43 **Commercial Activities**

The Council can invest in local commercial and residential property with the intention of making a profit that will be spent on local public services. Although there is increased national focus on property, councils have a long history of owning investment properties. Wirral's portfolio includes industrial estates, commercial and leisure properties. Total commercial investments are currently valued at £29.9 million, with the largest being Europa Boulevard.

### 3.44 **Governance of Commercial Activities**

The Strategic Asset Management Plan sets out how the Council will make the best use of its buildings and land in the future. This will be linked to future property purchase for consideration.

3.45 In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.

3.46 The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.

3.47 Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

3.48 Further details about commercial activities can be found in the Investment Strategy Statement.

### 3.49 **Liabilities**

In addition to the forecast debt of £306 million detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £472.4 million at 31 March 2020). Actuarial valuations are carried out every three years. Contributions are set with a view to targeting the Fund's solvency. The most recent valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2019, which showed a surplus of assets against liabilities of £26.5 million as at that date, equivalent to a funding level of 101%.

### 3.50 **Revenue Budget Implications**

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP repayments are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs;

this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e., the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

**Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream**

	<b>2020 /21</b>	<b>2021 /22</b>	<b>2022 /23</b>	<b>2023 /24</b>
	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Financing Costs (£m)	16.87	19.9	22.35	23.01
Proportion of net revenue stream	5.62%	6.45%	7.16%	7.21%

### 3.51 Sustainability

Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future.

3.52 The agreed Capital Programme includes projects costed at current year prices with many subject to a subsequent tender process which lead to variance in the final cost. In some areas, the design brief may not yet be finalised, again giving rise to potential price variance. This is a known risk and can be managed through phasing or reduction in specification.

3.53 In assessing the robustness of the Capital Programme, the risk of being unable to fund variations outside of the Programme is minimal mainly due to the phasing of projects. If necessary, the Council can choose to freeze parts of the Programme throughout the year to ensure spend is kept within the agreed budget.

3.54 The re-profiling and slippage from previous years is fully funded but increases the pressure to deliver the anticipated 2021/22 Programme. Any such delays will impact on the delivery of the intended outcomes of capital schemes.

### 3.55 Knowledge and Skills

The structure of the Council ensures that professionally qualified and experienced staff are in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Director of Resources is a qualified accountant. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, RICS.

3.56 Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers, Avison Young as property consultants, Lambert Smith Hampton for property valuations/appraisals/disposals and external legal firms and Counsel as legal consultants. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This report is focussed on providing clarity on the Capital financing strategy, and although there are financial implications to the delivery of this strategy, there are none directly arising from this report.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/414) also places a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Secretary of State and local authorities are required to “have regard” to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The Council is responsible for treasury, investment and expenditure decisions and activity and none of these are without risk. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are important, the main risks and mitigations are:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Loss of expertise from the Council's in-house resource	Working knowledge of operations and technical issues are shared by the resource pool on a regular basis
The fair value of the Authority's investment property portfolio is no longer sufficient to provide security against loss	That there is suitable diversification of investment within the property portfolio to retain a suitable level of overall security
The cost of borrowing increases at a rate higher than estimated leads to increased revenue pressure and/or curtailment of the capital programme	That the borrowing profile is balanced both in terms of loan maturity and also in terms of the nature of the interest rate of the loan portfolio (fixed rate and variable interest rate debt)
The programme does not deliver the outcomes as intended	The programme is subject to regular monitoring processes and reporting cycles for updates
Council issues S114 notice	Should the Council encounter difficulties in obtaining borrowing following a S114 notice, the Authority has access to borrow from the PWLB as a lender of last resort. Any such borrowing would be subject to higher rates of interest.

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

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

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report. The business case assessment process is currently under review. An Equality Impact Assessment consideration may be incorporated into the future business case assessment process.

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Capital bids for investment are welcomed that support the Council's Climate Emergency Plan that was compiled following the declaration of a Climate Emergency by the Council in May 2019.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement  
Appendix 2 – Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2021/22

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.  
Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22  
Investment Strategy Statement 2021/22

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports presented to Cabinet/Policy & Resources Committee	Various
18/19 Capital Programme – Council	5 March 2018
19/20 Capital Programme & Strategy – Council	4 March 2019
20/21 Capital Programme & Strategy – Council	2 March 2020

## APPENDIX 1

### 2021/22 MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) STATEMENT

- 1.1 Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision most recently issued in 2018.
- 1.2 The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.
- 1.3 The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods.
- 1.4 For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008, and for supported capital expenditure incurred on or after that date, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure based on the expected useful life of the relevant assets using an annuity method, (Option 3 in England and Wales).
- 1.5 For unsupported capital expenditure incurred after 31st March 2008, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset or as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate equal to the average relevant PWLB rate for the year of expenditure, starting in the year after the expenditure has been incurred.
- 1.6 For assets acquired by finance leases or the Private Finance Initiative and for the transferred debt from Merseyside County Council, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
- 1.7 The Council, if it considers it prudent for a particular financial year, will set aside capital receipts to be offset by the matching MRP liability amount.
- 1.8 With regards to loans granted by the Council no MRP will be charged on them. The MRP will be equated to the principal repayment of the individual loans.
- 1.9 Capital expenditure incurred during 2021/22 will not be subject to an MRP charge until 2022/23.
- 2.0 The MRP Statement will be submitted to Council before the start of the financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original MRP Statement during the year, a revised statement should be put to Council at that time.

Based on the Authority's estimate of its Capital Financing Requirement on 31st March 2021, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	<b>31.03.2021 Estimated CFR £m</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimated MRP £m</b>
Supported Capital Expenditure	170.2	0
Unsupported Capital Expenditure	158.3	6.4
Finance leases and Private Finance Initiative	36.9	2.7
Transferred debt	24.8	4.9
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>390.2</b>	<b>14.0</b>

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2021/22**

#### **Introduction**

As part of the November 2015 Spending Review, the Government announced that it would introduce flexibility for the period of the Spending Review for local authorities to use capital receipts from the sale of non-housing assets to fund the revenue costs of service reform and transformation. Guidance on the use of this flexibility was issued in March 2016 which applies to the financial years 2016/17 through to 2019/20. In the Provisional Local Government Settlement 2018/19 (announced 19 December 2017) the Government confirmed that the flexibility to use capital receipts to help meet the revenue costs of transformation will be extended for a further 3 years to April 2022. The Guidance requires local authorities to prepare, publish and maintain a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy. This document constitutes the Wirral Council Strategy.

