

WIRRAL LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – EXECUTIVE BOARD**WEDNESDAY 19th MAY 2010****REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES****WIRRAL'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN: MAY 2010 UPDATE****1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.2. This report updates members on Wirral's Economic Recovery Plan. It includes feedback from partners on latest responses to the recession and the very positive impact of a number of interventions.
- 1.3. Board Members are asked to
 - (i) Note this latest report on Wirral's response to the current economic conditions and good progress of the Recovery Plan attached as Appendix 1; and
 - (ii) Continue their commitment to regularly feeding back progress from their organisation so that the attached template can be updated ahead of future executive board meetings.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. LSP Executive Board agreed an Economic Recovery Plan for Wirral at the Board meeting in February 2010. The Plan outlines a number of responsive measures to mitigate the impact of the recession on businesses and local residents, whilst at the same time maintaining focus on the medium and longer term economic goals of the Community Strategy.
- 2.2. Partners indicated that it was important to consider the implications of the anticipated public sector recession - such as reduced job opportunities and longer journey times to employment - as part of any recovery plan. It was agreed that all partners should identify any contributions that their organisations could and were making to economy recovery and that these would be included in the Recovery Plan.
- 2.3. In addition, the Board agreed that it is important to consider how we can mitigate the human cost of the recession and how we can strengthen the role of volunteering, and the significant role of the Third sector. Discussions have therefore been taking place with partners to agree how this role can be supported, particularly in relation to provision of debt advice and tackling financial inclusion.
- 2.4. Finally, partners committed to providing regular feedback so that quarterly updates can be brought back to monitor progress of the Recovery Plan.

3 LATEST PROGRESS

- 3.1. The latest update to the full Recovery Plan template is attached at Appendix 1, and contains input from partners about their specific interventions. This indicates the development of activity that is having a very positive impact on residents and businesses. Key achievements include:

Working Wirral

The Working Wirral programme continues to deliver a number of effective projects supporting Wirral businesses and residents. Latest performance data for 2009/10 indicates that:

- 855 people have gained a job
- 138 have gained a qualification

Future Jobs Fund

This initiative continues to make good progress in supporting unemployed people into new employment opportunities. In Wirral, there have been almost 200 new starts to date. Feedback from both participants and employers is very positive, with evidence that the Wirral model is offering a high quality experience - including training and effective 'wraparound' support.

Business Starts

The number of new business start-ups and number of businesses supported through the Council's Business Start Programme continues to exceed targets (by 20%) despite the economic conditions. Latest data from WirralBiz indicates that 300 new businesses have been created in 2009/10.

Reach Out

The Involve Northwest: Reach Out project is an innovative approach that engages workless households by taking the service to their home. Reach Out guidance workers knock on doors, engage residents in the familiar surroundings of their own home and promote the value of being in work. The project has knocked on over a minimum 65,000 doors in Wirral's most deprived areas and helped over 1,000 residents secure employment .

In the last year to March 2010, 636 people achieved a job, 62 gained a qualification and 34 people moved into self employment.

Wirral Change

This BRM Outreach Project provides outreach employment service for Wirral's Black & Racial Minority residents offering specialist guidance workers to tackle multiple barriers to employment. Latest data to year end March 2010 indicates that 118 people achieved a job and 42 gained a qualification. 6 people were supported into self employment.

Wirral Apprenticeship Programme

Wirral Council has committed funding for over 200 subsidised apprenticeship places with local businesses via its highly successful Apprenticeship Programme. There is a particular focus on supporting NEET and other



vulnerable young people. The Wirral Apprentice Programme has been commended as a model of good practice nationally and regionally, and is increasingly being recognised as an exemplar of effective partnership working. The Programme has secured employment for young people in a diverse range of sectors such as construction, health and social care, engineering, accountancy and science and technology.

Business Engagement

Invest Wirral continues to successfully support businesses, and has increased the number of Wirral businesses accessing support as follows:

- A mix of 98 indigenous and inward investment company investment projects supported
- Good progress continues to increase jobs – with 738 jobs created and 545 safeguarded
- 1000 businesses engaged
- 3 inward investment projects supported
- Annual investment value of more than £21.5 million
- It has also enabled support to 31 projects which have applied and received funding support through the Council's BIG and Think Big schemes totalling £1.656m.

Health

Life expectancy is improving across the borough and the number of people giving-up smoking is increasing. Wirral has seen a reduction in teenage conceptions in the borough.

Housing

Wirral Council has secured almost £1.5 million for new, affordable rented homes in three areas of the borough. The number of affordable homes delivered has improved considerably.

Wirral was a fast track authority for the introduction of the national mortgage rescue scheme and after the first year, in December 2009 was in the top 20 performing authorities for rescues completed.

Statutory homelessness fell by 74% in 2009-10.

Community Safety

Crime is falling more rapidly in Wirral than in other parts of the region and the borough has the lowest rate of recorded crime in Merseyside. The number of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour has fallen again this year.

4. CONCLUSION

Despite prevailing economic conditions, Wirral continues to mitigate the effects of the recession with good intelligence and strong partnership working resulting in informed investment decisions. A twin track approach of providing support to individuals and businesses, alongside continuing to deliver the Community Strategy aims in order to prepare for recovery has, positioned Wirral to continue generating economic growth.



5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The latest update to the Recovery Plan template is attached as Appendix 1.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Board members are asked to:

- (i) Note this latest report on Wirral's response to the current economic conditions and good progress of the Recovery Plan attached as Appendix 1; and
- (ii) Continue their commitment to regularly feeding back progress from their organisation so that the attached template can be updated ahead of future executive board meetings.

Jim Wilkie

Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services

This report was prepared by Rose Boylan who can be contacted on 691 8037.