



Housing Committee

Date:	Thursday, 27 January 2022
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Floral Pavilion - New Brighton

Members of the public are encouraged to view the meeting via the webcast (see below), but for anyone who would like to attend in person, seating is limited therefore please contact the Floral Pavilion box office at their website: <https://www.florarpavilion.com/en-GB/categories/wirral%20council> or by telephone on 0151 666 0000 in advance of the meeting, if you would like to reserve a seat. All those attending will be asked to wear a face covering (unless exempt) and are encouraged to take a Lateral Flow Test before attending. You should not attend if you have tested positive for Coronavirus or if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus.

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AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

5.1 Public Questions

Notice of questions to be given in writing or by email, by 12 noon, Monday 24 January 2022 to the Council's Monitoring Officer and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol](#)

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission

5.2 Statements and Petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email, by 12 noon, Monday 24 January 2022 to the Council's Monitoring Officer and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1

Petitions may be presented to the Committee. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding one minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. Please give notice of petitions to committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement/petition by the deadline for submission.

5.3 Questions by Members

Questions by Members to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6. 2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 7 - 100)

SECTION B - REVIEWS / REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

- 7. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 101 - 108)**
- 8. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following item contains exempt information.

Recommendation: That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

- 9. EXEMPT APPENDIX - 2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 109 - 110)**

Exempt appendix to agenda item 6.

Housing Committee Terms of Reference

The Housing Committee has responsibility for taking a strategic approach to the Council's various housing functions, including issues concerning social rented and affordable housing, homelessness, allocations and standards of housing.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:-

- (a) the Authority's role and functions in relation to strategic and private sector housing policies and as the housing authority, including but not limited to
 - (i) the Council's Housing Strategy;
 - (ii) homelessness and the allocation of housing;
 - (iii) private sector housing, including taking action to remedy overcrowding, disrepair, unfitness and statutory nuisances; to promote fire safety in private sector housing and the Council's functions in relation to houses in multiple occupation;
 - (iv) licensing schemes;
 - (v) tenancy relations and the provision of housing advice;
 - (vi) relationship with Registered Providers of housing;
 - (vii) housing loans and grants;
 - (viii) housing related support services; and
 - (ix) policies and actions with a view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness to ensure that appropriate action is taken;
- (b) analysis, development and overview of housing policies in terms of spatial planning to submit to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee to inform the Local Plan and planning policies;
- (c) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- (d) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

HOUSING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18 November 2021

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J McManus (Chair)	
	Councillors	A Brame	M Collins
		J Bird	A Gardner
		P Martin	I Lewis
		T Smith	H Gorman
		H Cameron	
<u>Deputies:</u>	Councillor	J Walsh (For Cllr S Whittingham)	

11 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed Members of the Housing Committee, Officers and viewing members of the public to the meeting.

12 APOLOGIES

The Chair confirmed apologies the apologies of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, with Councillor Joe Walsh deputising.

13 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No such declarations were made.

14 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the Housing Committee held on 19 October 2021 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

15 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

16 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that two questions had been received from members of the public.

Question 1:

The Chair invited Ruth Molyneux to put her question which was:

“What are the needs and targets for affordable housing for Wirral?”

Answer:

There are currently 13,693 people on the Housing Register. 19% have an assessed housing need and been awarded a priority banding accordingly, (Band A the highest through to Band C). Those with the highest priority Band A equate to 207. The pressure for meeting housing needs is a challenge and the Council recognises this, as does this Committee.

The Council is in the process of concluding its Strategic Housing Needs and Market Assessment as part of the local plan. The emerging SHMA which is still to be formally approved recommends the need for 374 additional affordable homes each year. The Council's proposed target which is still subject to viability testing and is currently recommended to be 20% of all new homes.

However, we are striving to meet the demands within the Borough and it was anticipated as part of Wirral's Delivery Plan for 2021/22 a total of 400 affordable housing units would be completed and 700 units started on site. The current position at the end of quarter 2 is that 235 units have completed, with 650 on site. It is further estimated that the target 400 units will be surpassed which is positive.

Supplementary Question:

"When will an affordable housing strategy plan be published?"

Answer:

Affordable Housing targets for each area in the borough will be included within the local plan which is due to be approved by Members early in the new year. A new Affordable Housing Statement is currently being prepared and informed by the key findings emerging from the Strategic Market Assessment. This Committee will be considering this statement for approval before the end of the municipal year.

Question 2:

The question was submitted by Giuseppe Roberto, who was not able to attend the meeting in person. His question was read out by the Solicitor, Matthew Neal on his behalf:

"During the first lock down, Wirral Council ensured zero street sleeping with Everyone In.

But, with no-fault evictions starting again, the housing market on Wirral is still not meeting everyone's housing needs and many people live in insecure or over-crowded homes. I understand there are still over 2,000 people on housing waiting list assessed as high priority.

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026 states "A new plan will be set out outlining our needs and opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing with our partners.

How will more affordable housing be delivered?”

Answer:

There are broad range of mechanisms to deliver affordable housing, and this includes both the direct involvement of the Council and by us working in our ‘enabling role’ with partners.

Specific examples of what this entails includes: -

- Bringing forward the Councils own assets and/or acquiring land to deliver a range of housing to meet our Regeneration ambitions. i.e. the former Rock Ferry High School site where 186 homes are being delivered in partnership with a Registered Provider. The Legacy Scheme within the Birkenhead Regeneration area where 100 units of affordable housing will be delivered.
- The Council acquiring our own affordable housing. The approval to purchase some units having previously been approved by this Committee earlier in the year.
- Bringing forward early development of affordable housing, through existing and emerging delivery vehicles, such as the Wirral Growth Company and the Urban Development Corporation.
- Working closely with our Registered Providers to secure grant and access funding for delivery.
- Through planning policy, we seek to ensure that new market housing developments in Wirral meet the current targets for provision of affordable housing, wherever it is viable.

17 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

The Chair reported that no statements or petitions were received.

18 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Chair reported that no questions from Members had been received.

19 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

The Assistant Director of Health & Wellbeing and Public Health Consultant introduced a report that presented the Public Health Annual Report 2020/2021. It was noted that the annual report was a statutory requirement. It described the enduring health inequalities in Wirral, the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these differences in health outcomes and the recommended actions that needed to be taken to improve everyone’s health.

Members asked questions on the demands placed on the social housing sector on the Wirral and rises in costs in private sector rental accommodation.

Resolved – That Housing Committee endorsed the recommendation detailed within the Public Health Annual Report.

20 **WIRRAL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STOCK CONDITIONS**

The Housing Standards Manager introduced a report which set out the condition of Wirral's private sector housing stock and the range of interventions taken by the Council to remedy any problems.

The report provided an overview of how the Council was working to improve sub-standard housing stock conditions, ensuring the Council's available resources were prioritised to the areas of highest need to support vulnerable residents and bring empty properties back into use,

Members asked a range of questions on the Houses of Multiple Occupation licensing scheme, how the Council verifies if a property is vacant, how hazards in privately rented properties are reported to the Council and how the Council engages with housing associations, Members also asked questions about the voluntary accreditation scheme for landlords, obstacles to bringing empty properties back into use and prosecutions of landlords.

Resolved – That the content of the report be noted.

21 **UPDATE ON LOW CARBON HOUSING RETROFIT PROGRAMME**

The Principal Strategic Housing and Investment Officer introduced a report which set out the scale and challenge of carrying out low carbon housing retrofit of Wirral's housing stock. Low carbon housing retrofit supports at least three aims of the Wirral Plan 2021-26:

- Delivering regeneration, growth and transport ambitions;
- Creating jobs and supporting local businesses; and
- Responding to the Climate Change Emergency.

Members asked a number of questions on properties in conservation areas being made low carbon, publicity of the programme to landlords and costs involved.

Members thanked the Principal Strategic Housing and Investment Officer and the Housing Standards Manager for their reports and noted that they had been of excellent quality.

Resolved – That the Committee noted the report and further offered its support to the current programme of work.

22 **2020/21 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN**

The Senior Finance Manager introduced a report which provided a summary of the year-end revenue outturn and capital position for the Housing Committee as at the end of March 2021 for the 2020-21 financial year.

Members asked questions on reserves and whether money could be reallocated.

Resolved – That:

- 1. The year-end revenue outturn variance of £0.102m favourable position for 2021/22 be noted; and**
- 2. The Capital Programme Report be noted.**

23 **HOUSING QUARTER 2 MONITOR REPORT**

The Senior Finance Manager introduced a report which provided a summary of the projected year-end revenue and capital position for Housing Committees as at the end of Quarter 2 (to September 2021) of the 2021/22 financial year. The report provided an overview of budget performance to enable the committee to take ownership of their specific budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to officers on the performance of those budgets.

Members asked questions on slippage, waiting lists for residents that have applied for disability grants and staff resourcing issues.

The Chair noted that she had been delighted to present to the Motor Neuron Disease Foundation recently and that the Council had been recognised for the work it has done for people with Motor Neuron Disease. The Chair thanked officers for the work they had done.

Resolved – That:

- 1) the projected year-end revenue forecast variance of £0.071m favourable position as reported at quarter 2 (Jul-Sep) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- 2) progress on the achievement of approved savings and the projected year-end forecast position at quarter 2 (Jul-Sep) of 2021-22 be noted;**
- 3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for the future one-off commitments, be noted; and**

4. the projected year-end capital forecast expenditure position of £6.926m as reported at quarter 2 (Jul-Sep) of 2021-22, be noted.

24 **HOUSING COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT**

The Director of Regeneration of Place introduced a report to consider the feedback and outcomes from recent Budget Workshops. The workshops enabled officer and Member liaison on proposed budget options, to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required.

The Director of Regeneration and Place noted that the content of the report had been superseded by the recent governance reviews and that a further workshop would likely be arranged once clarification on the new budget process was received.

Resolved – That the Budget Workshop feedback and outcomes as detailed in appendix 1, being reported to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration, be agreed.

25 **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Members gave consideration to a report of the Director Regeneration and Place that set out the proposed Housing Committee Work Programme 2021/22 as detailed in the appendix to the report.

The report advised that the Housing Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which were within the remit of the Committee.

The report provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

Resolved – That the Housing Committee Work Programme for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year be noted.



HOUSING COMMITTEE

Thursday 27 January 2022

REPORT TITLE:	2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides for consideration of the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of the 2022/23 Budget Update. The associated Report of the Director of Resources to the Policy and Resources Committee is attached at appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Housing Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note and comment on the 2022/23 draft budget proposals.
- 2) authorise the relevant director with portfolio to take the necessary action to consult on any proposals that require additional consultation and take necessary action to deliver the resulting service changes in consultation with the Chair and Group Spokesperson or reporting to the Housing Committee as the Director considers appropriate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To provide the opportunity for the Policy and Services Committees to provide feedback on the budget proposals for the Policy and Resources Committee to take into consideration in recommending a legal budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options have been considered as reported in the Policy and Resources Committee and appended report.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on Monday, 17 January 2021 will receive a report from the Director of Resources providing an updated position on the draft budget for 2022/23 and related statutory consultation. That report and associated appendices are appended to this report.

- 3.2 The budget proposals associated to Housing Committee are detailed within section 3 of this report.

- 3.5 **PROPOSAL:** Cease Financial Contributions for the Provision of Community Alarms and Response Calls

More about this option: It is proposed the council will cease the grant funding contribution to current eligible customers for the community alarm/response services charges. Notice will be given to the providers of this funding being withdrawn in line with current funding regime and agreement notice period. Registered providers will then each undertake their own review of the service provided to see how this would be managed with their residents.

Saving: £200k (22-23) £100k (23/24)

- 3.6 **PROPOSAL:** Reconfiguration of Commissioned Homeless Accommodation

More about this option: The homeless accommodation scheme in its current configuration is not fully meeting the demands being seen coming through the council's housing options system. In partnership with service providers, we will look to reconfigure the service, adjusting parameters, including age restrictions, in order to meet demand and cater for wider client groups. Changes would result in the service having the ability to apply for intensive housing management eligible costs, thereby releasing the expenditure the council currently provides as part of a commissioned service.

Saving: £115k (22/23) £37k (23/24)

3.7 An analysis of the current configuration of the 'Market Wells' supported housing scheme located in Central Birkenhead is attached to this report as Appendix 6. Appendix 6 is exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information).

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is to ensure that a fully balanced legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

1.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 As detailed in the appended report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Dan Sharples**
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Report to Policy and Resources Committee, 17 January 2022
Appendix 2 Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position
Appendix 3 Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23
Appendix 4 2022/23 Budget Setting Proposals Pack

Appendix 5 Full Budget Consultation report

Appendix 6 Analysis of the current configuration of the 'Market Wells' supported housing scheme located in Central Birkenhead. *

*Appendix 6 is exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (being information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Business Cases

Savings and Income Business Cases

DLUHC External Assurance Reports

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	17 March 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	25 October 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	01 December 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	17 January 2022

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Monday, 17 January 2022

REPORT TITLE:	2022/23 BUDGET UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES (S151 OFFICER)

REPORT SUMMARY

This report is part of the Council's formal budget process, as set out in the constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2022/23.

The Policy and Resources Committee on 25 October 2021 agreed to ask for the views of residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services matter to them most to help develop the budget plan. This consultation ran from 2 to 28 November 2021 and the outcomes are provided in this report.

At the Committee on 25 October 2021, and in line with the external assurance review recommendations to provide sensitivity analysis, three potential budget scenarios were presented as to what the budget gap could be for 2022/23. The rationale for the three scenarios was to present assumptions based on known information at the time in advance of the draft Local Government Finance Settlement being published and in advance of the compilation of proposals for pressures and growth items and savings and income for the 2022/23 budget.

The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 16 December 2021 and budget proposals have been developed in response to the previously outlined budget gap.

This report provides an updated position on the draft budget for 2022/23 and related statutory consultation. The final budget proposals will be presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 15 February 22 for recommendation to full Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Note the outcome of the draft Local Government Financial Settlement for 2022/23, in advance of the final Settlement which is due later in January 2022;
- (ii) Recognise, the extent of the Council's financial challenge and structural deficit, which needs to be eliminated;

(iii) Note the savings and income proposals that could address the 2022/23 budget gap;

(iv) Note the outcome of the November 2021 consultation;

(v) Consult on the draft budget for 2022-23, under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The scale of the financial challenge that the Council faces cannot be overstated. The Council has a structural deficit and this has been recognised in a request to DLUHC for the application of a capitalisation directive. The short-term support afforded by government in the form of a capitalisation directive does not extend beyond 2021/22, emphasising the need for focus and agility in balancing the Council's financial position.
- 1.2 The offer for capitalisation for the current financial year was subject to an external assurance review. The review focussed on the Council's financial position and on its ability, including the strength of its governance arrangements, to deliver its plans for medium-term sustainability. This process reinforces the requirement for an in-depth review of functions to enable considered and robust proposals to be made to Council in February 2022 for the 2022/23 budget.
- 1.3 Implementing proposals will require difficult decisions to ensure that a balanced budget can be presented. Regular Member engagement on the process is essential for effective budget formulation.
- 1.4 One component of the external assurance review recommendations set out the need to develop a financial recovery plan. Policy & Resources Committee approved the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its meeting of 1 December 2021, which confirmed key principles the Council would follow in respect of its financial planning. The MTFS provides a robust, consistent, and sustainable approach to establishing and maintaining a stable and prudent financial basis on which the Council's services are to be delivered.
- 1.5 In order to fulfil the aims of the MTFS, it is imperative that proposals for budget options are evidence based and achievable. In order to ensure that this is the case, rigorous review has been undertaken through:
 - Directorate Management Teams (DMT)
 - Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
 - internal finance assurance review
 - external review via the engagement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and
 - Council Committees
- 1.6 This process of review and challenge is ongoing, to ensure that final proposals made to Policy & Resources Committee in February, for budget recommendation, are fully scrutinised and fit and proper in terms of readiness for decision-making. Contained within this report are all current proposals for consideration prior to the need to make decisions on how the budget for 2022/23 should be formulated.
- 1.7 Setting out potential budget proposals in this report ensures statutory consultation can be carried out in advance of setting the 2022/23 annual budget.
- 1.8 The information in this report also provides the opportunity for the Policy and Services Committees at their meetings in January 2022 to provide feedback on the

budget proposals for the Policy and Resources Committee to take into consideration in recommending a legal budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

- 1.9 As part of the budget setting process, the Policy and Resources Committee is able to take into consideration the outcome of the November 2021 consultation with residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services matter to them most to help develop the budget plan.
- 1.10 This report ensures that the Policy and Resources Committee is provided with timely information on the latest budget position and the matters that affect the budget gap inclusive of outline proposals to address it.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The setting of a legal budget is a statutory requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 25 October three scenarios were presented as the potential budget gap for 2022/23. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors:
 - Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically at this time of year, the Chancellor's Autumn Statement
 - The continued scrutiny of growth and pressures to ensure values are evidenced based with no optimism bias
 - Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light
 - The continued further development of budget proposals
- 3.2 As a result, the budget scenarios presented in October have changed and with the publication of the draft Local Government Financial Settlement on 16 December 2021, the three scenarios have been consolidated into one, more robust, position. This position however is subject to further change ahead of formal budget setting activity.

2022/23 Budget Position

3.3 The 2022/23 budget position is currently as follows:

	Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21	Revised Budget Position	Change
	£m	£m	£m
Total Funding	-317.94	-330.57	-12.63
Initial Budget Requirement for 2022-23	329.40	329.40	0.00
Total one off savings from 2021-22	7.51	7.51	0.00
Total one off pressures from 2021-22	-14.06	-14.06	0.00
Total known pressures	31.64	27.45	-4.19
Initial Budget Gap	36.55	19.73	-16.81
Total savings options	-11.34	-20.31	-8.97
Revised Budget Gap	25.21	-0.58	-25.79

3.4 A more detailed analysis of this table can be found in Appendix 1.

3.5 In October 2021, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced information regarding the Spending Review in his Autumn Statement. The details of this have been provided in the Local Government Funding Settlement, received on 16 December 2021 and a summary briefing note is included in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the settlement is provisional at this stage and is open to consultation until the 13th January 2022. Following the closure of the consultation period the settlement is subject to Parliamentary approval, and as such the financial position outlined above is subject to change.

