

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PROJECT PLAN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the proposed Project Plan prepared by Technical Services in partnership with Biffa Waste Services, Regeneration, Pathfinder Projects and local housing associations to achieve the local environmental quality objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and Wirral Local Area Agreement.
- 1.2 This report seeks Cabinet endorsement for the proposed Project Plan and the proposed monitoring of progress by senior officers in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport and the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 20th September 2007, Cabinet approved a new Corporate Plan structure focusing on five key Corporate Objectives with a series of corresponding first year Improvement Priorities.
- 2.2 The second Corporate Objective is "to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment" and has the following Improvement Priorities for 2008/9:
 - Create exemplary levels of street cleanliness
 - Increase levels of recycling;
 - Reduce our carbon footprint; and
 - Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.
- 2.3 Technical Services will play an instrumental role in the achievement of these Improvement Priorities and the overall Corporate Objective, and the Departmental Business Plan approved by Cabinet on 13th March 2008 (Minute 546 refers) focuses on the achievement of these Improvement Priorities through a robust project planning approach.
- 2.4 Accordingly, it is proposed that a specific Project Plan will be developed for each Improvement Priority to set out the proposed activities to be carried out by the Council and key partners and enable close monitoring of progress by senior officers in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member throughout the year.
- 2.5 This report details the proposed Project Plan to "*create exemplary levels of street cleanliness*" for Cabinet endorsement.

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Aim TS3 in the Technical Services Departmental Plan is to *“Improve environmental quality in our neighbourhoods with particular emphasis on developing the Authority’s sustainability programme including reducing our carbon footprint”*. This Departmental Aim complements the Corporate Improvement Priority for 2008/9 to “create exemplary levels of street cleanliness” in support of the overall Corporate Objective “to create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment”.

3.2 This Corporate Priority is also reflected in the new Wirral Local Area Agreement for 2008 to 2011 which includes the following Priority Area for Improvement:

- NI195 (Percentage of streets falling below an acceptable standard of cleanliness:
 - NI195a Litter
 - NI195b Detritus
 - NI195c Graffiti
 - NI195d Fly Posting

4.0 PERFORMANCE TO DATE AND PROPOSED TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.1 The national indicator for measuring environmental quality has changed from BV199 to NI195. Although survey techniques are the same, there have been slight changes to the way land types are categorised. Also, the threshold for attaining a "pass" grade has been lowered slightly. This means that NI195 scores tend to be lower than BV199 scores. For example, in 07/08 the BV199 score for combined litter and detritus was 14%. When re-calculated as NI195 the same grades scored 11%.

4.1 2008/9 is the final year of Wirral’s Public Service Agreement (Target 8) where the Council have agreed a 3% stretch on street cleansing performance for litter and detritus. Our BV199 target for 2008/9 is 14%. This means that Wirral must have at least 86% of streets at an acceptable standard of cleanliness at any one time during 08/09. Achieving or exceeding this target will result in over £800k of reward grant being allocated to the Council.

4.2 In addition to the BV199a target, Wirral Council have negotiated targets for environmental quality for the next three years. These targets form part of the Local Area Agreement. The priority strands of NI195, where DEFRA insisted on a further stretch are NI195a (litter) and NI195b (detritus). DEFRA accepted “flat line” targets for graffiti and fly posting based on existing performance. However, it is anticipated that the levels of graffiti will reduce significantly over the next three years as a direct result of the new Graffiti Removal Policy and accompanying strategy. The NI195 targets are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: New National Indicator LAA Targets

LAA Priority area	NI 195a Litter	NI 195b Detritus	NI195c Graffiti	NI195d Fly posting
Baseline (%)	11	11	7	1
08/09 target (%)	8	10	7	1
09/10 target (%)	7.5	9.5	7	1
10/11 target (%)	7	9	7	1
08/09 survey (first of 3) data returns	7.67%	8.53%	4%	0%
Performance to date	<i>on target</i>	<i>on target</i>	<i>exceeding target</i>	<i>on target</i>

4.3 The first of three 08/09 surveys took place in July 2008 and the results revealed that Wirral Council are on track to achieving these LAA targets.

5.0 NARROWING THE GAP: SETTING A LOCAL TARGET

5.1 Whilst the survey results in general are above national average for current performance in environmental quality issues, it has been recognised that the 5% most deprived areas of the Borough have significantly worse cleansing standards than the rest of the district. This was confirmed by an independent survey by ENCAMS in March 2008.

5.2 As a result, as part of the LAA a local target for “narrowing the gap” in Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) between the 5% most deprived areas of Wirral and the rest of the Borough has been established.

Wirral’s 2007/8 baseline for the most deprived 32 Super Output Areas is 30% (litter and detritus combined score based on the Encams independent survey). Therefore Wirral propose the following local targets for these areas:

NI 195 Litter and detritus: 08/09: 28% 09/10: 24% 10/11: 20%

5.3.1 It is proposed that many of the initiatives proposed in this Action Plan focus on the deprived areas initially, as the most improvement is needed in these areas to bring them in line with the rest of the Borough. The high density nature of the housing, higher footfall and problems associated with parked cars are the main reasons for poorer environmental quality which will be addressed primarily through changes to cleansing operations as detailed in the proposed Action Plan. Identifying and securing additional resources, especially for long-term education and awareness initiatives

5.3.2 Working more efficiently with our partners is also a key emphasis of the Plan throughout the three years of the LAA. Wirral’s Investment Strategy is concerned with making Wirral a prosperous and pleasant place to work and live. It is critical that the main transport routes into the borough are maintained to a high standard and are free of litter, fly tipping and graffiti, if we are to attract outside investment into the district. Technical Services aim to work with other Statutory Undertakers such as Merseytravel, Network Rail

and the Highways Agency in order to improve the appearance of Wirral's main gateways.

5.0 PROPOSED LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY PROJECT PLAN

5.1 The proposed Project Plan has been prepared by Technical Services in partnership with a number of partner organisations. There are three key work streams:

- Cleansing Operations(OP)
- Education and Awareness (ED)
- Enforcement (ENF)

The Project Plan is appended to this report.

6.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING DELIVERY OF THE PLAN

6.1 It is proposed that the monitoring and delivery of the Project Plan will be as follows:

- Technical Services Business Planning and Performance Management arrangements based on PIMS and regular reports to Chief Officers Management Team, the Cabinet Member and Overview & Scrutiny Committee in the usual manner;
- Monitoring through the Liveability Steering Group, where all partners involved in the delivery of the Plan meet at least quarterly.
- Reporting through the Safer Stronger Communities Block of the Local Area Agreement.
- Regular informal Cabinet Member briefings.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The delivery of this Project Plan will be from within existing financial and staffing resources.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

9.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

10.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Improvements in Local Environmental Quality can have a positive community safety benefit.

11.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

12.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

12.1 All activity proposed in this report supports the principals of the LA 21 Agenda, contributing positively to Wirral's Nottingham Declaration and Sustainability plans.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

14.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

15.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

15.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

16.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

16.1 There are no specific implications under this heading.

17.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

(1) the proposed Local Environmental Quality Action Plan be noted and endorsed;
and

(2) the proposed arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the Plan including regular informal briefings for the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport and the Cabinet Member for the Environment be endorsed.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SERVICES