#### **The Guidance**

The Guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 specified that;

- Local authorities will only be able to use capital receipts from the sale of property, plant and equipment received in the years in which this flexibility is offered. Following the Provisional Settlement announcement 19 December 2017, the period of offer is 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2022. They may not use their existing stock of capital receipts to finance the revenue costs of reform.
- Local authorities cannot borrow to finance the revenue costs of the service reforms.
- The expenditure for which the flexibility can be applied should be the up-front (set up or implementation) costs that will generate future ongoing savings and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs or to improve the quality of service delivery in future years. The ongoing revenue costs of the new processes or arrangements cannot be classified as qualifying expenditure.
- In using the flexibility, the Council will have due regard to the requirements of the Prudential Code, the CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and the current edition of the Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice.

The Guidance provides a definition of expenditure which qualifies to be funded from the capital receipts flexibility. Qualifying expenditure is expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners.

There are a wide range of projects that could generate qualifying expenditure. The key determining criteria to use when deciding whether expenditure can be funded by the capital receipts flexibility is that it is forecast to generate ongoing savings to an authority's net

service expenditure. Within the above definition, it is for individual local authorities to decide whether or not a project qualifies for the flexibility.

### **The Council's Proposals**

The Council intends to use the capital receipts flexibility to fund or part fund the following project:

Service Transformation Programme – Examples of suitable projects to which Capital receipts may be applied include:

- Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation (staff or non-staff), where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation.
- Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more efficient public services and how the public interacts with constituent authorities where possible.

The expected receipts to be allocated to this project are set out in the table below.

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Service Transformation Programme	1.200	TBC

TBC - To be confirmed.

### **The Prudential Code**

The Council will have due regard to the requirements of the Prudential Code and the impact on its prudential indicators from implementing the proposed project. The capital expenditure prudential indicators will be amended and approved as appropriate.

The Council will also have due regard to the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice when determining and including the entries required from undertaking and funding this project within the Council's Statement of Accounts.

### **Monitoring the Strategy**

The strategy will be monitored throughout the financial year and may be updated and replaced as proposals are developed and expenditure is incurred.

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 71 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report on the Treasury Management Strategy. The Authority's treasury management activity was underpinned by CIPFA's 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), which required the production of annual Treasury Management Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommended that Members were informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

The report fulfilled the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code. It did not cover the requirements of the 2018 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Investment Guidance, which mostly referred to non-treasury investments and was the subject of a separate report.

Members welcomed the use of Ethical, Social and Governance investment criteria for the future investment strategy.

Shaer Halewood, in response to a Member's comment confirmed that she would provide an updated version of Appendix 5 to the report, which referred to possible implications of a 'no deal Brexit'.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was –

#### **RECOMMENDED – To Council -**

- (1) the approval of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2021/2022;**
- (2) the approval of the Treasury Management Indicators.**

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

The Authority's treasury management activity is underpinned by CIPFA's 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), which requires the production of annual Treasury Management Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommends that Members are informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code. It does not cover the requirements of the 2018 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Investment Guidance, which mostly refers to non-treasury investments and is the subject of a separate report.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decisions in this report are key decisions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Policy & Resources Committee are requested to: -

1. Recommend to the Council the approval of the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2021/2022.
2. Recommend to the Council the approval of the Treasury Management Indicators.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services (the "CIPFA TM Code") requires local authorities to determine the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) on an annual basis. The TMSS no longer incorporates the Investment Strategy as required under the MHCLG's Investment Guidance, which mostly refers to non-treasury investments.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 CIPFA's 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the production of annual Treasury Management Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The accompanying 2021/26 Capital Programme impacts on the levels of borrowing being forecast within this report. An annual strategy is standard practice, but should it become appropriate to amend any key elements of this strategy during the period covered, a revised report will be produced.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year.
- 3.2 Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.
- 3.3 This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 3.4 Wirral Council defines its treasury management activities as:
- "the management of the organisation's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."*
- 3.5 The Council will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management:
- A Treasury Management Policy Statement (see Appendix 1, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities.
  - Suitable Treasury Management Practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the organisation will seek to achieve those policies

and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.

- 3.6 Treasury Management is about the management of risk. The Council is responsible for its treasury decisions and activity. No treasury management activity is without risk.
- 3.7 As per the requirements of the Prudential Code, the Authority has adopted the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. All treasury activity will comply with relevant statute, guidance and accounting standards.
- 3.8 Adoption of this Treasury Management Strategy Statement approves the following:
- Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22.
  - Treasury Management Policy Statement
  - Treasury Management Indicators for 2021/22.
- 3.9 The Authority will be asked to approve a revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement should the assumptions on which this report is based change significantly. Such circumstances would include, for example, a large, unexpected change in interest rates, or in the level of its investment balance.

## **ECONOMIC BACKGROUND**

- 3.10 **The Economy:** The impact on the UK from coronavirus, lockdown measures, the rollout of vaccines, as well as the new trading arrangements with the European Union (EU), will remain major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2021/22.
- 3.11 The Bank of England (BoE) maintained Bank Rate at 0.10% in December 2020 and Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion having extended it by £150 billion in the previous month. Within the latest forecasts, the Bank expects the UK economy to shrink -2% in Q4 2020 before growing by 7.25% in 2021, lower than the previous forecast of 9%. The BoE also forecasts the economy will now take until Q1 2022 to reach its pre-pandemic level rather than the end of 2021 as previously forecast.
- 3.12 UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) for November 2020 registered 0.3% year on year, down from 0.7% in the previous month. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, fell to 1.1% from 1.5%. The most recent labour market data for the three months to October 2020 showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.9% while the employment rate fell to 75.2%. Both measures are expected to deteriorate further due to the ongoing impact of coronavirus on the jobs market, particularly when the various government job retention schemes start to be unwound in 2021, with the BoE forecasting unemployment will peak at 7.75% in Q2 2021.
- 3.13 GDP growth rebounded by 16.0% in Q3 2020 having fallen by -18.8% in the second quarter, with the annual rate rising to -8.6% from -20.8%. Monthly

GDP estimates have shown the economic recovery slowing and remains well below its pre-pandemic peak. Looking ahead, the BoE's November MPR forecasts economic growth will rise in 2021 with GDP reaching 11% in Q4 2021, 3.1% in Q4 2022 and 1.6% in Q4 2023.