3.6 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 1 December, agreement was given to identify further budget proposals via a process of providing Directorate budget envelopes, after the original budget process, agreed in March 2021, failed to generate the level of savings required.

3.7 In November 2021, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published the two external assurance reports indicating areas the Council should give specific focus to. In response to the recommendations made in the assurance reports a peer-based improvement panel will convene in January when the information provided as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process will be reviewed.

3.8 The current set of budget proposals for the 2022/23 budget are included in Appendix 3.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is part of a programme of activity to ensure that a fully balanced, legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.

4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, which this paper forms part of, will support the Council in ensuring that CIPFA's Financial Management Code (FM Code) is complied with, in particular in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code – The Annual Budget.

4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes they have in place satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:

- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
- Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, that derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
- Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
- Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
- Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, internal audit and inspection.
- Sustainability - The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

4.4 Delivering financial sustainability is vitally important for the Council. The Capitalisation directive requirements reinforce the need to develop a revised approach to sustainable service delivery resource planning. This is reflective of comments made by Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditor, who noted as part of their value for money review during the audit of the 2019/20 accounts, "We note that the capitalisation directive will only provide support to the Council for 2020/21 and 2021/22. As such, the Council needs to ensure that it delivers against its revised MTFs. It will need to put in place clear plans to reduce its future recurring service expenditure and move to a balanced revenue position that does not rely on reserves".

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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 and, therefore, of this Committee in preparing that budget.

- 5.2 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. In doing so, 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, proposals put forward as part of the budget process will have identified the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce the desired outcomes.
- 5.3 Consultation has taken place in respect of the priorities and views of the public in formulating the draft budget, as set out in this report.
- 5.4 Once the Committee has agreed a draft budget, which is the purpose of this report, there is then a requirement under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to conduct specific consultation with persons or bodies appearing to it to be representative of non-domestic ratepayers about the authority's proposals for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in the forthcoming financial year. The information required to be shared as part of the consultation is set out in the Non-Domestic Ratepayers (Consultation) Regulations 1992. This includes the authority's current estimates of the total of its revenue expenditure and the total of its expenditure for capital purposes for the forthcoming financial year (the draft budget).
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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 and, 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. 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.
- 5.7 There is a particular requirement to take into consideration the Council's fiduciary duty and the public sector equality duty in coming to a decision.
- 5.8 Members are also individually reminded that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to the Council meeting on the budget and therefore arguably to the formulation of the Budget. 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 The implications for staffing, ICT and Assets will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed by Directors and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, ongoing impact of the pandemic, etc.
- 7.2 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.3 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.
- 7.4 Funding and demand assumptions in particular can change as more information becomes available. As such, the Medium-Term Finance Plan (MTFP) is regularly reviewed and updated as part of routine financial management.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 A balanced MTFP is fundamental in demonstrating robust and secure financial management. Delivering a balanced position requires continual review and revision of plans to allow alternative financial proposals to be developed and embedded in plans as situations change. A delay in agreeing these may put the timetable for setting the 2022/23 budget at risk and may result in a balanced budget not being identified in time for the deadline of 11 March 2022.
- 7.7 Assumptions have been made in the current budget outlook for income and funding from business rates and council tax and social care grants as the main sources of funding. If there is an adverse change to these assumptions as a result of the final funding settlement, additional savings proposals or reduced expenditure would need to be identified as soon as possible to ensure a balanced five-year MTFP.
- 7.8 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.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/ CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Initial consultation has taken place to ask for the views of residents, businesses, and all those with a stake in the future of Wirral, about what council services and priorities matter to them most to help develop the 2022-23 budget. This process ran from 2 to 28 November 2021. The full report of the outcome to the consultation is included within Appendix 4.
- 8.2 Statutory budget consultation will commence subject to agreement by the Committee. This will take place in January 2022 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.
- 8.3 All Policy and Services Committees will have an opportunity to debate the draft 2022/23 budget publicly at the January 2022 Committees and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 28 February 2022.
- 8.4 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position and response to the external assurance reports. This will continue throughout the budget setting process.
- 8.5 For budget proposals that may result in reductions to the workforce, the Council will consult with trade unions and relevant staff groups as required and in accordance with section 188(1A) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRCA) 1992.
- 8.6 The Council is committed to mitigating the impact on staff as far as possible and will take all steps possible to avoid any compulsory redundancies in accordance with policies and procedures.

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.
- 9.2 The equality implications will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval. Equality implications will be part of the decision-making process.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environment and climate implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The community wealth implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed. The budget proposals under consideration will take account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- Progressive Procurement and Social Value How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- More local & community ownership of the economy Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses. Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses. Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- Decent and Fair Employment Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- Making wealth work for local places

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position

Appendix 2: Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23

Appendix 3: 2022/23 Budget Setting Proposals Pack

Appendix 4: Full Budget Consultation report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Pressure and Growth Business Cases

Savings and Income Business Cases

DLUHC External Assurance Reports

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	17 March 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	25 October 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	30 November 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	01 December 2021

APPENDIX 1: Detailed Draft 2022-23 Budget Position

	Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21 £m	Revised Budget Position £m	Change £m
FUNDING			
Business Rates			
Business Rates base	-72.30	-72.30	0.00
Inflation	-1.16	-1.16	0.00
Properties	-0.14	-0.14	0.00
Section 31 Grant	-11.67	-11.67	0.00
Top up Grant	-34.30	-35.05	-0.75
BCF	-18.80	-19.24	-0.44
Council Tax			
Council Tax Base	-156.70	-156.70	0.00
Additional Properties	-0.57	-0.57	0.00
Inflation	-3.15	-3.15	0.00
Adult Social Care Precept	-1.58	-1.58	0.00
Other			
Collection Fund (surplus) / deficit	4.04	4.04	0.00
Local Council Tax Support Grant	-2.56	-2.56	0.00
NI reimbursement Grant	-1.44	0.00	1.44
New Homes Bonus	-0.07	-0.44	-0.37
Social Care Grant	-14.60	-19.77	-5.17
Lower Tier Funding	0.00	-0.51	-0.51
Capital Receipts	-2.93	-2.93	0.00
Capitalisation Directive	0.00	0.00	0.00
2022/23 Services Grant	0.00	-5.62	-5.62
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund	0.00	-1.22	-1.22
TOTAL FUNDING	-317.94	-330.57	-12.63

	Budget Position Reported in MTFS 1 Dec 21 £m	Revised Budget Position £m	Change £m
EXPENDITURE			
INITIAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR 2022/23	329.40	329.40	0.00
Removal of one-off items from 21/22:			
Total one off savings from 21/22	7.51	7.51	0.00
Total one off pressures from 21/22	-14.06	-14.06	0.00
REVISED BUDGET GAP	4.91	-7.72	-12.63
ADD KNOWN PRESSURES/ GROWTH	31.64	27.45	-4.19
REVISED BUDGET GAP	36.55	19.73	-16.81
DEDUCT PROPOSED SAVINGS			
Adult Care & Health	-4.00	-3.89	0.11
Children, Young People & Education	-1.89	-3.15	-1.27
Neighbourhoods	-0.77	-6.28	-5.51
Regeneration & Place	-0.08	-1.93	-1.85
Resources	-1.10	-4.23	-3.13
Law & Governance	-0.20	-0.73	-0.53
Corporate	-3.31	-0.11	3.20
Total Proposed Savings	-11.34	-20.31	-8.97
REVISED BUDGET GAP	25.21	-0.58	-25.79

APPENDIX 2: Briefing Note: Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This briefing note outlines the government's announcement and subsequent publications on 16th December 2021 concerning the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23 and gives an analysis on the impact on Wirral Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), although as noted below all data is provisional at this stage.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 27th October 2021 the government announced The Spending Review, which set out the Government's spending plans for each government department for the next three financial years, including local government and its agenda on "levelling up".

Following this, on 16th December 2021 the Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23 was announced, with impacts on Core Spending Power for 2022/23, Social Care Grant allocations as well as other grant details. The settlement was for a single year only, to give the government time to work with the sector and assess how it will share out resources fairly in future years.

At the same time, a consultation related to the settlement proposals was launched, which runs for 4 weeks and concludes on 13th January 2023.

3.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT HEADLINES

3.1 Core Spending Power

Core Spending Power is a measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery. It sets out the money that has been made available to local authorities (assuming full Council Tax increase) through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The headline announcement was that an additional £3.5 billion of funding would be "made available" to councils, representing a 4% real terms increase. This includes an additional £1.5 billion of the £1.6 billion announced grant funding and the first of the promised support from Department of Health to support Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care.

It was again undertaken that no Council would suffer a cash terms cut in core spending power. The main sources of the funding are:

ENGLAND	2021-22	Provisional 2022-23	Change 22-23	Change 22-23
	£ million	£ million	£ million	%
Settlement Funding Assessment	14,809.7	14,882.2	72.5	{
Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	650.0	1,025.1	375.1	{ 2.9
Council Tax Requirement excluding parish precepts	30,326.9	31,728.5	1,401.6	4.6
Improved Better Care Fund	2,077.0	2,139.8	62.8	3.0
New Homes Bonus	622.3	554.5	-67.8	-10.9
Rural Services Delivery Grant	85.0	85.0	0	0
Social Care Grant ²	1,710.0	2,346.4	636.4	37.2
2022/23 Services Grant	0	822.0	822.0	0
Market sustainability and Fair Cost of Care	0	162.0	162.0	0
Lower Tiers Services Grant	111.0	111.0	0	0
Core Spending Power	50,391.9	53,856.5	3,464.6	6.9

3.2 Council Tax

The Council Tax proposals set out in the Spending Review 2021 in October were confirmed as part of the settlement. The proposal for core Council Tax in 2022/23 is therefore to continue a referendum cap of up to 2%.

There is also the flexibility to add up to a further 1% adult social care precept for authorities providing adult social care services. This can be enhanced by up to 3% of the permitted Social Care Precept increase from 2021-22 where not already utilised.

A £5 flexibility is proposed for district councils, a £10 flexibility is proposed for Police and Crime Commissioners and a flexibility of £5 for the 8 lowest charging fire and rescue authorities. No referendum limit is proposed for Mayoral Combined Authorities in 2022-23 and Government has deferred its decision to impose a referendum limit on Town and Parish Councils.

3.3 Improved Better Care Fund

Improved Better Care fund grows by 3% for all upper tier councils.

3.4 Social Care Grant

Social Care Grant will increase by £636m from £1,710m to £2,364m in 2022/23. The basis for allocating the additional £636m is as follows:

- £556 million is based on existing formula i.e., distributed using the adult social care relative needs formula.
- £80 million is to equalise the different abilities of councils to raise social care precept.

3.5 Lower Tier Services Grant

Introduced in 2021/22, the Lower Tier Services Grant was assumed to be one-off funding for the current financial year only. However, it has been retained for

2022/23 and remains unchanged in cash terms at £111m, although the distribution to Local Authorities has been recalculated.

3.6 New Homes Bonus

The government has decided to maintain the current approach to the NHB payments in 2022/23. There will be no legacy (i.e., second) payment for 2021-22 years' NHB meaning 2022-23 payment therefore consists of 2019-20 legacy and 2022-23 estimate, resulting in a 10.9% reduction in the overall grant.

3.7 2022/23 Services Grant

A new 2022/23 Services Grant was announced giving Local Authorities £822m nationally. This grant is explicitly noted as a one-off grant and will in future likely contribute towards transition funding in the future as the government intended to take steps towards the introduction of Fair Funding in later years.

3.8 Public Health Grant

Information on the Public Health grant is not yet available and is expected in the new year.

3.8 Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund

To further support the government's proposals for making specific funding available for social care services, along with Better Care Fund and Social Care Grant, the Department for Health and Social Care's Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund is included within Core Spending Power in 2022/23.

Totalling £162m nationally, this fund is to support Local Authorities prepare their markets for reform and move towards paying providers a fair cost of care and is to be allocated using the government's existing Adult Social Care Relative Need Formula, in line with the Social Care Grant.

4.0 WIRRAL COUNCIL IMPACT

4.1 Council Tax

The confirmation of the 2% core referendum principal means an increase in Council Tax income of approximately £3.1m as reported as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Policy & Resources Committee on 1st December 2021.

Similarly, a 1% Council Tax precept for Adult Social Care would generate an additional £1.6m as reported within the MTFS. Both these figures are subject to confirmation of the Council Tax Base figure for 2022/23, which is due to be reported to Policy and Resources in January 2022.

4.2 Social Care Grant

Provisional allocations of the ringfenced Social Care Grant indicate that Wirral will receive £19.8m in 2022/23, which is an increase of £5.2m compared with the 2021/22 budget and the 2022/23 assumption in the MTFS reported to Policy & Resources. Based upon this allocation, the resources have been proportioned across Adults and Children's Services to limit the requirement to make additional savings in those statutory services.

4.3 **Lower Tier Services Grant**

It had previously been assumed that the Lower Tier Services grant was for one year only in 2021/22. However, confirmation of its continuation in 2022/23 means a £0.5m improvement compared with MTFs assumptions.

4.4 **New Homes Bonus**

It had previously been assumed that the New Homes Bonus grant was coming to an end with just a legacy payment of £0.074m due in 2022/23. However, the government has decided to maintain the current approach to the NHB payments in 2022/23. Provisional allocations indicate Wirral will receive £0.4m in 2022/23, an increase of £0.36m against previous assumptions.

4.5 **2022/23 Services Grant**

Provisional allocations indicate Wirral will receive £5.6m from this new grant, which was not included in previous assumptions as a standalone grant. However, as well as providing funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services, including social care, delivered at every level of local government, this grant includes funding for local government costs for the increase in employer National Insurance Contributions which Wirral had previously assumed would be received as a separate grant of £1.4m, meaning the provisional allocation is £4.2m better off against previous assumptions.

4.6 **Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund**

Early indications are that Wirral will receive approximately £1.2m for this funding, although any detailed conditions and allocation tables are not expected until early in 2022. This has been allocated to Adult Social Services, pending additional guidance and implications.

4.7 **Business Rates**

The settlement confirmed that the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot that Wirral participates in alongside Liverpool City Region authorities will continue in 2022/23. Although this was already assumed in the MTFs, this is positive news as Wirral benefits by approximately £7m per year as a result of participating in the pilot.

The latest assumptions were that the Business Rates Top-up would remain unchanged from 2021/22 at £53.1m. However, the provisional settlement indicates this will increase to £54.3m, an improvement of £1.2m.

4.8 Included within this increase is a 3% BCF increase of £0.44m to support integrated working across Adults, Children's, Public Health and NHS.

4.9 **Dedicated Schools Grant**

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations were also published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 16th December 2021. Although this is ringfenced education funding and therefore has no impact on the MTFs, Wirral's indicative allocation for 2022/23 is £313.5m, a £10.9m (3.6%) increase from the current 2021/22 estimate.

- 4.10 In total, the provisional impact on the Wirral MTFS is an improvement of £12.6m. The following table summarises the impact of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on Wirral Council's MTFS:

	2021/22 Budget £m	2022/23		
		MTFS assumption (P&R 01/12/21) £m	Provisional settlement £m	MTFS Impact £m
Business Rates Top-Up	-53.10	-53.10	-54.29	-1.19
SC NI levy reimbursement	0.00	-1.44	0.00	-1.44
New Homes Bonus	-0.20	-0.07	-0.44	-0.36
Social Care Grant	-14.60	-14.60	-19.77	-5.17
Lower Tier Funding	-0.50	0.00	-0.51	-0.51
2022/23 Services Grant	0.00	0.00	-5.62	-5.62
Market Sustainability & Fair Cost of Care Fund	0.00	0.00	-1.22	-1.22
Total provisional 2022/23 MTFS impact				-12.62

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 While the settlement brought positive news for Wirral as well as the Local Government sector in general, the data outlined in this briefing note should be treated with caution.
- 5.2 Firstly the settlement is provisional at this stage, and as noted is open to consultation until the 13th January 2022. Following the closure of the consultation period the settlement is subject to Parliament approve, and as such the data outlined above is subject to change.
- 5.3 Guidance on Business Rates for 2022/23 is still to be released. The estimated income generated from Business Rates for 2022/23, as well as the related Section 31 Grants for qualifying reliefs, will be analysed in detail in conjunction with the guidance when available. Such estimates have a deadline for completion and submission to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of 31st January 2022, and as such the impact of Business Rates income on the MTFS is not yet clear.
- 5.4 Similarly, the estimate of the Collection Fund position will impact the 2022/23 budget. This is a statutory process and is based on the latest data available on 15th January 2022 and therefore this will not be known until late January.
- 5.5 Finally, while the provisional settlement brings positive news for Wirral Council it is important to remember that, despite the three-year Spending Review period, the government have only impacted a single -year settlement. While the additional resources for 2022/23 are welcomed, they only provide limited and short-term stability while creating uncertainty for longer term financial planning.

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2022/2023 BUDGET SETTING Proposals Pack



Children's Services

Wirral's Children's Services are focussed on breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and encouraging and enabling families to bring up children in safe, happy, and secure environments. Its functions include:

- Assessment and Intervention
- Children's Business Support
- Early Childhood Services
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Fostering, Adoption and Placement Commissioning
- Integrated Front Door
- Modernisation
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Performance Improvement
- Permanence
- Safeguarding QA and Practice Improvement
- SEND and Inclusion
- Schools Improvement
- Youth Service

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Historic Teachers Pensions Costs

More about this option: The council is responsible for the costs of additional benefits awarded to teachers upon early retirement outside of the terms of the Teachers' Pension Scheme. This is a legacy financial commitment where the cost is reducing over time and can be achieved through a simple budget reduction.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Alternative Accommodation Provision for Children Looked After

More about this option: In order to reduce costs associated with external accommodation providers, the council plans to partner with a Community Interest Company to open four children's homes for up to 16 young people over the next 2 years. Provision will include short-breaks, therapeutic provision for children and young people with learning disability/autism and mental health difficulties and expanding in-house provision at Willowtree for young people with disabilities. A registered housing provider will also be commissioned to offer care leaver accommodation.

Saving: £1m

PROPOSAL: Utilisation of Demand Reserve

More about this option: This proposal is focused on service demand. A long-term saving will involve an alternative delivery model based on the Department for Education's Family Safeguarding model. In the meantime, COVID funding will deliver the savings until the permanent model is in place.

Saving: £467k

PROPOSAL: Children's Services redesign and posts deletion/closure

More about this option: This proposal will look to achieve efficiencies within the Directorate through removal of vacant posts, redeployment, and service realignment.

