



WIRRAL COUNCIL

CAPITAL STRATEGY

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**CABINET
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Our vision for Wirral is of a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential. This vision is clearly set out in Wirral's Sustainable Community Strategy and reflected in the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 1.1.2 The Corporate Plan is supported by a series of longer-term aims and annual priorities which are refreshed on an annual basis and guide future actions. This helps prioritise the use of resources as the Council continues to operate in an increasingly complex and challenging environment and informs the way in which the Council works with its partners who share many of these aims.
- 1.1.3 The national priorities of the Government are aligned with local priorities as part of the Council's corporate and business planning process in order to prioritise available resources. Wirral remains committed to maximising the use of scarce resources and directing these towards priority areas whilst keeping Council Tax at an affordable level as evidenced by recent Council Tax rises.

1.2 Statement of aims

- 1.2.1 This Strategy aims to support the delivery of the Council Vision and the Wirral Investment Strategy. The latter seeks that 'Together with our partners, Wirral Council is committed to encouraging focused and dynamic development while maintaining and enhancing Wirral's unique character and high quality of life. The Investment Strategy will ensure Wirral continues to be a prosperous and sustainable place to invest in, live, work and visit.'
- 1.2.2 With insufficient resources to meet all aspirations the Capital Strategy guides and shapes spending to maximise achievement of the Council's priorities by :-
- Providing the policy framework for the operational work of asset management.
 - Demonstrating how capital resources will be prioritised to meet Council objectives.
 - Informing on the process for bidding for capital funding.
 - Providing a framework for managing and monitoring the capital programme.

1.3 Review

- 1.3.1 Whilst this Strategy will be valid at least until 2015 it will be annually reviewed to ensure it remains relevant. For this update there have been only minor changes to reflect the updated Corporate Plan. The annual Capital Programme provides the detail of what is being done to implement this Strategy.

2.0 REGIONAL ISSUES

2.1 North West and City Region

- 2.1.1. Future North West: Our Shared Priorities was published in August 2010 and provides a high level statement of strategic priorities and framework for activity in the North West over the next 20 years. It builds on a substantial programme of work over the last two years, originally undertaken to support the development of the North West Regional Strategy (RS2010) but now underpins Future North West.
- 2.1.2 It provides a strong evidence-based understanding not only of the North West's strengths and unique offer but also the most important challenges and issues we face in the years ahead. It has been developed through close collaboration between partners covering the private, public and third sectors throughout the North West – as a bottom-up rather than top-down document – and takes account of the results of two public consultation exercises as well as a sustainability assessment.
- 2.1.3 The Economic Strategy and Action Plan for the City Region identifies the investment programmes and priorities that will contribute to the continued economic renaissance of Merseyside within a sustainable development framework. It represents the investment identified and agreed with all Merseyside partners that is to be implemented to accelerate this promising growth.
- 2.1.4 Wirral, together with Liverpool City Council, led the development of the City Employment Strategy (CES) reflecting our understanding of the importance of the wider City Region in terms of sustainable economic development. The aim was to develop a demand led approach to improving employment and skills across the City Region. Since then Wirral has played a key role in the development of the city region Multi Area Agreement as well as working closely with wider partners through the Mersey Dee Alliance.

2.2 Wirral Plans

2.2.1 Wirral Investment Strategy

This sets out a strategic and coordinated approach to the future economic development of the borough. Growing the local economy is Wirral's primary challenge and is the top priority of the Investment Strategy.

Wirral Council has a clear vision which recognises that, although past policies have delivered against their objectives, the scale and pace of regeneration activity must be sharply increased to meet present and future challenges. Wirral can boast a range of unique latent and untapped assets which now underpin a new dynamic vision for Wirral's future. There is clear Council support for developments that focus on the significant regeneration opportunities offered by Wirral's waterfront and docklands. The Council will take a key and proactive role in realising these objectives.

Wirral's excellent quality of life, tourism and residential offer represent a strong existing opportunity to be built on and enhanced. Whilst recognising the strategic significance and importance of Wirral's Green Belt, it is also recognised that a redevelopment opportunity of exceptional economic and employment significance would receive consideration in the light of the Council's strategic objectives.

2.2.2 Enterprise Strategy – Embracing Change

This sets the direction for Enterprise policy in Wirral over the next decade. It identifies the key priorities that must be pursued in order to bring about the step change in economic and enterprise performance required to close the enterprise gap with better performing locations.

The Strategy aims to consolidate and spread success in the west and tackle entrenched low rates of enterprise among communities in the east, identifying those broad types of actions and approaches that will grow enterprise in Wirral.

2.2.3 Wirral Full Employment Strategy – Employment for All:

The Strategy provides a framework for planning our local labour market to ensure that Wirral has a suitably skilled workforce that meets the demands of employers within the city region, whilst helping residents to maximise their potential and improve their quality of life.

3.0 LOCAL ISSUES

3.1 Facts and Figures

3.1.1 Wirral's Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council Corporate Plan set out a clear understanding of the local issues facing the borough which is a place of enormous opportunity also of sharp contrasts.