- 3.14 **Credit outlook:** Credit Default Swaps (CDS) are instruments that can be used to gauge market perception of a bank's financial condition. They are financial derivatives that guarantee against risk, similar to an insurance policy. The greater the perceived risk, the higher the price of insurance. After spiking in late March as coronavirus became a global pandemic and then rising again in October/November, Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices for the larger UK banks have steadily fallen back to almost pre-pandemic levels. However, general bank profitability in 2020 is likely to be significantly lower than in previous years. The credit ratings for many UK institutions were downgraded on the back of downgrades to the sovereign rating. Credit conditions more generally though in banks and building societies have tended to be relatively benign, despite the impact of the pandemic.
- 3.15 Looking forward, the potential for bank losses to be greater than expected when government and central bank support starts to be removed remains a risk, suggesting a cautious approach to bank deposits in 2021/22 remains advisable.
- 3.16 **Interest rate forecast:** The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that Bank of England (BoE) Bank Rate will remain at 0.1% until at least the first quarter of 2024. The risks to this forecast are judged to be to the downside as the BoE and UK government continue to react to the coronavirus pandemic and the new EU trading arrangements. The BoE extended its asset purchase programme to £895 billion in November while keeping Bank Rate on hold. However, further interest rate cuts to zero, or possibly negative, cannot yet be ruled out but this is not part of the Arlingclose central forecast.
- 3.17 Gilt yields are expected to remain very low in the medium-term while short-term yields are likely to remain below or at zero until such time as the BoE expressly rules out the chance of negative interest rates or growth/inflation prospects improve. The central case is for 10-year and 20-year gilts to rise to around 0.5% and 0.75% respectively over the time horizon. The risks around the gilt yield forecasts are judged to be broadly balanced between upside and downside risks, but there will almost certainly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.
- 3.18 A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix 5.

## **CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT**

- 3.19 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's

strategy will be to minimise and delay external borrowing where possible, through the utilisation of investment balances, sometime known as internal borrowing.

- 3.20 The Authority's current level of debt and investments are set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.21 CIPFA's Prudential Code of Practice recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years.
- 3.22 The forecast movement in the CFR in coming years is one of the Prudential Indicators (PIs). The movement in actual external debt and usable reserves combine to identify the Authority's borrowing requirement and potential investment strategy in the current and future years.

**Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary Analysis**

	<b>31-Mar-21 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31-Mar-22 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31-Mar-23 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31-Mar-24 Estimate £m</b>
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	390	432	441	428
Less: Existing Profile of Long Term Borrowing and Other Long Term Liabilities	203	199	190	186
<b>Cumulative Maximum External Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>242</b>
Usable Reserves	54	49	52	54
<b>Cumulative Net Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>188</b>

- 3.23 Table 1 shows that the capital expenditure plans of the Authority over the next three years cannot be funded entirely from other sources and external borrowing will be required. Useable reserves are subject to review as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

### **BORROWING STRATEGY**

- 3.24 The Authority as at 31st December 2020 held £170 million of longer-term loans, a decrease of £3 million from March 2020, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that in theory the Authority could need to borrow up to £184 million in 2021/22. The Authority may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing as per the Capital Strategy.

- 3.25 **Objectives:** The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.
- 3.26 **Strategy:** Given the significant pressures on local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.
- 3.27 By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal and/or short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. The Authority's Treasury Management advisors will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2021/22 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.
- 3.28 The Authority has previously raised a proportion of its long-term borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The Authority will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield.
- 3.29 Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.
- 3.30 In addition, the Authority may borrow short-term to cover unexpected cash flow shortages.
- 3.31 The approved sources of long term and short-term borrowing are:
- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
  - Any other UK public sector body
  - Any institution approved for investments
  - any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
  - UK public and private sector pension funds (with the exception of Merseyside Pension Fund)
  - Capital market bond investors

- UK Municipal Bonds Agency Plc and other special purpose companies created to enable joint local authority bond issues

3.32 In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- Leasing
- Hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- Sale and leaseback

3.33 UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities may be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to Council.

#### **Type of borrowing**

3.34 As the cost of carry remains high there is a greater reliance upon shorter dated and variable rate borrowing. This type of borrowing injects volatility into the debt portfolio in terms of interest rate risk but is counterbalanced by its affordability and alignment of borrowing costs with investment returns. Financial derivatives may also be used to manage this interest rate risk. The Authority's exposure to shorter dated and variable rate borrowing is kept under regular review.

#### **LOBOs**

3.35 The Authority has £108m of exposure to LOBO loans (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) of which £93m of these can be called within 2021/22. A LOBO is called when the lender exercises its rights to amend the interest rate on the loan at which point the borrower can accept the revised terms or reject them and repay the loan at no additional cost. LOBO loans present a potential refinancing risk to the Authority since the decision to call a LOBO is entirely at the lender's discretion. This refinancing risk is mitigated by the low interest rate climate, which has now been in existence for a number of years.

3.36 Any LOBOs called will be discussed with our Treasury Management advisors prior to acceptance of any revised terms. If a lender proposes to exercise their right to amend the interest rate of the loan, the default position will be the repayment of the LOBO without penalty i.e., the revised terms will not be accepted. Should the possibility arise of a LOBO being refinanced, for example by replacing the loan with a new loan arrangement, then the approach detailed below will be adopted.

## Debt Rescheduling

- 3.37 The Authority's debt portfolio can be restructured by prematurely repaying loans and refinancing them on similar or different terms to achieve a reduction in risk and/or savings in interest costs.
- 3.38 The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall saving or reduction in risk. The rationale for undertaking debt rescheduling would be one or more of the following:
- Savings in risk adjusted interest costs
  - Rebalancing the interest rate structure of the debt portfolio
  - Changing the maturity profile of the debt portfolio
- 3.39 Borrowing and rescheduling activity will be reported to the Policy & Resources Committee in the Annual Treasury Management Report and the regular treasury management reports.

## TREASURY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

- 3.40 The Authority holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. As at 31st December 2020, the Authority held £19 million of treasury investments. In the past 12 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £19 and £140 million. Investment balances were higher than usual during March 2020 to June 2020 due to cash received from central government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As this cash was utilised investment levels reduced to an average £40 million between July 2020 and December 2020. A similar range in investment level is expected in the forthcoming year, varying between £40 million and £20 million, depending on the levels of grant received and the payment profiles.
- 3.41 **Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. The Authority is facing severe funding pressures over future years and therefore any potential opportunities to increase income generation via investments, whilst adhering to CIPFA guidance, will be assessed for viability.