Saving: £294k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in Adoption Orders.

More about this option: Wirral had a disproportionately high number of adoption orders in 2017/18 and 2018/19. This has impacted on the budget which funds the service via the Regional Adoption Agency. The funding formula for the regional adoption agency is currently based on the average number of adoption orders for the previous four years. As these adoption order numbers pass out of the formula calculation over the next two years, Wirral's contribution to the regional adoption agency will reduce.

Saving: 2022/23: £50k 2023/24: £150k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in the Number of Looked After Children

More about this option: In recent years, the overall children looked after (CLA) numbers in Wirral were higher than statistical neighbours. The numbers coming into care presently are more in line with neighbours. The cohort of children who joined during the earlier period are likely to remain in care until age 18, but as these pre-2019 children reach 18 we anticipate our CLA spending will reduce annually.

Saving: £564k (22/23)

PROPOSAL: Review of Youth Offending Service

More about this option: This proposal includes the removal of a post from the Youth Offending Service structure which is no longer required.

Wirral's Youth Justice Service produces an Annual Strategic Plan which is approved by the Youth Justice Management Board and Council. The plan sets out the priorities and action for future delivery. It is anticipated that the service can continue to meet its statutory responsibilities and prevention approach without the additional post.

Saving: £25k

PROPOSAL: Special Educational Needs (SEND) Transport Review

More about this option: This option will include a service redesign which will look to reduce costs in home to school transport for children with SEND. The review will include changes to timings and routes, multiple drop offs, vehicle sharing and eligibility post 16.

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: Increase Funding for Placements from Health Clinical Commissioning Group and SEND

More about this option: Social Care currently contributes the majority of funding (90%) towards residential placements whilst education contribute 4.45% and health 5.27% (as of April 2021). This proposal is seeking a more equal distribution of funding which will help secure this saving.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Redesign of Youth Offer

More about this option: This proposal will seek to achieve savings through a review of current budgets and resource. It will include withdrawal of £150k from the Hive (in addition to the £200k withdrawn last year 2020/21), the removal of £108k from the Youth Service budget and deletion of one post from the Youth Service.

In 22/23 the Hive will continue to receive a £100k contribution from local developers.

Saving: £200k

Regeneration

This Directorate is leading Wirral Council on its hugely ambitious regeneration of the borough, and plays a significant role in promoting housing supply, providing wider place-based regeneration and local growth, and supporting cohesive communities. Its functions include:

- Assets and Facilities Management
- Culture strategy and Visitor Economy
- Development Management and Building Control
- Housing, Supported housing and homelessness services
- Major Planning and projects including Wirral Growth Company
- Inward investment
- Regeneration
- Strategic Transport

PROPOSAL: Capitalisation of Regeneration Staff Salaries

More about this option: Capitalisation of salaries will ensure the delivery of the council's regeneration and economic growth programme, which is recognised as a once in a generation opportunity to address decline in Birkenhead and other areas across Wirral.

Saving: £1.4m

PROPOSAL: Cease Financial Contributions for the Provision of Community Alarms and Response Calls

More about this option: It is proposed the council will cease the grant funding contribution to current eligible customers for the community alarm/response services charges. Notice will be given to the providers of this funding being withdrawn in line with current funding regime and agreement notice period. Registered providers will then each undertake their own review of the service provided to see how this would be managed with their residents.

Saving: £200k (22-23) £100k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: Reconfiguration of Commissioned Homeless Accommodation

More about this option: The homeless accommodation scheme in its current configuration is not fully meeting the demands being seen coming through the council's housing options system. In partnership with service providers, we will look to reconfigure the service, adjusting parameters, including age restrictions, in order to meet demand and cater for wider client groups. Changes would result in the service having the ability to apply for intensive housing management eligible costs, thereby releasing the expenditure the council currently provides as part of a commissioned service.

Saving: £115k (22/23) £37k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: The Closure of Nine Public Conveniences

More about this option: Due to increasing maintenance costs, this proposal will see the closure of public conveniences, located mainly in coastal areas, with sites including 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.

Saving: £143k

PROPOSAL: Corporate Buildings – Holding Costs

More about this option: Following changes in working arrangements due to the Covid pandemic, a number of council owned buildings are currently not in use, and it is proposed that a further review of them is undertaken, with savings anticipated from reduced utility costs, cleaning, materials etc.

Saving: £50k

Law and Governance

The core business of this department is to provide corporate and operational legal advice, assistance and support to the authority and its members, as well as responsibility for the co-ordination and efficient management of the decision-making processes of the Council. Its functions include:

- Civic Services
- Committee Services
- Coroners
- Electoral
- Legal Services
- Licensing
- Registrars
- Scrutiny

PROPOSAL: Removal of Individual Member Budgets

More about this option: In order to set a balanced budget for the 2021/22 budget year, the council had agreed to limit the budget to £1,000 per member with a view to the budget being reintroduced for 2022/23. However, given the current budget savings requirement that the council must meet to set a balanced budget, it is proposed that this budget now be removed altogether.

Saving: £250k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in the Number of Committees

More about this option: The current re-design of the council's committee structure will be accompanied by a re-design of the staffing requirement to support the number of meetings, members, and officers in the decision-making process.

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: Capitalise Salaries

More about this option: This proposal will include a change to re-direct qualifying legal services salaries away from the council's central budget to specific capital projects, which will enable a saving on net revenue costs.

This type of expenditure is not considered to be a council overhead but a direct cost necessary to achieve a project or programme of projects.

Saving: £200k

PROPOSAL: Whole Council Elections

More about this option: the council is currently undertaking a statutory consultation on changing the electoral cycle to whole council elections as of 2023. Over a 4-year period, the cost of running Local Authority elections is £1,024,200. The costs of running whole council elections, with the provision of funding for the event of by-elections, would be £520,000 over the same 4-year period

Saving: £125k

Corporate Office

The role of the Corporate Office is to ensure that Wirral Council is a high-performing, well-managed, strategic organisation. The office stands as a key interface between the Chief executive, Senior Leadership Team, Leader of the Council, Members and Key Stakeholders.

Its functions include:

- Business Support
- Communications
- Customer Feedback and Members Enquires
- Quality and Organisational Effectiveness
- Strategy, Policy and Partnerships

PROPOSAL: Service Re-design

More about this option: The Corporate Office will be redesigned to include the centralisation of corporate resources and more integrated and flexible teams. This work will be delivered over 18 months. The first phase of this will be achieved through the deletion of two vacancies across the Policy and Communications Teams and a reduction in the marketing budget. Phase two will be developed during 2022/23 and will align with the Change Programme service re-design schedule to explore opportunities for centralised corporate services.

Saving: £110k

Adult Care and Health

The Department provides or secures the majority of care and support services through adult social care, which is part of the wider health and social care system. Its functions include:

- Care standards
- Commissioning Older People and Mental Health and Disability Services
- Public Health
- Strategic Commissioning
- Wirral Intelligence Service

PROPOSAL: Demand mitigation – Technology and Care Package Review

More about this option: This proposal is an increased efficiency requirement for 2022/23 against the community care budget based on a range of case reviews, demand management approaches and care provider market shaping.

Saving: £3.89m

Resources

The Resources department includes all the professional services needed for the efficient running and sound financial management of Wirral Council. Its functions include:

- Debt recovery and income
- Finance and Investment
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- ICT Strategy and Delivery
- Merseyside Pension Fund
- Organisational change
- Organisational Development and Design
- Procurement and Commercial Management
- Programme Office
- Revenues and Benefits and Council Tax

PROPOSAL: One Stop Shop Establishment Review

More about this option: The One Stop Shop (OSS) Network has reduced in line with a reduction in visitors to OSS outlets. Savings are achieved by the removal of vacant posts which are no longer required.

Saving: £99k

PROPOSAL: Review of Treasury Activity

More about this option: Debt management and investment opportunities cover a wide range of activities undertaken within Treasury Activity. This proposal will look at investment opportunities, including social and green investment aims. Additionally, there is also potential for new revenue streams from alternative investments. Both will be balanced against risk and current income targets.

Saving: £500k

PROPOSAL: Revenues & Benefits Review and Restructure

More about this option: This proposal includes a full review to examine every aspect of the service and its processes, looking to streamline as much as possible and removing wasteful/bureaucratic tasks from the service. This process includes the expansion and introduction of new automated processes.

The savings will be realised by a mixture of removing vacant posts from the existing structure which can be released from the review, together with streamlining management structures and a limited offer of early voluntary retirement.

Saving: £750k

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Strategic Change Revenue Budget

More about this option: Partial funding of business change can be supported through flexible use of capital receipts for transformation, and this can therefore release revenue budget whilst enabling the service to deliver major business change to the council.

Saving: £650k

PROPOSAL: Restructure of Procurement and Commercial Teams

More about this option: Following an in-year staffing restructure that saw a central team of commercial officers restructured, this proposal seeks to remove the remaining budget for the team. Additional roles supporting income generation are in place within the relevant Directorates.

Saving: £230k

PROPOSAL: Review of Finance Team Structure

More about this option: This saving proposal, of reducing resources within the Finance function, is presented in recognition of the changes being put forward elsewhere in the council that will impact on the support services required.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Cease Business Rates Contribution

More about this option: It is proposed that the annual contribution to reserves to guard against successful appeals of business rates is halted.

Saving: £696k

PROPOSAL: Modernisation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Service

More about this option: In order to improve the councils digital offer, Microsoft are being engaged to support a Digital Transformation programme. As part of this programme the ICT services will be modernised which will see processes digitalised and automated. This will enable savings to be made across ICT.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Review of Business Support Unit

More about this option: With the move to working from home, less stationery is being purchased and there is less of a requirement to provide courier services. Savings will therefore be made within the Business Support Unit in lines with these changes in working patterns.

Saving: £20k

PROPOSAL: Review of Internal Audit – Income and Efficiencies

More about this option: In addition to staff efficiencies the department will increase the selling of services to third parties, which will include new customers that have already been secured.

Saving: £80k

PROPOSAL: Reduction of Learning & Development Budget

More about this option: This one-year temporary saving can be made as a result of the introduction of a new Learning Experience Platform, reduction in face-to-face delivery and optimising the apprenticeship levy. In addition to this the council have increased income which will be paid in 2022/23 tax year from the government apprenticeship start incentive payments which can be utilised to support learning and development.

Saving: £100k

PROPOSAL: Investment Statutory Override Pressure Removal

More about this option: Councils had been granted a time limited special exemption on the way they account for financial investments. If this exemption was not in place, this would present a pressure for the council of an estimated £1m.

This had previously been included as a pressure as the time limit was about to expire. However, the time period has now been extended meaning that the pressure can be removed from 2022/23.

Saving: £1m

Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhood's department is made up of the everyday functions that are key to the wellbeing of local areas and local people. The department includes a wide and varied range of universal, front-line services, such as:

- Assisted Travel
- Climate change
- Community Safety
- Customer Services
- Emergency Planning
- Environmental Health
- Highways Design and Maintenance
- Highways, Traffic and Road Safety
- Leisure
- Libraries
- Street Scene
- Major events
- Network Management
- One stop shops
- Parks and Countryside
- Road Safety
- Trading Standards
- Traffic Management
- Waste and Environment

PROPOSAL: Review of Leisure Service

More about this option: This proposal includes a full-service review of the council's Leisure Services Division to consider all elements delivered and focus on removal of unnecessary cost and duplication, improved commissioning, and a lean target operating model.

It is likely that there will be staffing implications as a consequence of the review, the totality of which cannot be identified at the present time. Any reduction in staffing numbers would be attempted to be achieved through EVR/VS, redeployment and/or retraining.

Saving: £178k

PROPOSAL: Highways Operational Services - Income exploration

More about this option: This proposal will explore the commercial opportunities and internal promotion of the various services available through Highway Operational Services in order to create additional income generation. It will also seek to further expand other departmental work requests within the council from Assets, Education, Parks & Countryside,

and third party works currently undertaken for service partners such as NHS and Wirral Older People's Parliament.

Income: £30k

PROPOSAL: Closure of Europa Fun/Leisure Pool & Enhanced Gym Offer

More about this option: This proposal includes the closure of the Leisure Pool ('Fun' Pool) at Europa Pools (wave machine, swimming pool features, flumes, etc). The option does not include the closure of the centre nor competition swimming pool which would continue to remain open. The service would also seek to repurpose the Leisure Pool, using the space to create a larger indoor gym offer and therefore increased income.

Saving: £246k Plus £20k increased income from Gym offer

PROPOSAL: Increased Catering Across all Leisure Sites

More about this option: This saving proposal would see an increase in income generation at the Sail Loft site through maximisation of customer numbers and sales. Further income could be generated through expansion of the service at different sites across the borough.

Income: £60k

PROPOSAL: Outdoor Water Sports Offer at West Kirby Marine Lake

More about this option: This budget option is an income generation scheme that would utilise the Marine Lake for new outdoor activities. These activities have become popular during the pandemic as people have sought alternatives to indoor activities whilst restrictions were in place.

Additionally, there will be more opportunities for residents to become involved in new sports activities, as well as having the potential to attract additional customers at the Sail Loft site

Income: £15k

PROPOSAL: Catering Pod at Leasowe Leisure Centre for Football Traffic

More about this option: This proposal will look to establish an outdoor catering offer (catering pod) at Leasowe Leisure Centre. An extension of the council's expanded in-house catering offer, the unit will primarily serve the high footfall football league traffic during the months of September – May. There is also scope to expand operation by re-locating the unit during the remaining months of the year.

Income: £21k

PROPOSAL: Permanent Closure and Demolition of Woodchurch Leisure Centre

More about this option: This option is for the closure of Woodchurch Leisure Centre. Due to the condition of the site, its low usage levels comparable with other sites, the required level of investment and the subsidy it carries, is proposed that the centre is then demolished to make way for a growth in outdoor leisure provision. The site adjacent to the Leisure Centre will see the construction of a new 3G Artificial Grass playing pitch and accompanying pavilion during the 2022-23 financial year.

Saving: £402k

PROPOSAL: Temporary Closure and Remodelling of Bidston Tennis Centre

More about this option: The option would see the closure of the Tennis Centre (indoors) in Bidston for a 12-month period whilst a facility upgrade takes place at the site within the core of the building. It has been identified by an independent leisure consultant that the facility mix within the building does not complement local need or local demographic. Consequently, a redesigned centre will meet the needs of the local population and provide additional income. The new development would take out 3 indoor tennis courts and replace with extensive soft play and gymnastics offer. A second new 3G AstroTurf pitch would also be built within the outside grounds of the site in a funding partnership between the Football Foundation and the Council with further income potential.

Saving: £114k

PROPOSAL: Review of Golf Offer

More about this option: This proposal will seek to generate savings through the closure of the two lowest income generating 18-hole golf courses, two leisure based recreational New Brighton sites and introduction of a new pricing/membership model for municipal golf. Brackenwood and Hoylake golf courses will close, along with Wallasey Beach and Kings Parade leisure sites. The two remaining golf courses will still provide a sufficient 'golf offer' to the residents of Wirral whilst substantially reducing the financial subsidy to the authority.

Saving: £328k

PROPOSAL: Exercise on Referral Programme

More about this option: Wirral's Leisure Services Team has a pool of qualified professionals who will be commissioned by health partners to provide patients with an opportunity to engage in a structured programme of physical activity or exercise by working with a qualified exercise professional to provide a positive introduction to being active.

Income: £100k

PROPOSAL: Reprovision of the Library Service

More about this option: This saving is associated with the development of a new operating model in libraries which will consolidate and realign the current libraries estate and resources to provide a comprehensive and efficient service for all who wish to use it. The new operating model will retain four central libraries and four community libraries, as well as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) only provision co-located in community assets. The home reader service will remain for residents who cannot access a traditional library, as will the council's digital library and online offer. In addition, the service will invest in a Mobile Library with a 3000-book capacity to ensure hard to reach communities have access to a library service. The saving will be achieved through library closures, service realignment and a staffing restructure.

Full details of the new Libraries Operating Model will be available from 10th January via: <http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=956&MIId=9051>

Saving: £814k

PROPOSAL: Floral Pavilion – New Operating Model

More about this option: This option would reduce the operational budget for the Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre, whilst increasing the amount of income generated by the venue. The venue does attract a subsidy however this has diminished in recent years due to improved management and this trend of working towards a leaner operating model with greater income potential is expected to continue.

Saving: £350k - £400k

PROPOSAL: Standardisation of Residents Parking Permits

More about this option: This proposal will look to standardise charges for residents parking permits for existing and new residents parking schemes to cover all operational running costs including the council's set-up, maintenance, administration, and enforcement costs for existing and new schemes.

Income: £110k

PROPOSAL: Fleet Efficiencies in Transport - Going Green

More about this option: This budget saving option is to appoint an independent expert to undertake a no-cost 'Green Fleet Review'. This review will examine the existing fleet in terms of vehicle choice, fuel economy and recommend mileage reduction strategies.

Saving: £20k

PROPOSAL: Capitalisation of Highways Salaries

More about this option: All highways and transport approved schemes for 2021/22 are funded from the Combined Authority allocation for Integrated Transport Block (ITB), which is £1.15m. It is anticipated that the new City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement allocation for Wirral over 5 years from 2022 will be between £5m and £11m. Revenue savings can be achieved by increasing capital recharges – that is staff time spent on individual schemes.

Saving: £15k

PROPOSAL: Highway's Maintenance Contracts

More about this option: This proposal will see a reduction in the highway lining and the street furniture budgets. This will include seating, guard rails, signs, and bollards.

Saving: £25k

PROPOSAL: Streetlighting Service Savings

More about this option: Due to the introduction of the new LED lanterns programme savings can be made through ceasing night-time lighting inspections. In addition, the capital investment for illuminated signage has enabled us to replace all the illuminated bollards with reflective surfaces, therefore savings can also be made within the illuminated signage budget.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Car Park Maintenance - 1 Year Budget Reduction

More about this option: This proposal will see a revenue saving from the car parks maintenance budget for 1 year only. A budget will remain for essential safety repairs to potholes etc.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Transport Efficiencies

More about this option: This proposal will include a review of the in-house fleet, such as the outsourcing of the tyre fitting supply, repair, and fitting service. A management restructure is also planned in order to realign the service and create workforce efficiencies.

