

# POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Monday, 27 June 2022

Present: Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors	T Anderson	P Stuart
	P Gilchrist	H Cameron
	P Cleary	L Rennie
	E Grey	J Bird
	T Jones	M Booth
	Y Nolan	K Hodson
	J Robinson	J Johnson

In attendance: Councillors C Davies

## 14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast.

## 15 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

## 16 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.

No declarations were made.

## 17 MINUTES

**Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Kathy Hodson in the attendance list, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022 be approved and adopted as a correct record.**

## 18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair informed the Committee that no public questions had been received.

## 19 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

The Chair informed the Committee that no requests to make a statement or petitions had been submitted.

## 20 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

The Chair reported that Councillor Phil Gilchrist had submitted a question to be asked of the Chair. The question was in relation to the £150 Council Tax rebate asking what steps were in place to assure residents who were still awaiting payment that they would receive it as soon as possible and what advice was available for those who were digitally excluded.

In response, the Chair outline that there had been a delay in payments due to a government requirement to verify bank details using account names prior to payment, which was not used when collecting payments, resulting in thousands of cases requiring intervention. The outstanding 38,000 cases were being written to as a reminder and a procedure had been established to enable staff to assist residents in completing the application process if necessary. It was further reported that the Director of Resources would issue a full progress briefing to all members later in the week.

## 21 **WIRRAL PLAN UPDATE**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services introduced the report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on the Wirral Plan 2021-26 which was approved by Council on 6 September 2021. The Plan was adopted part way through the year reflecting the Council's re-set from the emergency management arrangements in response to the pandemic back to resumption of normal business delivery during 2021/22.

The report provided a high-level summary of delivery progress made for the months since the plan was approved and also provided a refresh of the proposed plan priorities for 2022/23. It was reported that the Wirral Plan was a key document of the Council's policy framework, setting out the vision and priorities for Wirral as a place. The Plan had been aligned with the Council's Improvement Plan which sets out the vision and priorities for organisational change and improvement that would ensure the Council was in the best shape to lead Wirral partners in achieving the Wirral Plan vision.

The Committee discussed the different elements of the Wirral Plan Update in detail, including the ongoing monitoring of performance of the Plan and the broader incorporation of the wider environmental goals into the Plan.

Following various comments to the Director of Neighbourhood Services on the Plan, it was moved by Councillor Liz Grey, seconded by Councillor Tony Jones, that the Policy and Resources Committee –

- (1) Note the progress made against the Wirral Plan deliverables as set out in Appendix 2 and request that all future progress of deliverables be presented using the framework in the amended delivery plan agreed at Council (Min. 25, Council, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021). This framework is informed by the agreement between the chairs of Economy, Regeneration and Development (now Economy, Regeneration and Housing) Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee (Min. 27, P&R, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021).
- (2) Endorse the refreshed Wirral Plan 2022/23 priorities, as set out in Appendix 3, and recommend their approval by Council in July.
- (3) Request that officers work with the Council's political leadership and committee chairs during 2022/23 to develop a new four year plan for adoption following the elections in May 2023.

A discussion ensued on the timeliness of the development of a new four-year plan in advance of the whole Council elections in May 2023.

Further clarity was sought on Minute 25 of Council on 6 September 2021 at which point the Head of Legal Services read out the resolution.

The motion was then put and agreed (9:6). It was therefore –

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the progress made against the Wirral Plan deliverables as set out in Appendix 2 be noted and request that all future progress of deliverables be presented using the framework in the amended delivery plan agreed at Council (Min. 25, Council, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021). This framework is informed by the agreement between the chairs of Economy, Regeneration and Development (now Economy, Regeneration and Housing) Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee (Min. 27, P&R, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021).**
- (2) the refreshed Wirral Plan 2022/23 priorities be endorsed, as set out in Appendix 3, and their approval be recommended for approval by Council in July.**
- (3) that officers be requested to work with the Council's political leadership and committee chairs during 2022/23 to develop a new four year plan for adoption following the elections in May 2023.**

The Head of the Corporate Office introduced the report of the Chief Executive which presented the Council's Improvement Plan, which had been developed in response to the External Assurance Review commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The External Assurance Review was undertaken as a condition of the Council's request for exceptional financial support from the government in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The development of an Improvement Plan and its effective implementation was a condition of the government granting this support for 2021/22. The Improvement Plan also responded to the report and recommendations arising from the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2022, which was included as Appendix 2 to the report.

Officers responded to a number of queries in relation to the Improvement Plan, including the need for a detailed delivery plan for the Regeneration programme and assurances that the Improvement Plan delivery was on track.

A further discussion ensued on the delivery of the Enterprise Resource Planning system and members sought a further update on the estimated delivery of that project.

**Resolved – That the Improvement Plan be endorsed and recommended to Council for approval.**