- 3.42 The Authority and its advisors continually assess economic and market conditions for signs of credit or market distress that might adversely affect the Authority.
- 3.43 **Negative Interest Rates:** The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk that the Bank of England will set its Bank Rate at or below zero, which is likely to feed through to negative interest rates on all low risk, short-term investment options. Since investments cannot pay negative income, negative rates will be applied by reducing the value of investments. In this event, security will be measured as receiving the contractually agreed amount at maturity, even though this may be less than the amount originally invested.
- 3.44 **Strategy:** Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Authority aims to further diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes during 2021/22. This is especially the case for funds that are available for longer-term investment. The majority of the Authority's surplus cash is currently invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits and money market funds.
- 3.45 The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties shown in Appendix 3, subject to the cash and time limits shown.
- 3.46 **Business models:** Under the new IFRS 9 accounting standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority's "business model" for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its internally managed treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.
- 3.47 **Banks and Building Societies Unsecured Investments:** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.
- 3.48 **Secured Investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.
- 3.49 **Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create

additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

- 3.50 Inter-authority investment and borrowing is a major source of local government financing with £115 billion of transactions reported nationally in 2018/19. The Council has not invested any funds with other local authorities since 2017 and no amounts remain outstanding. The treasury management team have utilised other options such as money market funds to place short term funds which have paid slightly higher rates. The inter-authority interest rate is not set by the individual local authority but by the market on the day and therefore no local authority has any influence over what rate it can charge. As with all lending, this purpose is for cash flow purposes and the funds cannot be used for day to day expenditure. The benefit of investing cashflows is that any interest the authority does make goes into the general budget that does support day to day expenditure.
- 3.51 **Corporates:** Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in but are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent. Loans to unrated companies will only be made either following an external credit assessment or as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely.
- 3.52 **Registered Providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.
- 3.53 **Money Market Funds:** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.
- 3.54 **Strategic Pooled Funds:** Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer-term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.
- 3.55 **Real estate investment trusts (REITs):** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the

share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

- 3.56 **Operational bank accounts:** The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be minimised as part of daily Treasury Management procedures. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.
- 3.57 **Other investments:** The Authority may also invest cash with other organisations, for example by making loans to small businesses. Because of the higher perceived risk of unrated businesses, such investments may provide considerably higher rates of return. They will however only be made following a favourable external credit assessment.
- 3.58 **Risk Assessment and Credit Ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:
- no new investments will be made,
  - existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
  - full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.
- 3.59 Where a credit rating agency announces that a rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "rating watch negative" or "credit watch negative") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn (on the next working day) will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.
- 3.60 **Other Information on the Security of Investments:** The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

- 3.61 When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected immediately in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, via the Debt Management Office or invested in government treasury bills for example, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.
- 3.62 **Investment Limits:** In order that the risk to the Authority's finances is further minimised in the case of a single default, a group of entities under the same ownership or a group of funds under the same management will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes. Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts and foreign countries as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country since the risk is diversified over many countries. Group Investment can be found in Appendix 3.
- 3.63 When calculating counterparty limits, the investment portfolio may be grossed up to include amounts that are being utilised by the Authority in lieu of borrowing (internally borrowed), as per the Authority's external advisor.
- 3.64 **Liquidity management:** The Authority uses cash flow forecasting to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority's medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast. The Authority will spread its liquid cash over providers (e.g., bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.
- 3.65 The Section 151 Officer, under delegated powers, will undertake the most appropriate form of investments in keeping with the investment objectives, income and risk management requirements. Decisions taken on the core investment portfolio will be reported to Committee meetings.
- 3.66 **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG):** The Council's approach towards responsible investment, sustainability, its impact on society and the environment, as well as other ethical and good governance considerations. These factors can collectively be termed 'ESG'. Integrating ESG will allow the Council to deliver on key goals and also improve the long-term resilience of the balance sheet, particularly as it is now increasingly clear that there are financial benefits to be gained in the long-term from recognising the impact of

climate change, efficient energy consumption, sustainable resources, inclusion, diversity, equality and strong corporate governance. A summary of the key ESG consideration is included in Appendix 6 to this report.

### **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRED BY CIPFA TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

- 3.67 **Financial Derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g., interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g., LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e., those that are not embedded into a loan or investment). The CIPFA Code requires authorities to clearly detail their policy on the use of derivatives in the annual strategy.
- 3.68 The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be considered when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 3.69 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.
- 3.70 In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.
- 3.71 **Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The Authority has opted up to professional client with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Chief Financial Officer believes this to be the most appropriate status.
- 3.72 **Investment Advisors:** The Authority continues to utilise an independent treasury advisor to provide the following services:
- Credit advice
  - Investment advice

- Technical advice
- Economic & interest rate forecasts
- Workshops and training events

During 2020/21 these services were provided by Arlingclose. A competitive tendering exercise will be completed to appoint an advisor for 2021/22.

The Treasury Management Team within the Accountancy Services monitor the quality of the service provided.

### **INTEREST RATE FORECAST**

- 3.73 The economic interest rate forecast provided by the Authority's treasury management advisor is attached at Appendix 5 The Authority will reappraise its strategies from time to time in response to evolving economic, political and financial events.

### **POLICY ON DELEGATION**

- 3.74 The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to the Policy and Resources Committee, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Director of Resources who will act in accordance with the Council's Strategy Statement, Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.
- 3.75 On a day-to-day basis the Treasury Management Team within Finance undertake the treasury management activities.
- 3.76 Decisions on short term investments and short-term borrowings may be made on behalf of the Section 151 Officer by the Senior Finance Business Partner with the responsibility for investments or any other members of that team who are empowered to agree deals subject to their conforming to the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy and policies outlined in this report.
- 3.77 A list of the current Authorised Signatories for Treasury Management activity, as designated by the Director of Finance & Investment, is included in Appendix 7.
- 3.78 Decisions on long term investments or long-term borrowings (i.e., for periods greater than one year) may be made on behalf of the Section 151 Officer by the Senior Finance Business Partner (or equivalent) or the Finance Business Partner (or equivalent) on the Treasury Management function and will be reported to Committee.
- 3.79 All officers will act in accordance with the policies contained within this document.

## **PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING**

- 3.80 The Council will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities, including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close in the form prescribed in its TMPs.
- 3.81 The Council will produce an Outturn Report on its treasury activity no later than 30 September after the financial year end.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Approval and implementation of this strategy will limit financial risks while helping to minimise financing costs and maximise investment returns.
- 4.2 If the Council fails to set a balanced budget as a result of the significant financial pressures attributable to COVID-19, a Section 114 notice may be issued by the Section 151 Officer. Should this action be required, this would impede upon the Authority's ability to borrow funds.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The MHCLG Guidance is issued by the Secretary of State under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. Under that section local authorities are required to "have regard" to "such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue". The Council has adopted the requirement of the MHCLG to produce a Treasury Management Strategy. The Council would be putting its financial standing at risk, as well as failing to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, if it failed to follow the revised Treasury Management Code and the associated guidance. The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. This requires the annual production of a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, which this report fulfils and the reporting of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are none arising out of this report.

### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The Council is responsible for treasury decisions and activity and none of these decisions are without risk. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are important and the main risks and mitigations are:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Fluctuations in interest rate levels	That the borrowing and investment profiles are balanced both in terms of maturity (utilising short- and long-term instruments) and also in terms

	of the nature of the interest rate of the portfolio (fixed rate and variable interest rate products)
Exposure to inflation	That wherever possible investments are into at inflation equalling levels of interest. This depends entirely on the nature and purpose of the proposed investment.
Legal and Regulatory Risk	That appropriate legal advice is sought on new opportunities to ensure adherence to relevant legislation and regulation.
Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of investments).	That any potential counterparty is subjected to suitable due diligence to ascertain appropriateness for investment and investment criteria
Council issues S114 notice	Should the Council encounter difficulties in obtaining borrowing following a S114 notice, the Authority has access to borrow from the PWLB as a lender of last resort. Any such borrowing would be subject to higher rates of interest.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 This strategy report has been written in consultation with the Council's external treasury management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, in accordance with best practice. There has also been consultation with Camdor Global Advisors in respect to the 'ESG' considerations outlined in Appendix 6 to this report. undertaken or proposed for this strategy report. There are no implications for partner organisations arising out of this report.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 As part of future investment strategy, consideration will be given to potential opportunities to invest in environmentally focussed instruments or organisations. 'Ethical, Social and Governance' (ESG) investment criteria will be considered and, where viable in adherence to the policies laid out in this strategy, will only be entered into following satisfactory assessment of the instrument and/or organisation. An example of such investment is the holding in the Public Sector Social Impact Fund.

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## **APPENDICES**

1. Treasury Management Policy Statement
2. Existing Investment and Debt Portfolio Position
3. Approved Investment Counterparties
4. Treasury Management Indicators 2021/22 – 2023/24
5. Interest Rate Outlook
6. Environmental, Social and Governance Considerations
7. Authorised Signatories

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management

## **SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-21</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> February 2020</b>
<b>Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2020-21</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020</b>

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 The Council adopts the key recommendations of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the Code), as described in Section 5 of the Code.
- 1.2 Accordingly, the Council will create and maintain, as the cornerstones for effective treasury management: -
  - A treasury management policy statement, stating the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities.
  - Suitable treasury management practices (TMPs), setting out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives, and prescribing how it will manage and control those activities.
- 1.3 The Council (i.e., full Council) will receive reports on its treasury management policies, practices and activities including, as a minimum, an annual strategy and plan in advance of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after its close, in the form prescribed in its TMPs.
- 1.4 The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Committee, and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Section 151 Officer who will act in accordance with the Council's Strategy Statement, Treasury Management Practices (TMPs) and CIPFA's Standard of Professional Practice on Treasury Management.

#### **2. Policies and objectives of treasury management activities**

- 2.1 The Council defines its treasury management activities as:

“The management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
- 2.2 This Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications

for the organisation, and any financial instruments entered into to manage these risks.

- 2.3 This Council acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.
- 2.4 The Council's borrowing will be affordable, sustainable and prudent and consideration will be given to the management of interest rate risk and refinancing risk. The source from which the borrowing is taken and the type of borrowing should allow the Council transparency and control over its debt.
- 2.5 The Council's primary objective in relation to investments remains the security of capital. The liquidity or accessibility of the Authority's investments followed by the yield earned on investments remain important but are secondary considerations.

## APPENDIX 2

### EXISTING INVESTMENT & DEBT PORTFOLIO POSITION

	<b>Current Portfolio as at 31 Dec 20 £m</b>
<b>External Borrowing (Long &amp; Short Term)</b>	
Public Works Loan Board	18
Local Authorities Temporary Loans	40
LOBO Loans	108
Other Loans	44
<b>Total External Borrowing</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Other Liabilities</b>	
PFI	39
<b>Total Other Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Total External Debt</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>Treasury Investments:</b>	
<i>Managed in-house</i>	
Deposits with Banks & Building Societies	1
Deposits with Community Interest Companies	1
<i>Managed Externally:</i>	
Royal London	1
Public Sector Social Investment Fund	10
Payden Sterling Reserve	4
Columbia Threadneedle	1
CCLA Property Fund	1
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Net Borrowing Position</b>	<b>230</b>

## APPENDIX 3

### APPROVED INVESTMENT COUNTERPARTIES

#### Investment Limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£10m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	25 years	£10m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	£10m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£5m	£25m
Money market funds *	n/a	£10m	Unlimited
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£10m	£50m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£10m	£25m
Other investments *	5 years	£5m	£10m

\* Minimum credit rating: Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be considered.

For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made where external advice indicates the entity to be of sound credit quality.

#### Additional investment limits

Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£25m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker's nominee account	£25m per broker
Foreign countries	£10m per country

## APPENDIX 4

### TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS 2021/2022

#### 1. Background

Treasury management indicators are not in the 2017 edition of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code itself but in the separate Treasury Management Code guidance notes for local authorities, which was last published in 2011. The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

#### Treasury Management Indicators

##### 1. Security

The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

<b>Credit risk indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Portfolio average credit rating	A-

##### 2. Liquidity

The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount it can borrow each quarter without giving prior notice.

<b>Liquidity risk indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
<b>Total sum borrowed in past 3 months without prior notice</b>	<b>£15m</b>

##### 3. Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

<b>Maturity Structure of Borrowing</b>	<b>Lower Limit</b>	<b>Upper Limit</b>
	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 12 Months	0	90
12 Months and within 24 months	0	75
24 Months and within 5 years	0	75
5 years and within 10 years	0	75
10 years and over	0	100

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment, including LOBO loans, many of which have repayment options every six months.

#### **4. Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer Than a Year**

The Council has placed an upper limit for principal sums invested for periods longer than a year. This limit is to contain exposure to the possibility of loss that may arise as a result of the Council having to seek early repayment of the sums invested.

<b>Price risk indicator</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Limit on principal invested beyond year end</b>	£50m	£30m	£30m

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **The Arlingclose Economic and Interest Rate Outlook**

#### **Underlying assumptions:**

- The medium-term global economic outlook has improved with the distribution of vaccines, but the recent upsurge in coronavirus cases has worsened economic prospects over the short term.
- Restrictive measures and further lockdowns are likely to continue in the UK and Europe until the majority of the population is vaccinated by the second half of 2021. The recovery period will be strong thereafter, but potentially longer than previously envisaged.
- Signs of a slowing UK economic recovery were already evident in UK monthly GDP and PMI data, even before the second lockdown and Tier 4 restrictions. Employment is falling despite an extension to support packages.
- The need to support economic recoveries and use up spare capacity will result in central banks maintaining low interest rates for the medium term.
- Brexit will weigh on UK activity. The combined effect of Brexit and the after-effects of the pandemic will dampen growth relative to peers, maintain spare capacity and limit domestically generated inflation. The Bank of England will therefore maintain loose monetary conditions for the foreseeable future.
- Longer-term yields will also remain depressed, anchored by low central bank policy rates, expectations for potentially even lower rates and insipid longer-term inflation expectations. There is a chance yields may follow a slightly different path in the medium term, depending on investor perceptions of growth and inflation, or the deployment of vaccines.