Saving: £70k

PROPOSAL: Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport Review

More about this option: This proposal focuses on the outsourcing of the in-house SEN adult transport service. Savings are based on the average cost of the current external provision compared to in-house provision, plus outsourcing of tyre supply, repair, and fitting service.

Saving: £0 in 22-23 then £118k in 23-24

PROPOSAL: Eco and Forest School Income

More about this option: The council provides a well-established and highly regarded Eco Schools programme and has been developing a Forest Schools initiative. Such provision is currently offered to schools free of charge. This proposal sets out an opportunity to implement a charge for parts of these programmes.

Income: £20k

PROPOSAL: Tree Management Team Commercial Offer

More about this option: The primary purpose and function of the Tree Risk and Inspection Team is to inspect and manage the council's tree stock (both highways and parkland) and mitigate any risk associated. However, there is some capacity within the inspection team to conduct tree inspections and provide management advice for partnering organisations and other landowners.

Income: £25k income

PROPOSAL: Market Rental for Park Café

More about this option: This option will seek to increase the income received from rents, specifically for the rent of a café at Royden Park by a commercial operator.

Income: £10k

PROPOSAL: Income Increase on Allotments

More about this option: This option would seek to increase the income received from allotments by increasing the annual fees charged to allotment holders.

Income: £50k

PROPOSAL: Increase in Charges for Waste and Environmental Services

More about this option: This proposal would see an increase in charges (income) for a range of services provided by Waste and Environmental Services (including garden waste collection service subscription, skip permits, collection of bulky items, collection of waste and recycling from schools and cost to supply a new wheelie bin), as well as freezing the litter bin budget for one year and annual contract efficiency savings.

Income: £462k

PROPOSAL: Removal of Vacancies in Environmental and Waste Team

More about this option: This option seeks to approve a post for early voluntary retirement (EVR) from the Waste and Environmental Services Team, plus not filling of existing or new vacancies.

Saving: £100k

PROPOSAL: Suspension of Climate Emergency Initiatives

More about this option: This saving proposal would see the suspension of the budget for climate emergency action plan projects, for the period of one year. External funding will be sought to continue environmental projects where available.

Saving: £250k

PROPOSAL: Remodelling of Street Cleansing, Plus Special Events

More about this option: This option would see the removal of the additional community permanent presence street cleansing service in some areas of the borough, as well as the removal of the budget for cleansing of special events e.g., River of Light, Cycling Tour of Britain, Giants etc. Removing this budget would result in cleansing costs for special events being charged out to promoters/organisers.

Saving: £214k

PROPOSAL: Cease Overtime Budget in Parks

More about this option: This Savings option would review the use of the additional hours budget, given the reduced maintenance and cessation of green spaces.

Saving: £15k

PROPOSAL: Re-Design Parks Service Reducing Maintenance and Service Costs

More about this option: This option will focus on service reduction and maintenance in parks. It will include the cessation of public firework displays, a reduction in maintenance cuts from 10 to 8 per annum, ceasing maintenance in open spaces including up to 10-15 local parks, and ceasing maintenance of 50% of the remaining parks. Local parks which also have play areas, football pitches or bowling greens etc have been excluded from this list.

Saving: £655k

PROPOSAL: Income Strategy - Cemeteries and Crematorium Service

More about this option: This option would provide increase choice for bereaved families with regards to burials and memorials and offer corporate sponsorship opportunities within Wirral's Cemeteries and Crematorium grounds for funeral directors.

Income: £53k income

PROPOSAL: Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Team

More about this option: This option will involve an alternative service delivery model and reduction of one post. The Team will continue to prioritise the statutory functions and consider the impact on the Community Safety Strategy.

Saving: £50k

PROPOSAL: Review Engagement Officer Secondment

More about this option: This proposal will seek agreement to not backfill an Engagement Officer for one year secondment to Regeneration.

Saving: £35k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in Community Patrol Service

More about this option: This option would see a redesign of the Community Patrol Service to an Out of Hours / High Demand service only (the CCTV and Control Room Function will remain 24/7, 365).

Saving: £150k

PROPOSAL: 50% Reduction in School Crossing Patrol Service

More about this option: The service has 80 established sites but traditionally carries a number of vacancies due to difficulties in recruiting to the role. This option will require the permanent deletion of the 18 vacant sites plus the closing of at least a further 25 sites to be achieved by reprioritising of sites into highest risk areas / highest number of peds crossing.

Saving: £100k (22/23) £40k (23/24)

PROPOSAL: Cessation of Constituency Team and Remodelling of Section

More about this option: This saving presents the deletion of the Constituency Team and Redeployment of officers where possible. The saving will be achieved through associated staffing reductions.

Saving: £346k

PROPOSAL: Introduction of an Overnight Camper Van Parking Charge in New Brighton

More about this option: This option will focus on income generation from introducing an overnight parking charge for leisure vehicles (motorhomes / campervans) on the coastal areas of New Brighton.

There is currently no charge for overnight parking. New Brighton has seen regeneration and an increase in tourism in recent years. The proposal will help to manage overnight parking in this area which has also seen a significant growth particularly since the start of the pandemic.

Income: £35k

PROPOSAL: Deletion of Vacant Posts

More about this option: There are a number of vacant posts across the Neighbourhoods Directorate. This option would see these posts deleted to achieve the savings.

Saving: £302k

PROPOSAL: Reduction in The Budget for Office Related Expenditure

More about this option: This proposal is made up of a reduction in Neighbourhoods budgeted expenditure for office related expenses such as printing and paper services, lighting, electricity, heating, etc.

Saving: £23k

PROPOSAL: Review of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate

More about this option: A fundamental review of the Neighbourhood Directorate will take place in order to drive efficiencies and realign service. This will be achieved through an EVR process that will commence in early January.

Statutory services within this Directorate will not be affected by the review.

Saving: £360k

Have your say

Wirral Council Budget 2022-23 Public Consultation Report



Consultation: 2 November 2021 – 28 November 2021

Report: 6 December 2021

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1.0 Executive Summary

Wirral Council continues to face financial challenges as it moves ahead with setting a budget for 2022-23. The authority faces a potential maximum budget gap of around £30m between funding (from council tax, fees, and grants) and the cost of providing services at the current level.

The council must therefore plan to make any necessary savings in order to deliver a legal balanced budget.

At Policy and Resources committee on 25 October 2021 a stakeholder consultation programme was agreed. The objectives of the public consultation were to:

- Achieve a proportionate balance of responses which accurately reflects stakeholder make up
- Ensure external coverage is balanced in tone and content, with inaccuracies challenged
- Ensure residents and stakeholders understand the scale of the budget challenge, and feel able to contribute their views
- Provide an engagement plan that will:
- Allow residents to contribute strategically about what's important to them and their community
- Address the difficult budget choices/decisions that must be taken.

Through the consultation people were asked to tell us what their priorities are, what council services matter most to them, and where they believe the Council should be focusing its efforts to help develop the budget plan. The results of the consultation are provided in this report.

1.1 Key Findings

1.1.1 The Questionnaire

A total of 534 survey responses were received, 530 online responses and 4 paper copies. These responses have been amalgamated and are reported on as a whole.

- **Parks and Open Spaces** and **Children’s Services** were highlighted as being among the top 3 for both most valued services (Q1) and most important services to invest more resources in (Q2).
- Q1. The services that were most frequently placed as being most valued were:
 1. Children’s Services (46.1% of respondents)
 2. Parks and Open Spaces (42.5%)
 3. Adult Social care (40.0%)
- Q2. The services that were most frequently placed as most important to invest more resources in were:
 1. Parks & Open Spaces (39.2%)
 2. Museums (39.0%)
 3. Children’s Services (36.3%)
- Q3. **Safe and Pleasant Communities** was the priority most frequently placed as most important, by 46.2% of respondents.
 - Within the **Safe and Pleasant Communities** priority, working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 53.3% of respondents.
 - Within the **Sustainable Environment** priority, the protection of our local environment action was most frequently placed as most important, by 41.8% of respondents.
 - Within the **Brighter Futures** priority, ensuring our children and young people have equal access to education opportunities was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.
 - Within the **Inclusive Economy** priority, supporting local businesses and job creation was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.

- Within the **Active and Healthy Lives** priority, working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 34.6% of respondents.
- Suggestions and Ideas that appeared in-common on both the free text section of the questionnaire (Q4) and the ideas board were:
 - The council should have fewer consultants (32 comments/23 ideas).
 - The council should have fewer councillors (29 comments /38 ideas).

See below for a full summary of the free text responses to Question 4.

See section 1.1.2 for a full summary of the ideas board.

Q4. Respondents were invited to outline suggestions as to how the council could make additional savings or generate income.

- The most common themes that suggestions fell in to were:
 - Council workforce (136 people).
 - Council operation (54).
 - Suggestions for chargeable services (51).
- Overall the top specific suggestions were:
 - The council should have fewer consultants (32).
 - The council should have fewer councillors (29).
 - Reduce salaries within the council (26).

1.1.2 The Ideas Board

- 112 contributions were made to the ideas board by 78 participants. Contributions could be in the form of an idea (x80) or a comment on an idea (x32) and participants were able to make more than one submission.
- The most common themes that ideas fell in to were:
 - Council's operation and structure (score of 71).
 - Ideas relating to maintenance (57).
 - Ideas relating to golf courses (42).
- The most popular and 'liked' specific ideas were:

- The council should have fewer councillors (38).
- Hoylake Beach should be maintained (24).
- The council should use fewer consultants (23).

1.1.3 Demographics

- Most of the respondents (87.9%) classed themselves as local residents.
- The most represented Wirral Ward is Hoylake and Meols (11.3%), the least represented Wirral Ward was Bromborough (0.2%).
- Most Wirral respondents were in Decile 1 or decile 6 of the IMD (13.7% each), where decile 1 is the most deprived, and decile 10 is the least deprived.
- 59.3% of respondents were male; 36.4% were female.
- The most represented age group was 65–74-year-olds (24.7%).
- The least represented age group was 16–27-year-olds (0.8%).
- 93.4% of respondents were of white British ethnicity.
- 2.7% were of a non-white or 'other' ethnicity.
- 81.6% of respondents were heterosexual.

2.0 Methodology

Through the budget consultation people were asked to tell us what their priorities are, what council services matter most to them, and where they believe the Council should be focusing its efforts to help develop the budget plan.

Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 January 2022, where further budget consideration will be made. Full Council will have the final say on the authority's budget for the next year.

The consultation was carried out between 2 November – 28 November 2021. The approach used was an online public consultation through the 'Have your say' consultation portal at www.haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk with a page dedicated to the Budget Consultation. A Budget Booklet, a Financial Strategy 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.

Two 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.

Respondents were also 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' website alongside the online tool.

2.1 Questionnaire

The consultation questionnaire was developed on the themes of the Wirral Plan and enabled stakeholders to record their feedback and opinions on how the council budget could be allocated, and savings made according to their priorities and what matters to them most. 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-text comment question, a text coding approach was used based on the reoccurring themes. This data was then collated and summarised in the report. Free text results are provided as a count, rather than as percentages. This is because one comment or idea may cover multiple themes, therefore there are considerably more themes than contributions. Percentages derived from this as a denominator are non-sensical and confusing so have been omitted

Four paper 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.

2.2 Ideas Board

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

Ideas and comments were reviewed and categorised into themes. Those categories of ideas that were most prevalent and/or most 'liked' have been identified and highlighted.

Ideas Board results are provided as a score, rather than as percentages. This is because one comment or idea may cover multiple themes, therefore there are considerably more themes than contributions. Percentages derived from this as a denominator are non-sensical and confusing so have been omitted.

2.3 Staff Feedback

In addition to direct Manager/ Departmental Management Team communications, a specific area was set up on the council's new Intranet Platform. This included channels for questions, feedback, and ideas, as well as links to the Have Your Say platform. Regular staff briefings, member engagement, 'Exec view' messages and specific sessions for our harder to reach staff were also undertaken. All responses were reviewed and summarised for reporting.

2.5 Analysis of Respondents

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.

2.6 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.

The Policy and Resources Committee requested that the engagement should aim to ‘Achieve a proportionate balance of responses which accurately reflects stakeholder make up’. To achieve responses from a representative sample of the Wirral population would require a range of targeted engagement to ensure the correct sample size, and coverage of response from the correct population demographics. Consultations designed to achieve this are often run in a range of stages based on analysis of the responses throughout the process and often use a range of engagement techniques such as contacting residents using a call centre. The time frame allowed to run this consultation did not allow this to be achieved. As noted above this consultation provides information on the opinion of residents who engaged.

2.7 Communication

A major social and digital media sub campaign was also carried out, which included regular messaging, targeted demographical and geographical communications, resident e-newsletters, and regular theme specific stories, linking with the narrative, and urging residents and stakeholders to take part in the consultation.

Through partnership agreements, we worked closely with Wirral Globe, Metro, and more local digital news channels. A mix of printed adverts and advertorials were placed to encourage participation, as well as digital click-through links and targeted news stories.

3.0 Results

3.1 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was responded to by 534 people, with 530 through the online portal and 4 paper copies submitted. No questions were mandatory so respondents could choose which questions to respond to.

Due to the size of data tables, the main tables for each of the closed questions are contained in [Appendix 1](#).

Council Services

Q1. Which Council Services do you value the most?

“We believe the services the council provides are all important. In planning for how we fund and deliver these services, we want to know more about which council services(s) you value the most”.

Please tell us how important these services are to you on a scale of 1-5 (1 being very important and 5 being of no importance at all).

The services that were most frequently placed as being most valued were:

1. Children’s Services (46.1% of respondents)
2. Parks and Open Spaces (42.5%)
3. Adult Social care (40.0%)

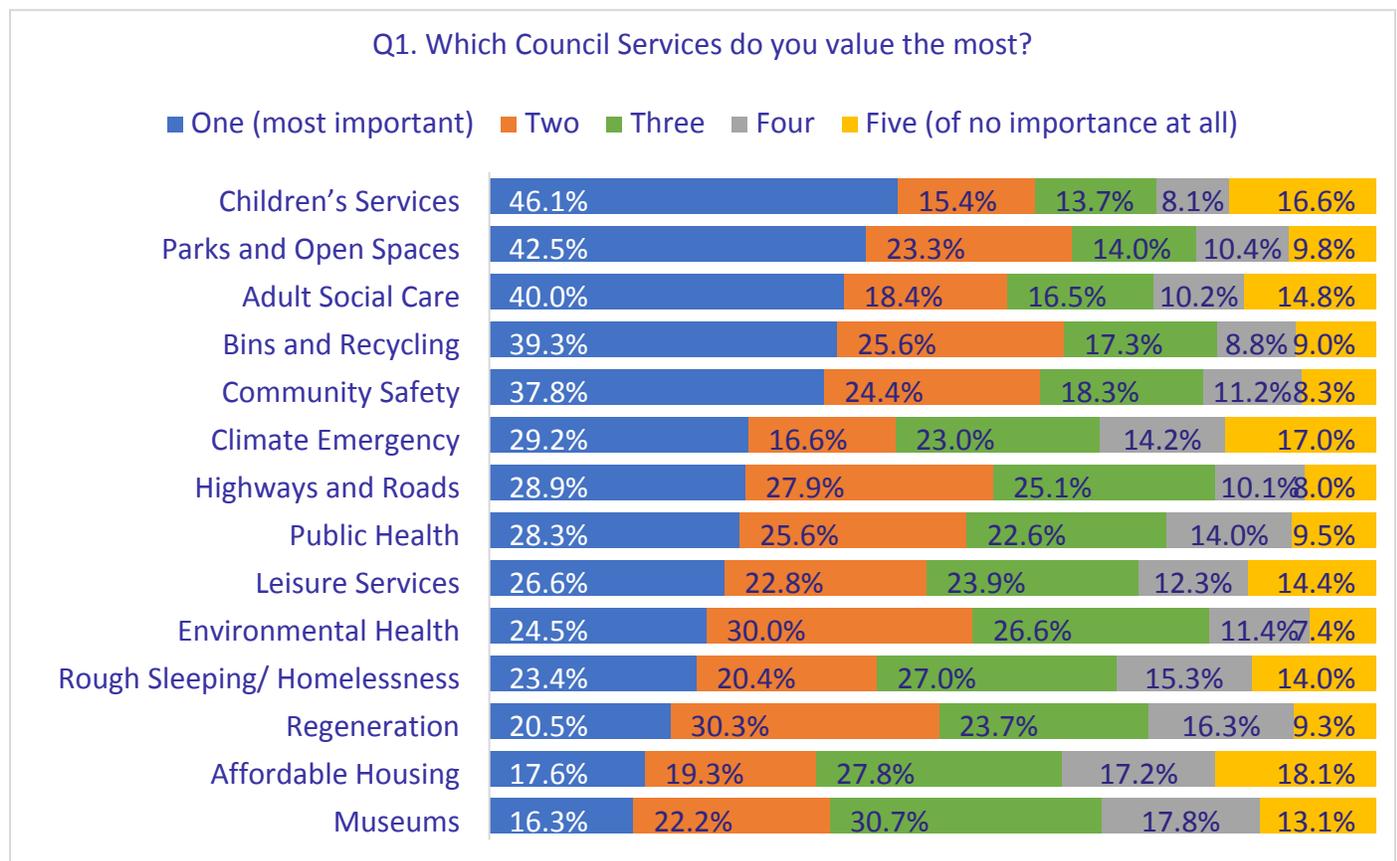


Figure 1: Chart showing which Council Services respondents value the most

Those services most frequently placed as least valued were:

4. Affordable Housing (18.1%)
5. Climate Emergency (17.0%)
6. Children’s Services (16.6%)

Q2. Tell us which services you believe the council needs to invest more resources into.

The services that were most frequently placed as most important to invest more resources in were:

1. Parks & Open Spaces (39.2%)
2. Museums (39.0%)
3. Children’s Services (36.3%)

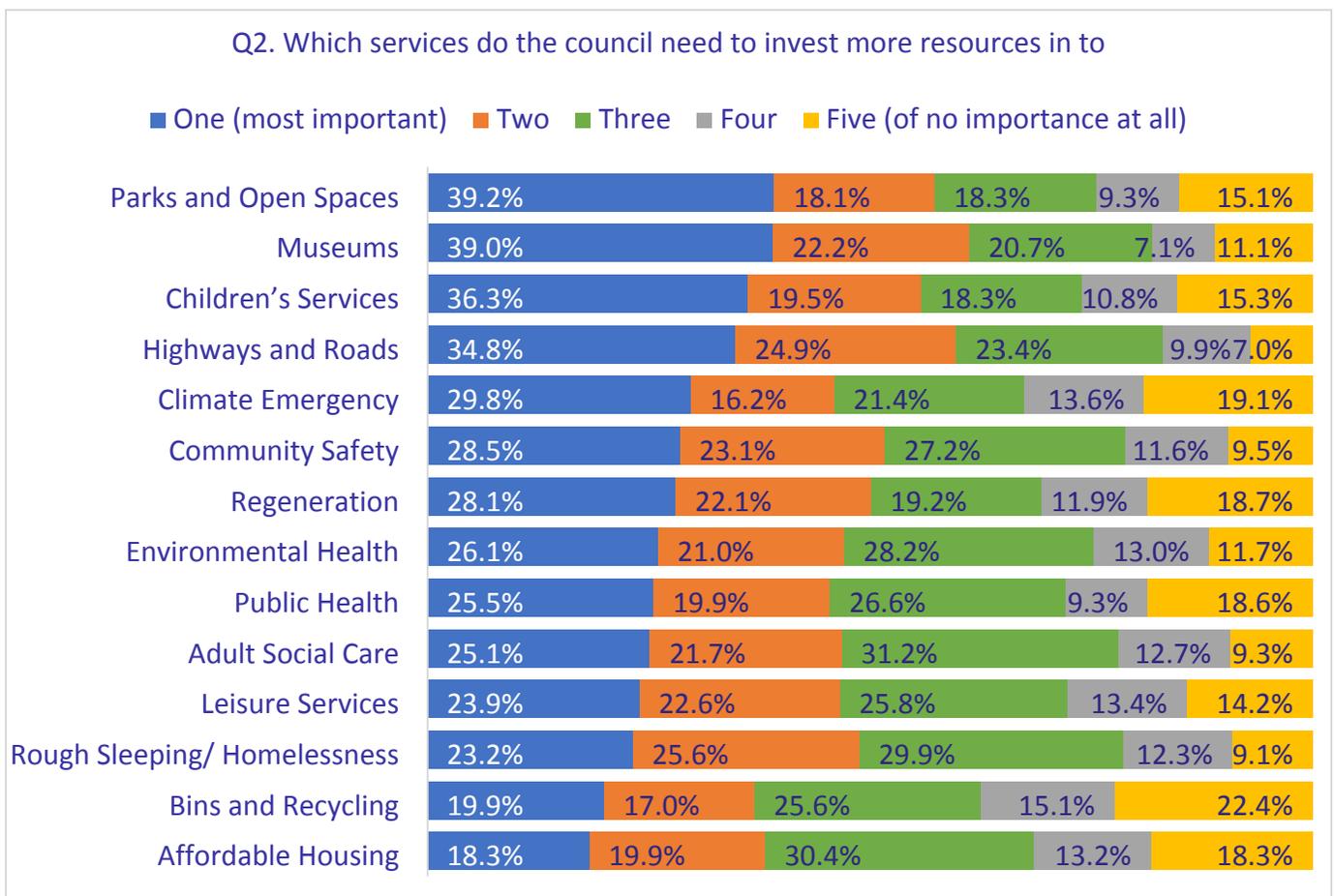


Figure 2: Chart showing which services respondents feel that the council needs to invest more resources into

Those services that were most frequently placed as of no importance at all to invest more resources in were:

1. Bins and Recycling (22.4%)
2. Climate Emergency (19.1%)

The Wirral Plan and the council budget

Q3. Please tell us how important these priorities are to you on a scale of 1-5.

Safe and Pleasant Communities was the priority most frequently placed as most important, by 46.2% of respondents.

Active and Healthy Lives (31.8%), Brighter Futures (31.4%) and a Sustainable Environment (31.3%) were all similarly placed in importance.

A Sustainable Environment was the priority most frequently placed as of no importance at all (13.1%).

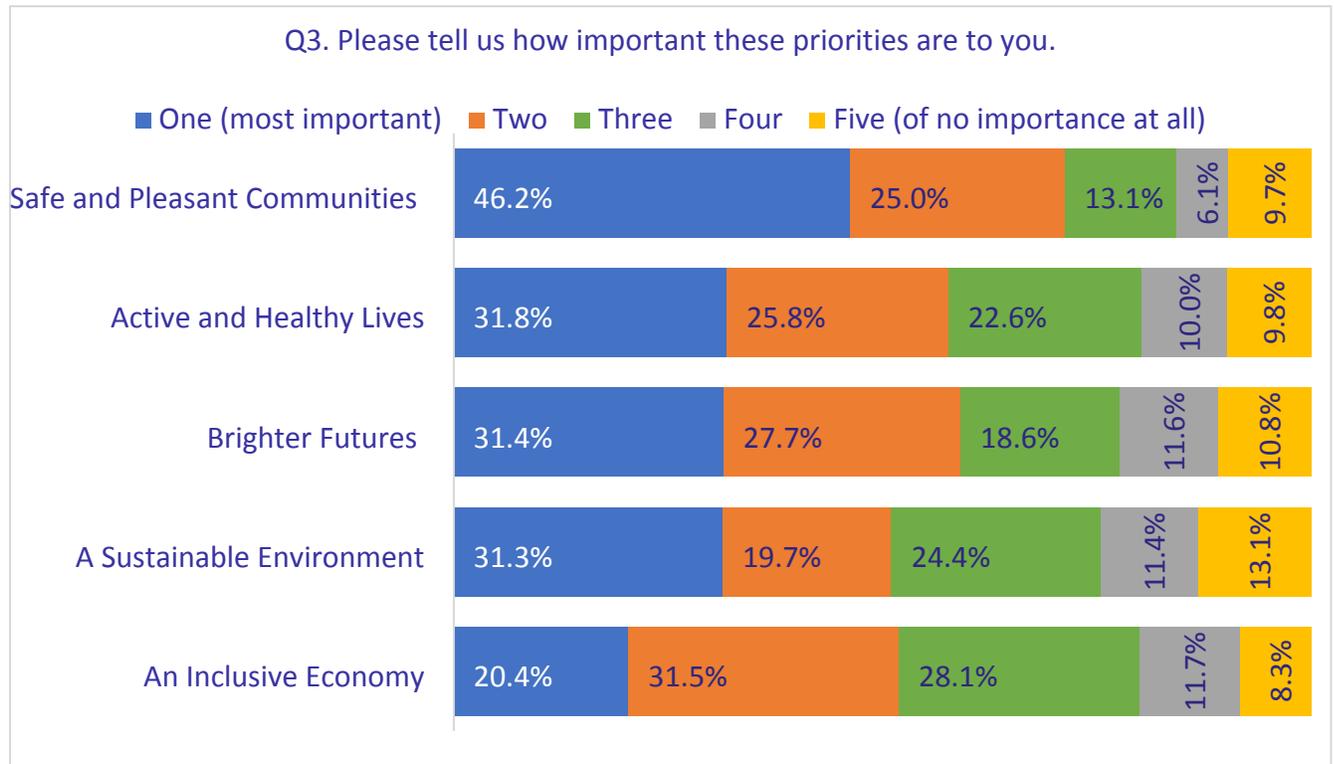


Figure 3: Chart showing how important these priorities are to respondents

Q4. Sustainable Environment: How important are these actions?

Within the Sustainable Environment priority, the protection of our local environment action was most frequently placed as most important, by 41.8% of respondents.

The continue to respond to the climate emergency action was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (14.9%).

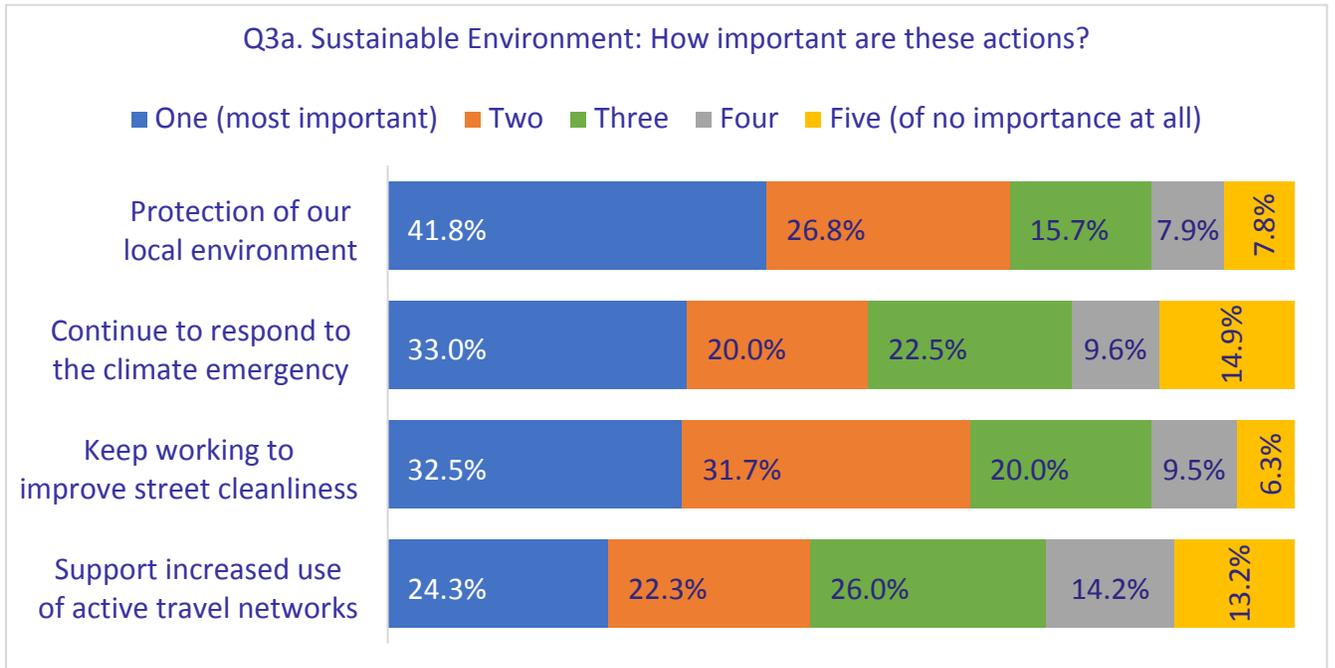


Figure 4: Chart showing how important the Sustainable Environment actions are to respondents

Q5. Brighter futures: How important are these actions?

Within the Brighter Futures priority, ensuring our children and young people have equal access to education opportunities was the action most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents. This was also the action most frequently placed as being of 'no importance at all'.

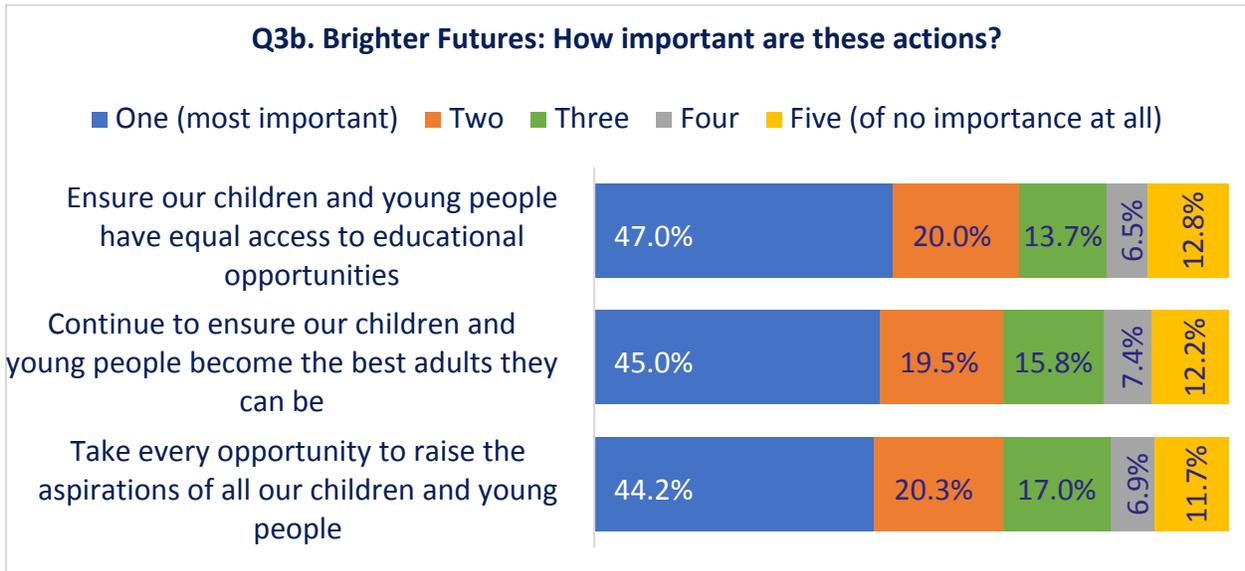


Figure 5: Chart showing how important the Brighter Futures actions are to respondents

Q6. Inclusive Economy: How important are these actions?

Within the Inclusive Economy priority, supporting local businesses and job creation was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 47.0% of respondents.

Developing quality, affordable, sustainable homes was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (13.7%).

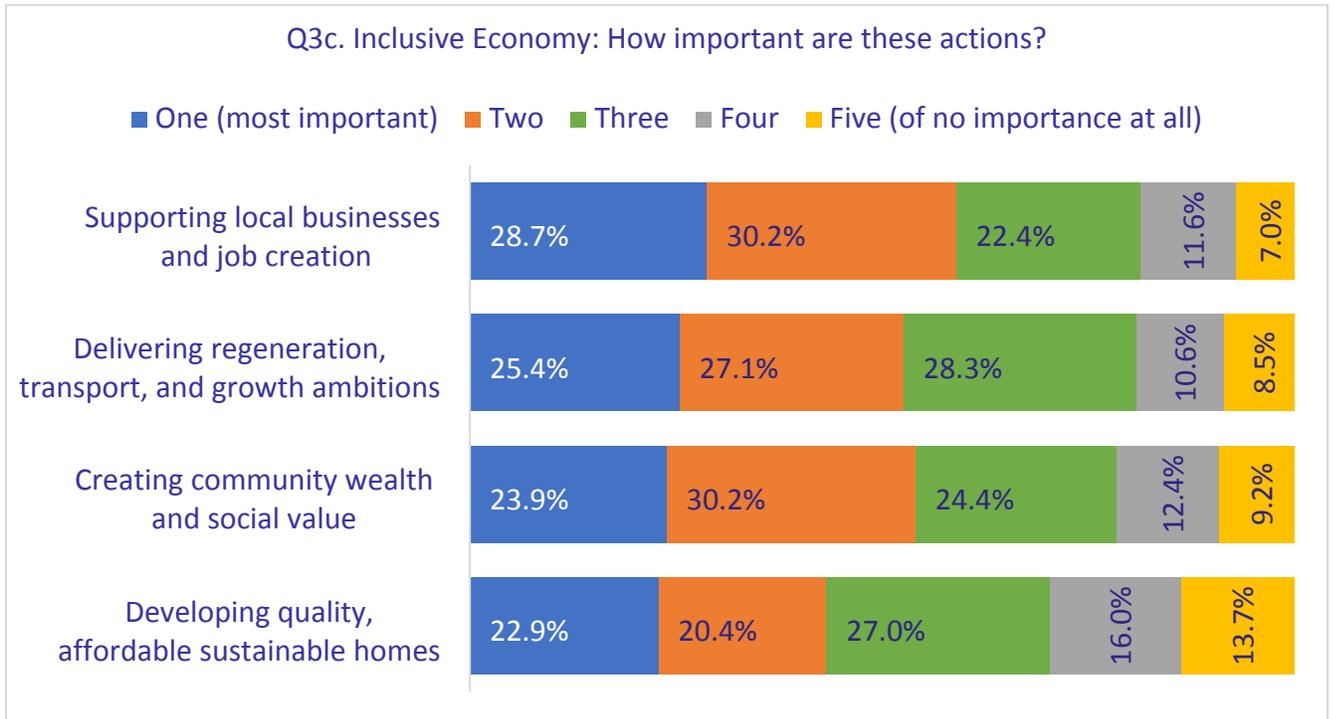


Figure 6: Chart showing how important the Inclusive Economy actions are to respondents

Q7. Safe and Pleasant Community: How important are these actions?

Within the Safe and Pleasant Community priority, working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 53.3% of respondents.

Tackling rough sleeping and homelessness was most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (13.7%).

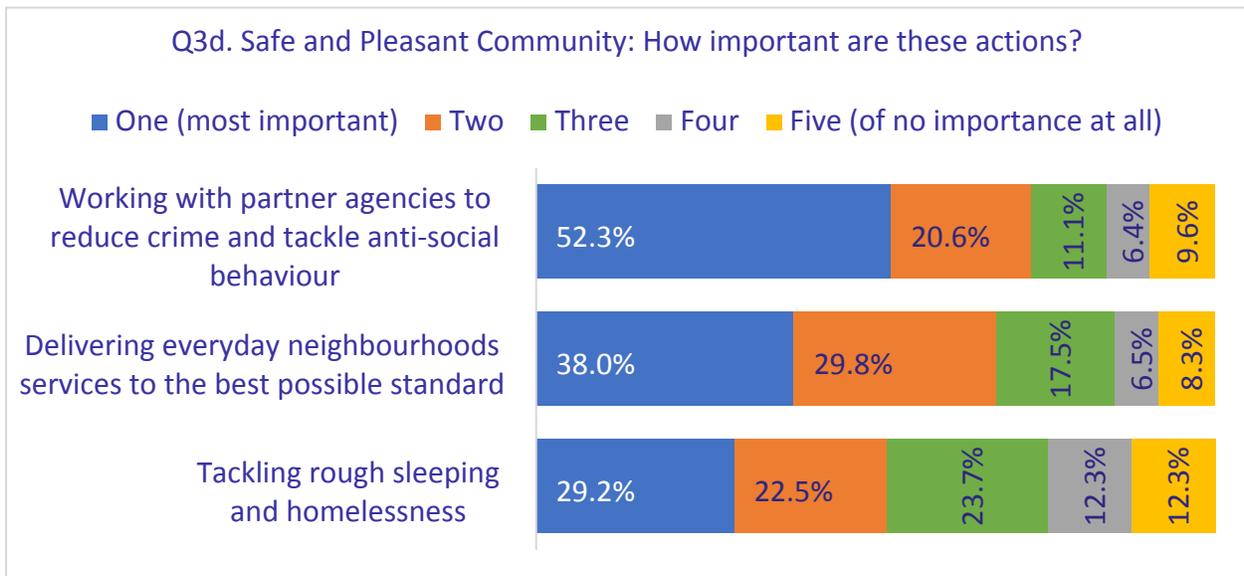


Figure 7: Chart showing how important the Safe and Pleasant Community actions are to respondents

Q8. Active and Healthy Lives: How important are these actions?