#### **Forecast:**

- Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to remain at the current 0.10% level.
- Our central case for Bank Rate is no change, but further cuts to zero, or perhaps even into negative territory, cannot be completely ruled out, especially with likely emergency action in response to a no-deal Brexit.
- Gilt yields will remain low in the medium term. Shorter term gilt yields are currently negative and will remain around zero or below until either the Bank expressly rules out negative Bank Rate or growth/inflation prospects improve.



## APPENDIX 6

### Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Considerations

Outside of financial risks, it is increasingly evident that there are also key non-financial risks with financial consequences over the longer-term for the Council. In particular

- **Environmental risks:** Climate change has continued to become an increasingly evident problem, with extreme weather events rising and temperatures increasingly on a global basis. Coupled with the depletion of natural resources and the negative feedback loop created by hydrocarbon pollution, there are growing concerns about the environment and the potential financial impact on societies, economies and businesses.
- **Social risks:** Inequality, diversity and inclusion are becoming more important considerations. The unequal recovery since the last financial crisis coupled with financial pressures on public sector balance sheets have led to a growing divergence of outcomes and concerns about parts of society being systematically left behind. There is also increased scrutiny from a range of stakeholders. For the Council, there is also a vested interest in protecting and minimising the most vulnerable in society.
- **Governance risks:** Governance covers the rights and responsibilities of the senior management of companies, institutions and counterparties, in particular its structures, corporate values and accountability processes. The proper treatment of employees, ensuring an ethical approach to supply chains, paying living wages, how counterparties ensure that management is acting in the best interests of all stakeholders – these are all clear areas of focus that if poorly managed, can lead to reputational and financial consequences for the Council's portfolio in the long-term.

The Council's objective is to recognise all these risks, to mitigate them where possible and thereby improve the security of its portfolios and balance sheet in the long-term.

Within these risks, the Council has identified climate change as a long-term, material and systemic financial risk with the potential to significantly impact the treasury portfolio, the capital strategy and the Council's financial resilience over time. The Council has declared a Climate Emergency already in response to this, and further, in respect of its investments, will seek to:

- Minimise exposure to counterparties and investments heavily impacted by climate change risk.
- Increase exposure to sectors, counterparties and investments, such as renewables, whose activities aid the transition to a lower carbon world and economy.
- Contribute meaningfully to an improved economically sustainable future locally and nationally, without sacrificing security

The Council will incorporate ESG issues into its analysis and decision-making processes when considering the treasury portfolio and capital investments. The Council will seek to use data and analysis where available to determine the type and materiality of relevant issues for counterparties.

## ESG Risk Appetite

It is important to note that risk will always exist in some measure and cannot be removed in its entirety. Additionally, in order to realise investment and commercial gains, it is unavoidable for some measure of risk to exist.

Therefore, risks need to be considered both in terms of potential threats to the Council and positive opportunities.

The risk appetite will be considered annually and monitored on an ongoing basis by senior management and external advisors.

In general, the Council seeks to minimise its exposure to risks that are unwanted and unrewarded. Of relevance to ESG, the Council is exposed to a range of risks across its balance sheet and portfolios:

Environmental risks related to the environmental impact of the Council's strategy and investments.

- Social risks related to the social impact of the Council's strategy and investments.
- Governance risks related to ensuring that prudence and careful consideration sit at the heart of the Council's decision-making, augmented by quality independent advice and appropriate checks and balances.

Within these, the Council's appetite is as follows:

Risk	Appetite
Environmental	No appetite for environmentally negative risks. Moderate to high appetite for projects and investments that reduce environmental risks and promote sustainability. Always subject to full due diligence and subsequent monitoring of risks and key appropriate metrics.
Social	Low appetite for social risks, especially in the local region. Moderate appetite for projects and investments that reduce social risk. Always subject to full due diligence and subsequent monitoring of risks and key appropriate metrics.
Governance	No appetite for investments and initiatives that are not accompanied by careful due diligence and an assessment of the transaction versus the Council's resources, funding needs, cashflow requirements, ESG risk preferences and broader goals. All subject to ongoing monitoring of risks and key relevant metrics to manage the Council's

	exposure and respond to any emerging issues. Depth and frequency of monitoring should be proportional to the complexity and capital at risk for the Council.
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## **APPENDIX 7**

### **AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

The following officers are authorised to make payments, either via the Council's online banking system or by signing cheques, and issue other instructions relating to Treasury Management transactions on behalf of Wirral Borough Council:

Director of Resources – Shaer Halewood

Assistant Director of Finance & Investment – Daniel Kirwan

Senior Finance Manager – Peter J. Molyneux

Senior Finance Manager – Peter McCann

Senior Finance Manager – Vikki Gregorich

Senior Finance Manager – Diane Grisdale

This list can be amended at the discretion of the Director of Resources, should the need arise due to operational requirements.

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

17 FEBRUARY, 2021

#### 72 INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report on the Investment Strategy. In February 2018, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published updated 'Guidance on Local Government Investments'. The previous edition covered only Treasury Management investments. In recent years local authorities had had an increasing focus on commercial activities including but not exclusive to property. Such activity had the potential to bring both increased returns and increased positive and negative risk. The revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments required that a separate Investment Strategy focusing on non-treasury investments was produced and approved annually by Council.

This report fulfilled the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covered non-treasury activities.

Shaer Halewood responded to comments from Members, including on the work of the New Commercial Ideas Panel and the Investment and Change Board and confirmed that an update would be provided on the investment strategy to the Committee. She also confirmed that she would respond in writing with regard to the current value of the Vue Cinema in Birkenhead.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was –

**RECOMMENDED - To Council, the approval of the Investment Strategy for 2021/2022 which includes potential investment in the following activity areas:**

1. **Commercial Property**
2. **Service Investments: Loans**
3. **Service Investment: Shares (non-currently held)**
4. **Loan Commitments and financial Guarantees**

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****Wednesday, 17 February 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021/22</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

In February 2018, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published updated 'Guidance on Local Government Investments'. The previous edition covered only Treasury Management investments. In recent years local authorities have had an increasing focus on commercial activities including but not exclusive to property. Such activity has the potential to bring both increased returns and increased positive and negative risk. The revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments requires that a separate Investment Strategy focusing on non-treasury investments is produced and approved annually by Council.