Within the Active and Healthy Lives priority, working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing was the action was most frequently placed as most important, by 34.6% of respondents. This action was also most frequently placed as of 'no importance at all' (11.8%).

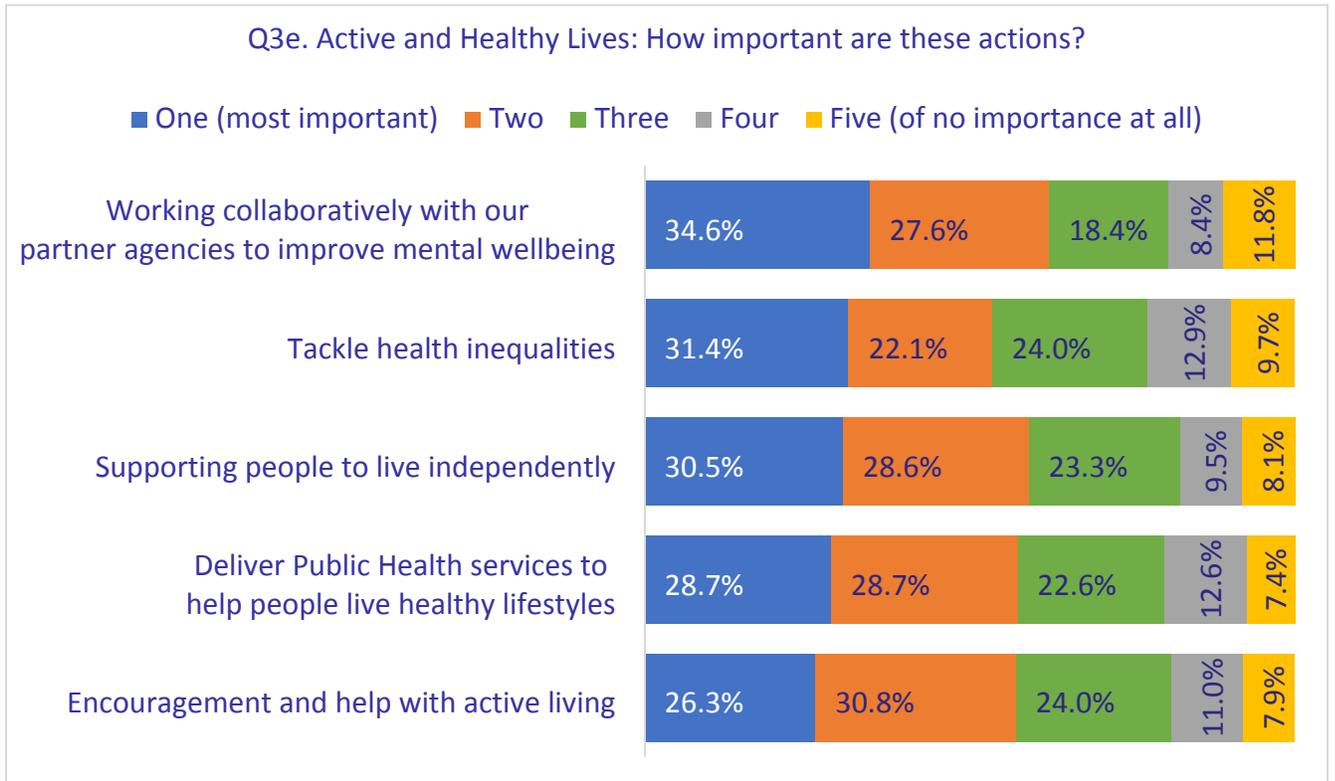


Figure 8: Chart showing how important the Active and Healthy Lives actions are to respondents

Q9. Please outline any suggestions you may have for how the council can make additional savings or potential sources of income.

The most common themes that suggestions fell in to were:

1. Council workforce (136).
2. Council operation (54).
3. Suggestions for chargeable services (51).



Figure 9: Top categories of suggestions

Main Category	Count
Council Workforce	136
Council Operation	54
Chargeable Service suggestions	51
Regeneration	46
Assets	42
Service closure/reduction	36
Maintenance	30
Leisure Services	29
Fines and enforcement	26
Climate Emergency	25
Golf Courses	20

Table 1: Top categories of suggestion.

Overall the top specific suggestions:

1. The council should have fewer consultants (32).
2. The council should have fewer councillors (29).
3. Reduce salaries within the council (26).



Figure 10: Top suggestions

Category	Subcategory	Total
Council Workforce	Fewer consultants	32
Council Workforce	Fewer councillors	29
Council Workforce	Reduce salaries within council	26
Assets	Sell council buildings	22
Regeneration	Cease existing projects - no new projects	21
Chargeable Services	Parking charges - support	16
Chargeable Services	Parking charges - oppose	14
Maintenance	Hoylake Beach - Rake/clean up	14

Table 2: Top suggestions



Below is a summary of those suggestions that were put forward more than 10 times.

1. **The council should employ fewer consultants (32).** Council workforce.

32 people put this forward as a suggestion. It is felt that the functions carried out by consultants should be carried out in-house, and that a workforce should be recruited that have the necessary skills.

2. **Reduce the number of Councillors serving Wirral (29).** Council workforce

29 people put forward this suggestion. Most commonly, people suggested that there should be only 1 or 2 councillors per ward, and that expenses paid should be reduced.

3. **Reduce salaries paid (26).** Council workforce

26 people put forward this suggestion. It is felt that salaries, particularly amongst upper management should be reduced or capped.

4. **Sell council-owned buildings (22).** Assets

22 people put forward this suggestion as a way of potentially generating revenue and saving costs in maintaining older buildings. There were 4 counter suggestions, where people were against selling off buildings, particularly the town halls.

5. **Curtail regeneration projects and do not embark on new ones (21)** Regeneration

21 people suggested that the various regeneration projects do not represent value for money and often do not reach fruition. It is felt that money should be spent on essential services and/or where there will be an immediate impact. 7 of the suggestions specifically mentioned that regeneration in Birkenhead in particular should cease.

6. **Parking charges - for (16) and against (14)** Chargeable services

Parking charges divided opinion amongst the suggestions.

16 people suggested that parking charges should be retained, or introduced, in order to increase revenue and/or deter car use. Some suggest all car parking should be charged, others that specific types should be chargeable such as on-street parking, parking at retail parks, workplace parking and non-resident parking.

There were 14 counter suggestions to this, suggesting that to charge for parking at smaller town and village high streets would have a detrimental effect on the businesses there, result in closures, and encourage people to out of town retail parks instead. It is also highlighted that removing parking charges at beauty spots would encourage people to be active and improve health and wellbeing.

7. **Hoylake Beach - Rake/clean-up (14) Maintenance**

14 people suggested that maintenance resume at Hoylake beach, and that it be returned to an 'amenity beach. The prevalent feeling in regard to this is that beach is no longer usable for leisure and recreation by the community, nor is an attraction to visitors. It is felt this will have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing and the local economy. In addition, it is thought that the unmaintained beach will attract vermin.

3.2 Ideas Board Results

Ideas were examined and sorted into categories and given a 'score' based on the frequency that the idea was put forward and how many likes they received. Counter comments have been taken into account, and where someone disagrees with an idea, or submits an opposing idea, the score was adjusted (reduced) accordingly.

The score was calculated by adding the number of submissions and number of combined likes and subtracting the number of counter comments.

Where one individual has made multiple submissions saying the same thing, these are combined to one submission per category discussed. Any 'likes' accrued across the submissions are combined and retained.

The most popular type of ideas were those relating to the

1. Council's operation and structure (score of 71).
2. Ideas relating to maintenance (57).
3. Ideas relating to golf courses (42).

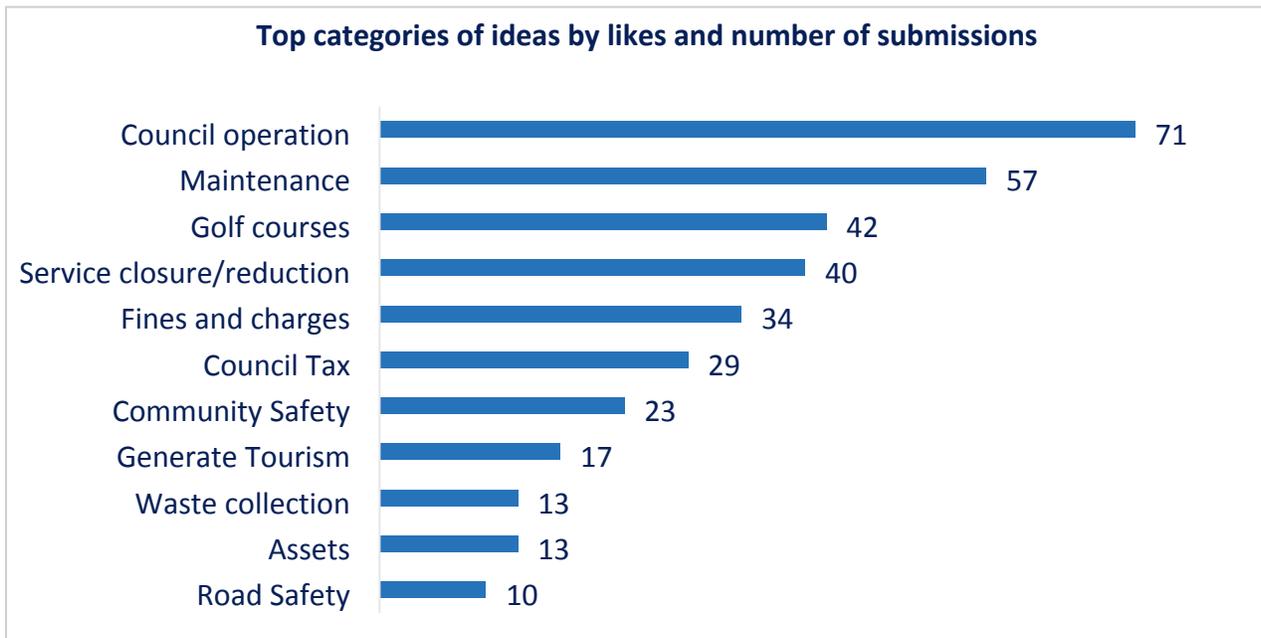


Figure 11: Top idea categories

Category	Sum of Likes	Submissions	Total approval
Council operation	58	13	71
Maintenance	41	16	57
Golf courses	24	18	42
Service closure/reduction	26	14	40
Fines and charges	24	10	34
Council Tax	21	8	29
Community Safety	17	6	23
Generate Tourism	15	2	17
Waste collection	11	2	13
Assets	9	4	13
Road Safety	8	2	10

Table 3: Top idea categories – score matrix

The most popular and ‘liked’ specific ideas were:

1. The council should have fewer councillors (38).
2. Hoylake Beach should be maintained (24).
3. The council should use fewer consultants (23).

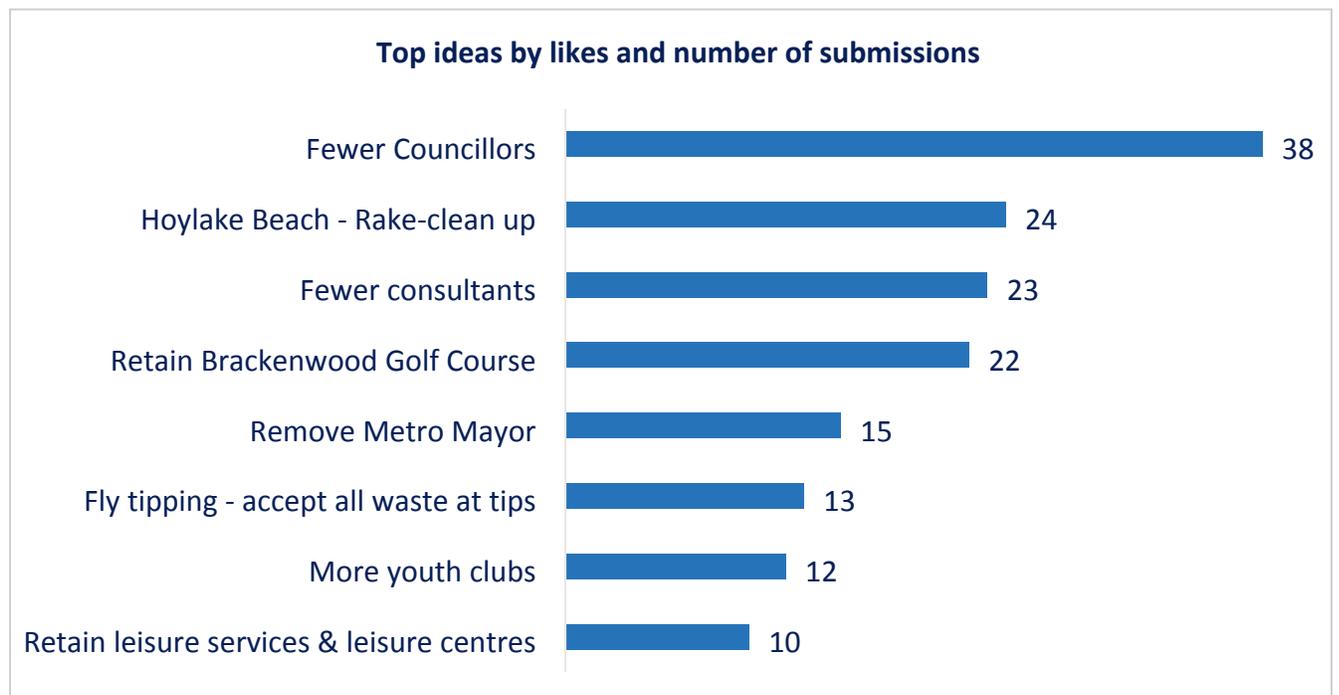


Figure 12: Top individual ideas

Row Labels	Sum of Likes	Submissions	Counter Comment	Total approval
Fewer Councillors	33	5		38
Hoylake Beach - Rake-clean up	25	7	8	24
Fewer consultants	20	3		23
Retain Brackenwood Golf Course	17	5		22
Remove Metro Mayor	14	2	1	15
Fly tipping - accept all waste tips	11	2		13
More youth clubs	10	2		12
Retain leisure services & leisure centres	7	3		10

Table 4: Top individual ideas – score matrix

Below is a summary of those ideas that achieved a frequency and popularity score of more than 10:

1. **Reduce the number of Councillors serving Wirral (38).** Council Operation and Structure

Five people put forward submissions mentioning this as an idea, which between them garnered 33 ‘likes’. Most commonly, people suggested that there should be only 1 councillor per ward, not 3.

One of these submissions was the joint most popular idea on the ideas board and received 14 ‘likes’:

Reduce the number of Wirral Councillors

I feel we could cut the number of councillors in each ward. Pensby, Thingwall & Irby has 3. Totally unnecessary. Whilst ward councillors do not receive a salary they do receive allowances, are loaned computer equipment when required. Every little helps.

Share    

1 Comment

14 

2. **Resume maintenance of Hoylake Beach (24)** Maintenance

Seven people put forward submissions relating to this, which between them garnered 25 ‘likes’. There were also contrary opinions about this (8), that the beach should be returned to nature, which have been taken into account in the final scoring.

The feeling is that beach is no longer usable for leisure and recreation by the community, nor is an attraction to visitors. It is felt this will have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing and the local economy.

The counter argument is that it would be environmentally beneficial to see the beach returned to nature and would attract wildlife and thus wildlife enthusiasts. It saves maintenance costs and stabilises the sand.

3. **Council to employ fewer consultants (23)** Council Operation and Structure

Three ideas to this effect were submitted, which garnered 23 'likes'. The prevalent feeling is that consultants were expensive and unnecessary. It is felt that the work should be carried out in-house and staff employed who could carry out the roles currently outsourced.

4. **Retain Brackenwood Golf Course (22)** Golf

Five people submitted ideas and comments to this effect, which were 'liked' by 17 people.

Brackenwood Golf Course is predominantly mentioned in terms of courses that should be retained, Hoylake golf course and the plans for an Arrowe Park golf resort were mentioned as those that could be sold or scrapped.

5. **Remove metro mayor charge from council tax (15)** Council Tax

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 14 likes. It is felt that this function does not benefit Wirral.

One of these submissions was the joint most popular idea on the ideas board and received 14 'likes':

Scrap metro mayor tax from council tax.

It's a pointless greedy tax, that does not benefit Wirral

Share    

2 Comments

14 

There was a counter comment to this submission which stated that a metro mayor afforded the ability to make regional decisions independent of Westminster, and that funding was attached to role.

6. **Reduce fly tipping by accepting all waste at tips and making kerbside collections cheaper (13)** Waste Collection

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 11 likes.

By accepting all types of waste, and commercial waste at Wirral recycling centres fly-tipping would be greatly reduced or eliminated thus saving the cost of clearance. Similarly, if kerb-side bulk waste collection services were cheaper, this would lead to a reduction in fly tipping.

7. More youth clubs (12) Community safety and crime prevention

Two people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 10 likes.

It is noted that there is little for young people to do, and this can lead to anti-social behaviour born of boredom. The Hive in Birkenhead is highlighted as being a success and it is suggested that specifically West Kirby youth club should re-open.

8. Retain services and leisure centres (10) Health & wellbeing

Three people submitted ideas or comments to this effect, garnering 7 likes.

The benefits of sport and leisure on physical and mental health are highlighted as particularly important following COVID-19 restrictions. It is specifically queried as to why Woodchurch Leisure Centre is not open.