This report fulfils the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covers non-treasury activities.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decisions in this report are key decisions.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Policy and Resources Committee recommends to the Council the approval of the Investment Strategy for 2021/2022 which includes potential investment in the following activity areas:

1. Commercial Property
2. Service Investments: Loans
3. Service Investment: Shares (non-currently held)
4. Loan Commitments and financial Guarantees

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To fulfil the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covers non-treasury activities.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report fulfils the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covers non-treasury activities. Should the Council not produce a strategy this would conflict against MHCLG guidance. The guidance on investments is issued under section 15(1) of the 2003 Local Government Act and authorities are therefore required to have regard to it. An annual strategy is standard practice and should it become appropriate to amend any key elements of this strategy during the period covered, a revised report will be produced.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Authority invests its money for three broad purposes:
- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
  - to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations other organisations (**service investments**), and
  - to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose)
- 3.2 This investment strategy report meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the Government in January 2018 and focuses on the second and third of these categories. MHCLG have acknowledged the increase in commercial activities local authorities are engaged in. The revised guidance requires local authorities to clearly define their approaches and risk appetite for such activity and to gain approval from Council on an annual basis.
- 3.3 A separate report covering the Treasury Management Strategy will also be produced that fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG guidance.
- 3.4 A Commercial Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018. This strategy takes commercial approach to service design, management and decisions, encouraging innovation whilst optimising assets and services to exploit opportunities to generate income surplus for reinvestment and reduce costs. As part of this the effectiveness of the 'Investment & Change Board' and 'New Commercial Ideas Panel' in this regard, is assessed through the relevant committee'.

## Treasury Management Investments

3.5 The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, may lead to a cash flow surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The daily balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £20m and £50m during the 2021/22 financial year.

3.6 Wirral Council defines its treasury management activities as:

*“the management of the organisation’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”*

3.7 **Contribution:** The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities. Investment returns contribute towards funding services, whilst reduced borrowing costs allow resources to be allocated elsewhere.

3.8 **Further details:** Full details of the Authority’s policies and its plan for 2021/22 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the treasury management strategy.

### Service Investments: Loans

3.9 **Contribution:** The Council lends money to its subsidiaries e.g. Edsential Community Interest Co. (by way of a credit facility) and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.

3.10 **Security:** The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. Appropriate due diligence is undertaken on loan applications and collateral sought to offset risk. In order to further limit this risk and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as per the table below. Loans should be self-financing with returns covering financing and administrative costs plus any return.

Table 1: Loans for service purposes.

Category of borrower	31.3.2021 Estimate			2021/22
	Balance Owing £000	Loss allowance £000	Estimated Net figure in accounts £000	Approved Limit £000
Subsidiaries	975	44	931	10,000
Local businesses	350	175	175	10,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,325</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>20,000</b>

- 3.11 Accounting standards require the Authority to set aside loss allowance (where appropriate) for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the Authority's statement of accounts are shown net of this loss allowance. However, the Authority makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.
- 3.12 **Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans. If in the future the authority actively markets itself as a provider of finance, it would need to assess the market that it would be competing in e.g., other local authorities and financial institutions. Prior to offering any loan facility the following factors are considered:
- Financial appraisal based on evidence obtained from credit agencies.
  - Independent external advisor appointed in conjunction with procurement.
  - Analysis of business plans.
  - Appropriate interest rate calculation, including potential state aid implications; and
  - The availability of any securities/collateral.

### **Service Investments: Shares**

- 3.13 **Contribution:** The Council can invest in the shares of its subsidiaries, its suppliers, and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth. At present there are no such investments in place.
- 3.14 **Security:** One of the risks of investing in shares is that they fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. In order to limit this risk, upper limits on the sum invested in each category will be determined as the need arises.
- 3.15 **Risk assessment:** The Authority will assess the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding shares by the approach referred to in paragraph 3.11.
- 3.16 **Liquidity:** The maximum period for non-subsidiaries which funds may prudently be committed would initially be 12 months, but this would be subject to an ongoing review to best avoid the likelihood of capital losses.
- 3.17 **Non-specified Investments:** Shares are the only investment type that the Authority has identified that meets the definition of a non-specified investment in the government guidance. The limits on share investments will therefore also be the Authority's upper limits on non-specified investments. The Authority has not adopted any procedures for determining further categories of non-specified investment since none are likely to meet the definition covered by this requirement.

### **Commercial Investments: Property**

- 3.18 **Contribution:** MHCLG defines property to be an investment if it is held primarily or partially to generate a profit. The Council invests in local commercial and residential property with profits that will be spent on local public services. Although there is increased national focus on property, councils have a long history of owning investment properties. Wirral's portfolio include industrial estates, commercial and leisure properties.

Table 2: Property held for investment purposes

Property [type]	Actual	31.3.2021 Estimate	
	Purchase cost £000	Gains or (losses) £000	Estimated Value in accounts £000
Europa Boulevard	8,400	0	8,400
Birkenhead Market	2,805	0	2,805
Vue Cinema	6,800	0	6,800
92 Grange Rd	2,400	0	2,400
Other Investment Properties	9,482	0	9,482
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,887</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29,887</b>

The amount for other investment properties represents the latest valuation per the Statement of Accounts.

- 3.19 The Council's 'Strategic Asset Management Plan' sets out how the council will make the best use of its buildings and land in the future. This will be linked to future property purchase or consideration.
- 3.20 The Council is currently engaged in a joint venture agreement with Muse Developments to create the Wirral Growth Company the benefits being inward investment, regeneration, job creation and income generation to the authority. These growth priorities are reflected within the Wirral Plan 2025, which highlights ambitions to drive forward sustainable economic growth.
- 3.21 **Security:** In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.
- 3.22 Where value in the accounts is at or above purchase cost: An annual fair value assessment of the Authority's investment property portfolio is undertaken and the underlying assets provide security for capital investment. Should the 2020/21 year-end accounts preparation and audit process value these properties significantly below their purchase cost, then an updated investment strategy will be presented to full council detailing the impact of the loss on the security of investments and any revenue consequences arising therefrom.
- 3.23 Where value in accounts is below purchase cost: The fair value of the Authority's investment property portfolio is no longer sufficient to provide security against loss, and in these circumstances the Authority will take mitigating actions to protect the capital invested.
- 3.24 **Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments. Refer to measures outlined in paragraph 3.11.
- 3.25 **Liquidity:** Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions.

### **Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees**

- 3.26 Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Authority and are included here for completeness.
- 3.27 The Authority has committed itself to make available a credit facility of £2 million to Edsential Community Interest Co. To date £0.975 million has been advanced. Under the terms of the existing agreement Edsential has until March 2026 to call upon the balance. Interest is earned by the Council on any sums advanced and is charged at an appropriate market rate.

### **Proportionality**

- 3.28 The Authority plans to become partly dependent on profit generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. The most significant income source will be the dividend payable by the Growth Company to the Council which will be determined by the Growth Company development plans. The table below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives and/or place making role of the Authority is dependent on achieving the expected net profit from investments over the lifecycle of the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Regular budget monitoring and review of income to be achieved will highlight if expected net profit is in any doubt and if so that corrective budgetary action needs to be taken to minimise any potential impact on services.

*Table 3: Proportionality of Investments*

	<b>2020/21 Forecast £000</b>	<b>2021/22 Budget £000</b>	<b>2022/23 Budget £000</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget £000</b>
Gross service expenditure	310,000	319,000	312,000	313,000
Investment income	2,000	2,000	2,000	3,000
Proportion	0.63%	0.63%	0.64%	0.96%

*The proportion is the investment income divided by the gross service expenditure.*

### **Borrowing in Advance of Need**

- 3.29 Government guidance is that local authorities must not borrow more than, or in advance of, their needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. The Authority may, from time to time, borrow in advance of need, where this is expected to provide the best long-term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Authority is aware that it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums, and the risk that investment and

borrowing interest rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Authority's overall management of its treasury risks.

### **Capacity, Skills and Culture**

- 3.30 **Elected members and statutory officers:** The Council has a dedicated 'Policy & Resources Committee' to review key financial matters. The Committee meets regularly with the Director of Resources, raises questions and receives briefings on latest developments. Financial training has been offered to all Members to aid decision making. Regular reporting and discussion of financial matters occurs with frequent meetings of Committee and Strategic Leadership team. Formal reporting is provided to Council and supporting committees. Reports undergo extensive review to ensure content is detailed and appropriate for the circumstance and relevant implications have been identified.
- 3.31 Decisions which have a financial impact must be approved by the Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) or one of their authorised officers. Finance Officers are members of appropriate professional bodies such as the chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (or equivalent). Membership requires officers undergo continuous professional development and are subject to compliance with the regulatory frameworks laid down by professional institute. Officers are supported by properly regulated advisors and have access to latest guidance and best practice. Strategies and policies are approved to provide a framework for investment decisions to be made within.
- 3.32 **Commercial deals:** Commercial deals require initial approval from the Director of Resources. Governance arrangements include oversight from the Investment and Change Board (ICB), chaired by the Director of Resources. ICB membership includes senior officers from a range of disciplines including legal services. Decisions are also subject to member approval with governance arrangements in place to ensure reports contain appropriate detail to enable decisions to be made. Where appropriate external advice will be sought from experienced and suitably qualified experts.
- 3.33 **Corporate governance:** The Director of Resources has statutory responsibility for overseeing the Council's financial affairs and ensuring that robust controls are in place. The Director is supported by officers within and without the directorate. The Investment and Change Board assists with ensuring governance and oversight is in place. At member level there is a Policy & Resources Committee with responsibility for financial matters. The Council maintains appropriate risk registers and an Internal Audit function is maintained to provide appropriate challenge and review.

### **Investment Indicators**

- 3.34 The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.
- 3.35 **Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually

committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third-party loans.

*Table 4: Total investment exposure*

<b>Total investment exposure</b>	<b>31.03.2020 Actual £000</b>	<b>31.03.2021 Forecast £000</b>	<b>31.03.2022 Forecast £000</b>
Treasury management investments	86,720	30,000	30,000
Service investments: Loans	1,106	1,106	1,106
Commercial investments: Property	29,887	29,887	34,887
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>117,713</b>	<b>60,993</b>	<b>65,993</b>
Commitments to lend	1,025	1,025	1,025
Guarantees issued on loans	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL EXPOSURE</b>	<b>118,738</b>	<b>62,018</b>	<b>67,018</b>

- 3.36 **How investments are funded:** Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.

*Table 5: Investments funded by borrowing*

<b>Investments funded by borrowing</b>	<b>31.03.2019 Actual</b>	<b>31.03.2020 Forecast</b>	<b>31.03.2021 Forecast</b>
Service investments: Loans	350	350	350
Commercial investments: Property	29,887	29,887	34,887
<b>TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING</b>	<b>30,237</b>	<b>30,237</b>	<b>35,237</b>

- 3.37 **Rate of return received:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

*Table 6: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)*

<b>Investments net rate of return</b>	<b>2019/20 Actual %</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast %</b>	<b>2021/22 Forecast %</b>
Treasury management investments	0.34	0.40	0.40
Service investments: Loans	5.56	5.67	5.59
Commercial investments: Property	4.49	4.91	4.91
<b>ALL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>1.49</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>2.62</b>

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Approval and implementation of this strategy will limit financial risks while helping to minimise financing costs and maximise investment returns.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Guidance is issued by the Secretary of State under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003. Under that section local authorities are required to “have regard” to “such guidance as the Secretary of State may issue”. The Council has adopted the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covers non-treasury activities This requires the annual production of Investment Indicators and an Investment Strategy Statement.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are none arising out of this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The Council is responsible for investment decisions and activity and none of these decisions are without risk. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are important, and the main risks and mitigations are:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Fluctuations in interest rate levels	That the borrowing and investment profiles are balanced both in terms of maturity (utilising short- and long-term instruments) and also in terms of the nature of the interest rate of the portfolio (fixed rate and variable interest rate products)
Exposure to inflation	That wherever possible investments are into at inflation equalling levels of interest. This depends entirely on the nature and purpose of the proposed investment.
Legal and Regulatory Risk	That appropriate legal advice is sought on new opportunities to ensure adherence to relevant legislation and regulation.
Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of investments).	That any potential counterparty is subjected to suitable due diligence to ascertain appropriateness for investment and investment criteria

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been no consultation undertaken or proposed for this strategy report.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As part of future investment strategy, consideration will be given to potential opportunities to invest in environmentally focussed instruments or organisations. 'Ethical, Social and Governance' (ESG) investment criteria will be considered and, where viable in adherence to the policies laid out in this strategy, will only be entered into following satisfactory assessment of the instrument and/or organisation.

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## APPENDICES

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

International Financial Reporting Standards – IFRS9 Financial instruments  
Strategic Asset Management Plan  
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government Investment Guidance

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Investment Strategy Statement 2019-20	18th February 2019
Investment Strategy Statement 2020-21	17th February 2020