3.3 Staff Engagement

There were five staff responses fed back through the channel set up within the Council. The key areas in the feedback included:

Ideas for cost savings:

- Income generation in services such as cemeteries and crematorium.
- Reduce spending on buildings by reducing the Councils assets or bringing more services together to share buildings.
- Reducing the number of inappropriate jobs created in some parts of the Council. Inappropriate jobs relate to those established without consultation, ring fenced to certain individuals, lack of job evaluation and manager level pay with no management responsibility.
- To have a more inclusive curriculum and education system with support within schools and colleges utilising learning bases so a lot of money doesn't have to be spent on alternative curriculum for young people.
- Utilising the services that already exist including third sector to support instead of creating new services.
- Utilising tourists' spots to bring money in.

- Having more courses and educational opportunities in the Wirral so people don't have to travel out or move away.

What the Council priorities should be:

- Vulnerable Adults and Children
- Front line services e.g., bins, streetlighting, schools, social services.
- Use of the intelligence we have.
- Valuing and utilising the skills of the experienced staff we have.
- Senior management listening to ideas from staff not just once a year at budget time.
- Investing in young people, more opportunities and youth workers in the communities where young people are.

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.

Most of the respondents (87.9%) classed themselves as local residents.



Figure 13: Who are you registering as?

Are you registering as:	Count	%
A local resident	494	87.9%
An employee of Wirral Council	32	5.7%
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	21	3.7%
A local Business	7	1.2%
Other	6	1.1%
An elected Member of Wirral Council	2	0.4%
Total	562	100.0%

Table 5: Who are you registered as?

The most represented Wirral Ward is Hoylake and Meols (11.3%), the least represented Wirral Ward was Bromborough (0.2%). Most Wirral respondents were in Decile 1 or decile 6 of the IMD (13.7% each), where decile 1 is the most deprived, and decile 10 is the least deprived.

Parts of Seacombe and Bidston and St. James were most represented in decile 1. Parts of Hoylake and Meols ward was most represented in decile 6.

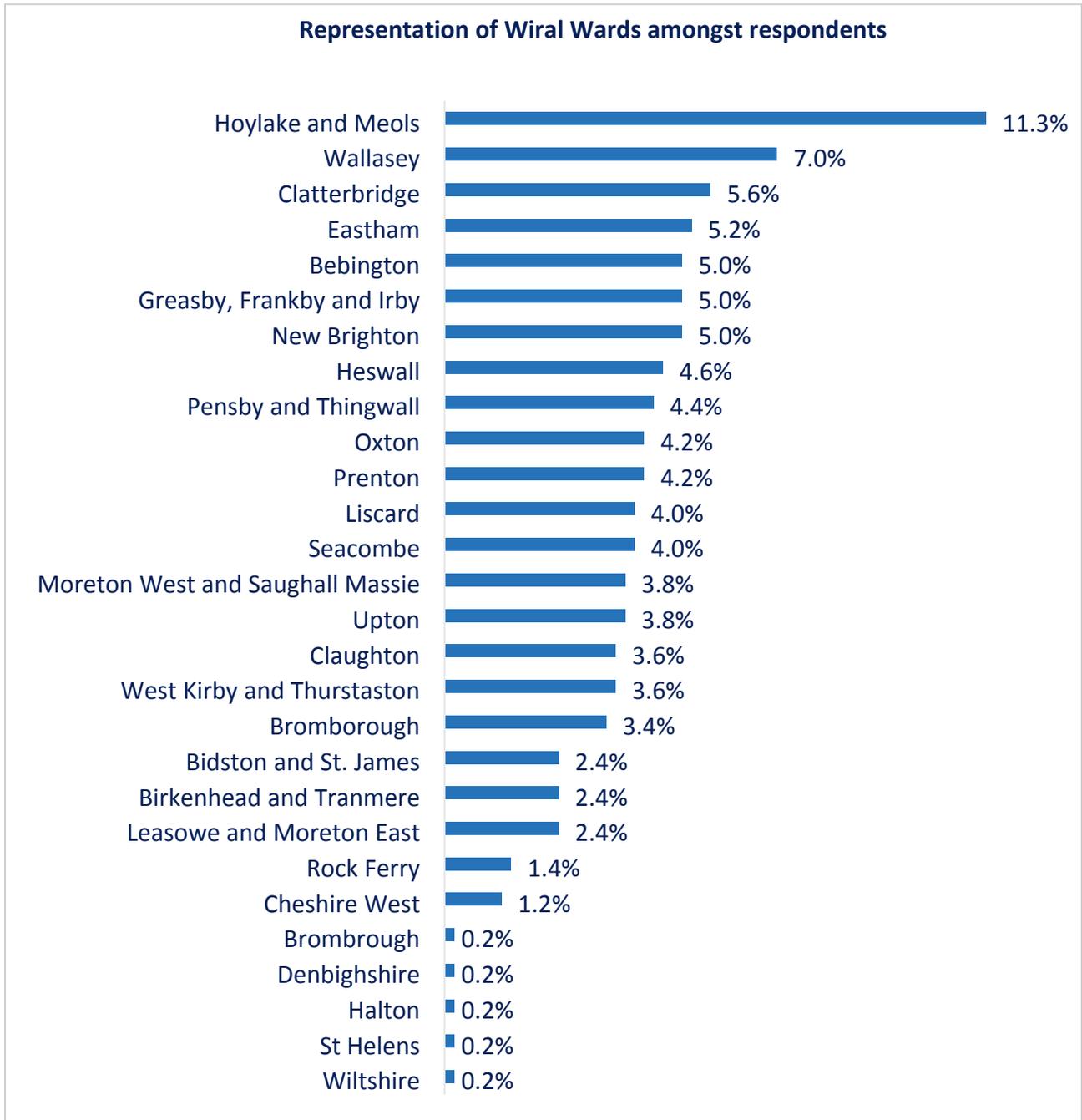


Chart 1: Respondent location by ward

Ward Name	Count	%
Hoylake and Meols	57	11.3%
Wallasey	35	7.0%
Clatterbridge	28	5.6%
Eastham	26	5.2%
Bebington	25	5.0%
Greasby, Frankby and Irby	25	5.0%
New Brighton	25	5.0%
Heswall	23	4.6%
Pensby and Thingwall	22	4.4%
Oxton	21	4.2%
Prenton	21	4.2%
Liscard	20	4.0%
Seacombe	20	4.0%
Moreton West and Saughall Massie	19	3.8%
Upton	19	3.8%
Claughton	18	3.6%
West Kirby and Thurstaston	18	3.6%
Bromborough	17	3.4%
Bidston and St. James	12	2.4%
Birkenhead and Tranmere	12	2.4%
Leasowe and Moreton East	12	2.4%
Rock Ferry	7	1.4%
Cheshire West	6	1.2%
Bromborough	1	0.2%
Denbighshire	1	0.2%
Halton	1	0.2%
St Helens	1	0.2%
Wiltshire	1	0.2%
Uncategorised	10	2.0%
Total	503	100.0%

Table 6: Respondent location by ward.

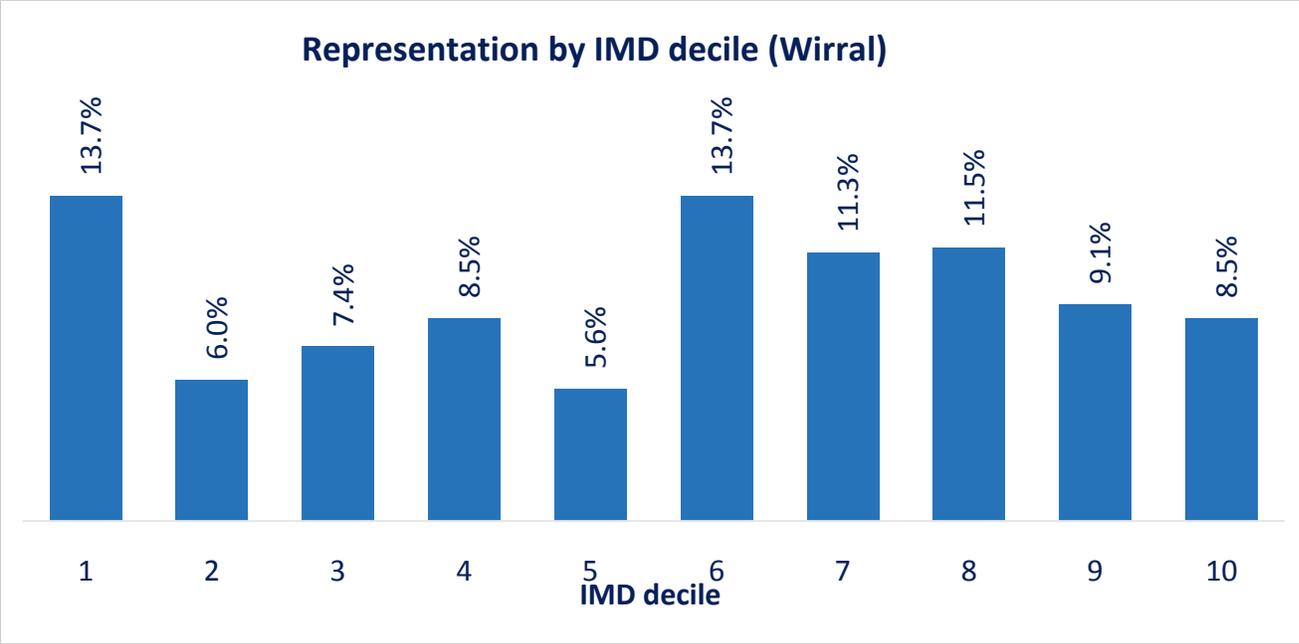


Figure 14: Representation by IMD decile

IMD Decile	Count	%
1	69	13.7%
2	30	6.0%
3	37	7.4%
4	43	8.5%
5	28	5.6%
6	69	13.7%
7	57	11.3%
8	58	11.5%
9	46	9.1%
10	43	8.5%
Outside Wirral	10	2.0%
Unavailable	13	2.6%
Total	503	100.0%

Table 7: Representation by IMD decile

The gender of respondents was 59.3% male, 36.4% female, with 3.5% preferring not to say and 0.8% preferring their own term.

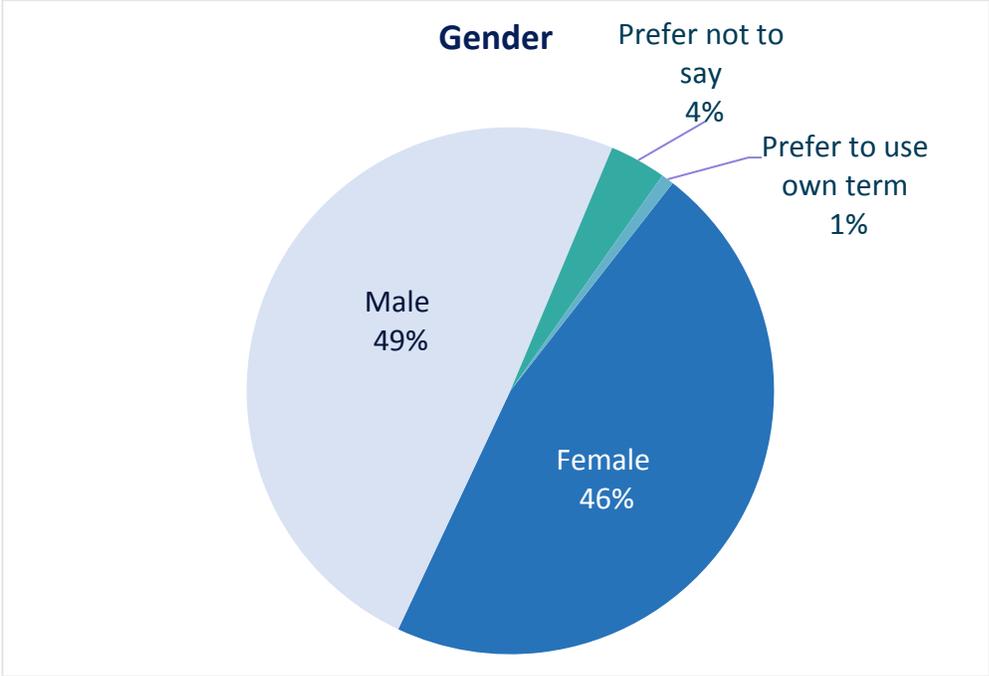


Chart 2: Gender of respondents

The age group profile is illustrated with the most common age groups were 65-74 years (24.7%), followed by 55-64 years (23.1%) and 45-54 years (20.4%). The least represented groups were 16-24 years (0.8%) and over 75s (7.6%).

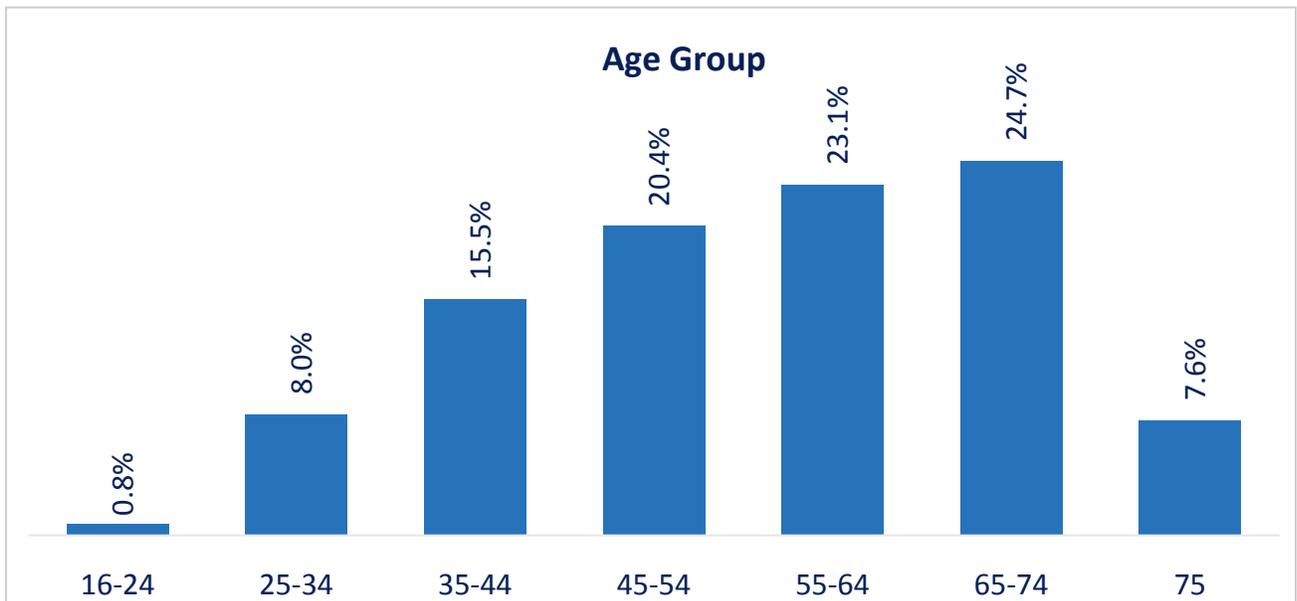


Chart 3: Age group of respondents

93.4% of respondents were white British, with only 14 (2.7%) respondents were of a non-white or other ethnicity.

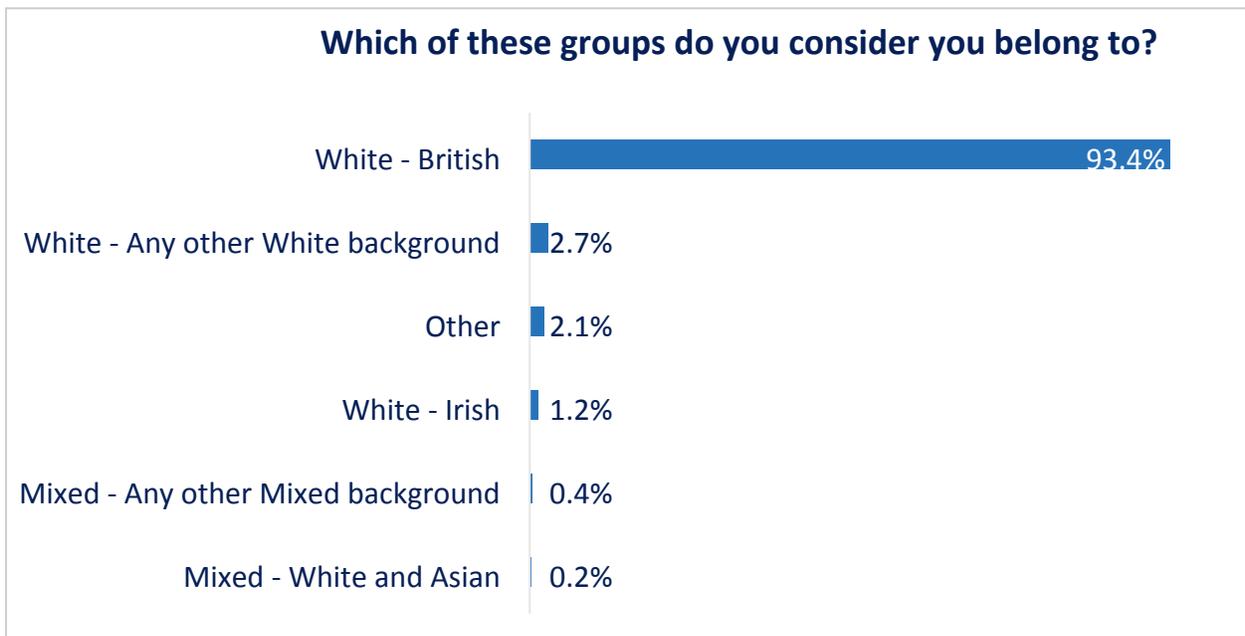


Chart 4: Ethnicity of respondents

81.6% of respondents were heterosexual, 3.6% were gay/ lesbian, 1.4% bisexual and 13.5% preferred not to say.

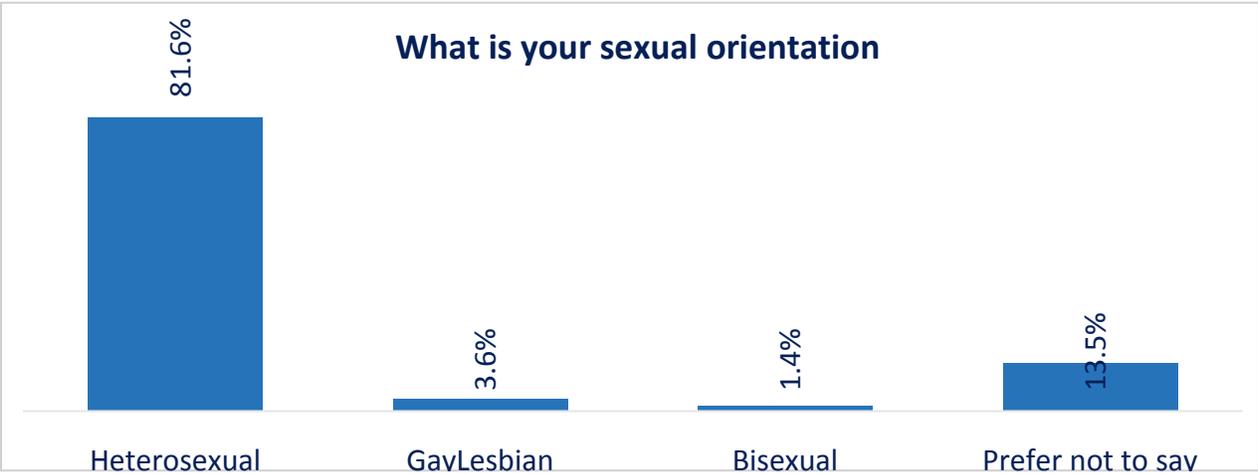


Chart 30: Sexual orientation of respondents

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 or ideas board; 530 people completed the survey and 78 people contributed 112 ideas to the board.

2,710 visited the Budget Consultation page of the Have Your Say site, of these 182 downloaded a document, 530 people completed the survey and 78 people contributed 112 ideas to the board.

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 (2,006 visits) where people have either pasted or typed the URL in to their browser; these generated high rate of engagement with 32.5% of visits resulting in completion of the survey and/or ideas board.

Compared to this, whilst social media accounted for the second highest volume of traffic (1,120 visits) it generated the lowest rate of engagement - 11.8%.

TRAFFIC CHANNEL	AWARE VISITS	INFORMED VISITS (%)	ENGAGED VISITS (%)
DIRECT	2,006	70.0%	32.5%
SOCIAL MEDIA	1,120	61.3%	11.8%
EMAIL	199	63.3%	15.6%
SEARCH ENGINE	135	57.0%	19.3%
REFERRALS	67	67.2%	14.9%
.GOV SITES	9	66.7%	33.3%

Table 8: Site traffic sources

Appendix 1: Data Tables

Q1 Which council services do you value the most? data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Adult Social Care				
One	209	4	213	40.0%
Two	98		98	18.4%
Three	88		88	16.5%
Four	54		54	10.2%
Five	79		79	14.8%
Total	528	4	532	100.0%
Children's Service				
One	242	3	245	46.1%
Two	82		82	15.4%
Three	72	1	73	13.7%
Four	43		43	8.1%
Five	88		88	16.6%
Total	527	4	531	100.0%
Bins and Recycling				
One	207	2	209	39.3%
Two	134	2	136	25.6%
Three	92		92	17.3%
Four	47		47	8.8%
Five	48		48	9.0%
Total	528	4	532	100.0%
Affordable Housing				
One	90	3	93	17.6%
Two	101	1	102	19.3%
Three	147		147	27.8%
Four	91		91	17.2%
Five	96		96	18.1%
Total	525	4	529	100.0%
Highways and Roads				
One	152		152	28.9%
Two	144	3	147	27.9%
Three	131	1	132	25.1%
Four	53		53	10.1%
Five	42		42	8.0%
Total	522	4	526	100.0%
Climate Emergency				
One	154	1	155	29.2%

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Two	87	1	88	16.6%
Three	120	2	122	23.0%
Four	75		75	14.2%
Five	90		90	17.0%
Total	526	4	530	100.0%
Community Safety (Including Antisocial Behaviour)				
One	197	3	200	37.8%
Two	128	1	129	24.4%
Three	97		97	18.3%
Four	59		59	11.2%
Five	44		44	8.3%
Total	525	4	529	100.0%
Rough Sleeping and Homelessness				
One	122	2	124	23.4%
Two	107	1	108	20.4%
Three	142	1	143	27.0%
Four	81		81	15.3%
Five	74		74	14.0%
Total	526	4	530	100.0%
Regeneration (Including Economic Growth and Job Creation)				
One	108		108	20.5%
Two	158	2	160	30.3%
Three	124	1	125	23.7%
Four	86		86	16.3%
Five	48	1	49	9.3%
Total	524	4	528	100.0%
Public Health (Including addressing Health Inequalities)				
One	146	3	149	28.3%
Two	134	1	135	25.6%
Three	119		119	22.6%
Four	74		74	14.0%
Five	50		50	9.5%
Total	523	4	527	100.0%
Environmental Health				
One	128	1	129	24.5%
Two	155	3	158	30.0%
Three	140		140	26.6%
Four	60		60	11.4%
Five	39		39	7.4%
Total	522	4	526	100.0%
Leisure Services (Including Leisure Centres and Golf Courses)				

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
One	139	1	140	26.6%
Two	118	2	120	22.8%
Three	126		126	23.9%
Four	65		65	12.3%
Five	75	1	76	14.4%
Total	523	4	527	100.0%
Museums				
One	85	1	86	16.3%
Two	116	1	117	22.2%
Three	161	1	162	30.7%
Four	94		94	17.8%
Five	68	1	69	13.1%
Total	524	4	528	100.0%
Parks and Open Spaces				
One	223	2	225	42.5%
Two	122	1	123	23.3%
Three	74		74	14.0%
Four	55		55	10.4%
Five	51	1	52	9.8%
Total	525	4	529	100.0%

Q2 Which Services do the council need to invest more resources in data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Adult Social Care (including Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding and Independent Living)				
One	141	4	145	36.3%
Two	78		78	19.5%
Three	73		73	18.3%
Four	43		43	10.8%
Five	61		61	15.3%
Total	396	4	400	100.0%
Children's Services (Including Education, Safeguarding, Early Help and SEND)				
One	153	3	156	39.2%
Two	72		72	18.1%
Three	72	1	73	18.3%
Four	37		37	9.3%
Five	60		60	15.1%
Total	394	4	398	100.0%
Bins and Recycling				
One	93	2	95	25.1%
Two	80	2	82	21.7%

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Three	118		118	31.2%
Four	48		48	12.7%
Five	35		35	9.3%
Total	374	4	378	100.0%
Affordable Housing				
One	72	2	74	19.9%
Two	62	1	63	17.0%
Three	94	1	95	25.6%
Four	56		56	15.1%
Five	83		83	22.4%
Total	367	4	371	100.0%
Highways and Roads (Including Streetlights, Parking and Street Cleaning)				
One	108	3	111	28.5%
Two	89	1	90	23.1%
Three	106		106	27.2%
Four	45		45	11.6%
Five	37		37	9.5%
Total	385	4	389	100.0%
Climate Emergency				
One	113	1	114	29.8%
Two	61	1	62	16.2%
Three	80	2	82	21.4%
Four	52		52	13.6%
Five	73		73	19.1%
Total	379	4	383	100.0%
Community Safety (Including Antisocial Behaviour)				
One	131	3	134	34.8%
Two	95	1	96	24.9%
Three	90		90	23.4%
Four	38		38	9.9%
Five	27		27	7.0%
Total	381	4	385	100.0%
Rough Sleeping and Homelessness				
One	93	3	96	25.5%
Two	75		75	19.9%
Three	99	1	100	26.6%
Four	35		35	9.3%
Five	70		70	18.6%
Total	372	4	376	100.0%
Regeneration (Including Economic Growth and Job Creation)				
One	91		91	23.9%

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Two	84	2	86	22.6%
Three	97	1	98	25.8%
Four	51		51	13.4%
Five	53	1	54	14.2%
Total	376	4	380	100.0%
Public Health (Including addressing Health Inequalities)				
One	95	3	98	26.1%
Two	78	1	79	21.0%
Three	106		106	28.2%
Four	49		49	13.0%
Five	44		44	11.7%
Total	372	4	376	100.0%
Environmental Health				
One	86	1	87	23.2%
Two	93	3	96	25.6%
Three	112		112	29.9%
Four	46		46	12.3%
Five	34		34	9.1%
Total	371	4	375	100.0%
Leisure Services (Including Leisure Centres and Golf Courses)				
One	107	1	108	28.1%
Two	83	2	85	22.1%
Three	74		74	19.2%
Four	46		46	11.9%
Five	71	1	72	18.7%
Total	381	4	385	100.0%
Museums				
One	67	1	68	18.3%
Two	72	2	74	19.9%
Three	113		113	30.4%
Four	49		49	13.2%
Five	67	1	68	18.3%
Total	368	4	372	100.0%
Parks and Open Spaces				
One	153	2	155	39.0%
Two	87	1	88	22.2%
Three	82		82	20.7%
Four	28		28	7.1%
Five	43	1	44	11.1%
Total	393	4	397	100.0%

Q3 How important are these priorities? - data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
A Sustainable Environment – e.g., tackling climate crisis				
One	165	2	167	31.3%
Two	104	1	105	19.7%
Three	129	1	130	24.4%
Four	61		61	11.4%
Five	70		70	13.1%
Total	529	4	533	100.0%
Brighter Futures – e.g., helping children and families				
One	163	3	166	31.4%
Two	146		146	27.7%
Three	97	1	98	18.6%
Four	61		61	11.6%
Five	57		57	10.8%
Total	524	4	528	100.0%
An Inclusive Economy – e.g., supporting jobs and businesses				
One	106	2	108	20.4%
Two	165	2	167	31.5%
Three	149		149	28.1%
Four	62		62	11.7%
Five	44		44	8.3%
Total	526	4	530	100.0%
Safe and Pleasant Communities – e.g., being safe where we live				
One	241	3	244	46.2%
Two	131	1	132	25.0%
Three	69		69	13.1%
Four	32		32	6.1%
Five	51		51	9.7%
Total	524	4	528	100.0%
Active and Healthy Lives – e.g., helping people live independently				
One	166	3	169	31.8%
Two	136	1	137	25.8%
Three	120		120	22.6%
Four	53		53	10.0%
Five	52		52	9.8%
Total	527	4	531	100.0%

Q4 Sustainable Environment data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Continue to respond to the climate emergency				
One	174	1	175	33.0%
Two	105	1	106	20.0%
Three	118	1	119	22.5%
Four	51		51	9.6%
Five	79		79	14.9%
Total	527	3	530	100.0%
Protection of our local environment				
One	220	1	221	41.8%
Two	140	2	142	26.8%
Three	83		83	15.7%
Four	42		42	7.9%
Five	41		41	7.8%
Total	526	3	529	100.0%
Keep working to improve street cleanliness				
One	169	2	171	32.5%
Two	166	1	167	31.7%
Three	105		105	20.0%
Four	50		50	9.5%
Five	33		33	6.3%
Total	523	3	526	100.0%
Support increased use of active travel (walking and cycling) networks				
One	128	1	129	24.3%
Two	117	1	118	22.3%
Three	137	1	138	26.0%
Four	75		75	14.2%
Five	70		70	13.2%
Total	527	3	530	100.0%

Q5 Stronger & brighter futures data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Continue to ensure our children and young people become the best adults they can be				
One	235	1	236	45.0%
Two	101	1	102	19.5%
Three	82	1	83	15.8%
Four	39		39	7.4%
Five	64		64	12.2%
Total	521	3	524	100.0%
Ensure our children and young people have equal access to educational opportunities				
One	245	2	247	47.0%
Two	104	1	105	20.0%
Three	72		72	13.7%
Four	34		34	6.5%
Five	67		67	12.8%
Total	522	3	525	100.0%
Take every opportunity to raise the aspirations of all our children and young people				
One	229	2	231	44.2%
Two	105	1	106	20.3%
Three	89		89	17.0%
Four	36		36	6.9%
Five	61		61	11.7%
Total	520	3	523	100.0%

Q6 Inclusive Economy data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Creating community wealth and social value				
One	124	1	125	23.9%
Two	156	2	158	30.2%
Three	128		128	24.4%
Four	65		65	12.4%
Five	48		48	9.2%
Total	521	3	524	100.0%
Supporting local businesses and job creation				
One	150	1	151	28.7%
Two	157	2	159	30.2%
Three	118		118	22.4%
Four	61		61	11.6%
Five	37		37	7.0%
Total	523	3	526	100.0%
Developing quality, affordable sustainable homes				
One	118	2	120	22.9%
Two	106	1	107	20.4%
Three	142		142	27.0%
Four	84		84	16.0%
Five	72		72	13.7%
Total	522	3	525	100.0%
Delivering regeneration, transport, and growth ambitions				
One	133	1	134	25.4%
Two	141	2	143	27.1%
Three	149		149	28.3%
Four	56		56	10.6%
Five	45		45	8.5%
Total	524	3	527	100.0%

Q7 Safe & Pleasant Communities data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Working with partner agencies to reduce crime and tackle anti-social behaviour				
One	275	2	277	52.3%
Two	108	1	109	20.6%
Three	59		59	11.1%
Four	34		34	6.4%
Five	51		51	9.6%
Total	527	3	530	100.0%
Tackling rough sleeping and homelessness				
One	152	2	154	29.2%
Two	119		119	22.5%
Three	124	1	125	23.7%
Four	65		65	12.3%
Five	65		65	12.3%
Total	525	3	528	100.0%
Delivering everyday neighbourhoods services to the best possible standard				
One	199	1	200	38.0%
Two	155	2	157	29.8%
Three	92		92	17.5%
Four	34		34	6.5%
Five	44		44	8.3%
Total	524	3	527	100.0%

Q8 Active and Healthy Lives data table

Importance	Online responses	Paper responses	Total responses	Percent
Working collaboratively with our partner agencies to improve mental wellbeing				
One	179	3	182	34.6%
Two	144	1	145	27.6%
Three	97		97	18.4%
Four	44		44	8.4%
Five	62		62	11.8%
Total	526		526	100.0%
Encouragement and help with active living				
One	137	2	139	26.3%
Two	162	1	163	30.8%
Three	127		127	24.0%
Four	57	1	58	11.0%
Five	42		42	7.9%
Total	525	4	529	100.0%
Supporting people to live independently				
One	158	3	161	30.5%
Two	150	1	151	28.6%
Three	123		123	23.3%
Four	50		50	9.5%
Five	43		43	8.1%
Total	524	4	528	100.0%
Deliver Public Health services to help people live healthy lifestyles				
One	148	4	152	28.7%
Two	152		152	28.7%
Three	120		120	22.6%
Four	67		67	12.6%
Five	39		39	7.4%
Total	526	4	530	100.0%
Tackle health inequalities				
One	161	4	165	31.4%
Two	116		116	22.1%
Three	126		126	24.0%
Four	68		68	12.9%
Five	51		51	9.7%
Total	522	4	526	100.0%



HOUSING COMMITTEE

Thursday 27 January 2022

REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION & PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Housing Committee is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

The work programme is formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Housing Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members of the committee are invited to comment on and note the proposed Housing Committee work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1** To ensure Members of the Housing Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1** Various formats for the workplan were explored. The current format is open to amendment to match the requirements of the committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1** The work programme should align with the priorities of the council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- (i) The Council Plan
- (ii) The Council's transformation programme
- (iii) The Council's Forward Plan
- (iv) Service performance information
- (v) Risk management information
- (vi) Public or service user feedback
- (vii) Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Housing Committee has responsibility for taking a strategic approach to the Council's various housing functions, including issues concerning social rented and affordable housing, homelessness, allocations and standards of housing.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:-

- (a) the Authority's role and functions in relation to strategic and private sector housing policies and as the housing authority, including but not limited to
- (i) the Council's Housing Strategy;
 - (ii) homelessness and the allocation of housing;
 - (iii) private sector housing, including taking action to remedy overcrowding, disrepair, unfitness and statutory nuisances; to promote fire safety in private sector housing and the Council's functions in relation to houses in multiple occupation;
 - (iv) licensing schemes;
 - (v) tenancy relations and the provision of housing advice;
 - (vi) relationship with Registered Providers of housing;
 - (vii) housing loans and grants;
 - (viii) housing related support services; and
 - (ix) policies and actions with a view to reducing and eliminating street homelessness to ensure that appropriate action is taken;

- (b) analysis, development and overview of housing policies in terms of spatial planning to submit to the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee to inform the Local Plan and planning policies;
- (c) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- (d) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications to staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable.

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 is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Bryn Griffiths, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Housing Committee Workplan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council Plan

The Council's transformation plan

The Council's Forward Plan

The Constitution of the Council

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Housing Committee	28 October 2020
Housing Committee	26 November 2020
Housing Committee	27 January 2021
Housing Committee	10 March 2021
Housing Committee	19 October 2021
Housing Committee	18 November 2021

HOUSING COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

Contact Officer/s: Bryn Griffiths, Senior Democratic Service Officer
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 Phone: 0151 691 8117

PROPOSED AGENDA FOR HOUSING COMMITTEE

DATE: 27 JANUARY 2022

Item	Key Decision Yes/No	Lead Departmental Officer	Wirral Plan Priority
2022/23 Budget Update	No	Director of Resources	Inclusive Economy

Deadline for Reports to SLT	Deadline for reports for briefing	Agenda Published
04.01.2022	10.01.2022	19.01.2022

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Strategic Housing Market Assessment	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place
Affordable Homes Update/Affordable Homes Statement	TBA with Party Spokes	Director of Regeneration and Place
LCR Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Programme Update	TBA with Party Spokes	Director of Regeneration and Place

Financial Assistance Update Report	TBA with Party Spokes	Director of Regeneration and Place
Housing Growth Strategy – Delivering for Wirral (Key)	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place
Council Housing Building Options	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place
Housing Needs of Care Leavers	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place
Property Pool Plus allocations policy Consultation	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place
Homelessness Update – Rough Sleeper Count and Next Steps Update	Between January 2022 and March 2022	Director of Regeneration and Place

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Budget and Performance Monitoring Report	TBA	Director of Regeneration and Place
Housing Committee Work Programme Update	Every Committee	Bryn Griffiths

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
-	-	--	-	-
Task and Finish Reviews				
-	-	--		-
Spotlight Sessions and Workshops				
Budget & Housing Workshop	Committee wide workshop	28.10.2020	Alan Evans	
Budget and Performance Workshop	Committee wide workshop	26.11.2020	Alan Evans	
Budget Workshop	Committee wide workshop	23.09.2021	Alan Evans	

Affordable Housing Statement	Committee Wide workshop	Date needs to be scheduled in		Alan Evans	
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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