3.1.2 The overall picture masks inequalities for local people as Wirral residents experience some of the country's most notable variations in economic and social well being. A substantial percentage of Wirral's population live within some of the country's most deprived areas, whilst there are also a large number that live in some of the country's most affluent areas.

3.1.3 Wirral's population has declined from over 355,000 during the 1970s to 308,495 in mid-2009. The population is skewed towards older age groups, with a lower proportion of younger adults and a higher proportion of older people than the averages for the rest of England and the North West. The fastest falling population categories are the 24 years and under age groups. With the availability of employment in the borough being lower than the national average a significant number are travelling outside for jobs.

3.2 The Wirral priorities

3.2.1 The approach to corporate planning integrates national and local priorities into a series of objectives and the Council's Corporate Plan contains the five corporate objectives set to achieve the Vision of a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities to achieve their full potential which are:-

- To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral.
- To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment.
- To improve health and well-being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society.
- To raise the aspirations of young people.
- To create an excellent Council.

3.3 Allocation of resources to priorities

3.3.1 The table provides some examples of how investment, from the Council and its partners and the private sector, contributes to meeting the objectives and delivering the priorities of the Council.

| Corporate Objective | Examples of Capital investment |
|---|---|
| To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral | Wirral International Business Park, Regeneration of Hoylake / West Kirby, New Brighton, Regeneration of Wirral Waters / Docklands, The Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre, NewHeartlands partnership with social landlords and private sector. |
| To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment | Development and expansion of Streetscene services; Energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives, Local safety and speed reduction schemes, Investment in infrastructure inc highways, Investment in housing through NewHeartlands. |
| To improve health and well-being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society | Sports halls for School and shared Community use; Disabled access schemes to public buildings; Investment into care inc former Mendell Lodge facility. Improvements to sports centres including the Oval Sports Centre and Wirral Tennis Centre. |
| To raise the aspirations of young people | New and refurbished schools; Woodchurch High School, Children's Centres across the borough. |
| To create an excellent Council | Review the use of assets selling surplus assets, Investment into technology and customer access via the Call Centre, One Stop Shops, libraries and web, Creation of Wirral Archive and Records Unit, Work with partners to maximise benefits eg health and care services. |

4.0 CAPITAL STRATEGY

4.1 Strategy and investment

- 4.1.1 The purpose of the Capital Strategy is to enable the Council to work together with partners and stakeholders to prioritise and effectively deliver capital investment that contributes to the achievement of Wirral's objectives.
- 4.1.2 The Strategy is key to drawing together the capital requirements emerging from the Investment Strategy and service strategies to prioritise the capital needs of services and to maximise opportunities for joined-up investment with local partners. Bids for inclusion in the capital programme are prioritised against criteria taking account of the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.
- 4.1.3 Grant funding has always been key to supporting our capital investment needs. Wirral has been proactive and has an excellent history of attracting external grants. This is particularly the case for the improvement of schools and for improvements in housing. The latter tackles low demand, abandoned homes, failing housing markets and support the creation of sustainable communities in Liscard, Seacombe, Birkenhead, Bidston and Tranmere;
- 4.1.4 Council Resources are used to lever in investment essentially for housing and regeneration. In housing this includes NewHeartlands and in regeneration the Business Park projects re-used land, secured private sector investment and created jobs. These Council resources include receipts from the sale of surplus assets identified from the implementation of the Asset Management Plan and school sites identified from the programmed review of school places.

4.2 Partnership and cross-cutting working

- 4.2.1 Strong and effective partnership working underpins the Council's commitment to providing high quality and efficient services. This was recognised in Beacon Status awards for 'Transforming Secondary Education' and 'Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services'.
- 4.2.2 The delivery of the Investment Strategy requires further concerted, joint action with a range of partners and agencies. In addition to the strategic relationships that extend beyond Wirral, the Council is working with partners within the borough across the private, public, voluntary and community sectors to realign service delivery and to identify gaps in provision.
- 4.2.3 Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership Board involves the Council and other public sector organisations and includes representatives of major thematic partnerships including Health and Social Care, Crime and Disorder Reduction, and Wirral Learning Partnership.
- 4.2.4 The Local Transport Plan (LTP2) was developed with the other Merseyside Local Authorities and Merseytravel and the Green Transport initiative discourages the use of cars for journeys to and from work and promotes alternative forms of transport.

- 4.2.5 Wirral works closely with its local health partners. Initiatives include; developing multi-service centres for respite and social care which expand the number of Council beds available for older people, developing GP and pharmacy facilities in specific areas of the borough.
- 4.2.6 Wirral is working closely with Wirral Partnership Homes, the landlord of its former Housing Stock. Initiatives include a joint Community Fund for supporting housing and regeneration projects across the borough. This Fund is being used to support the transfer of Council assets into community ownership.
- 4.2.7 Cross cutting initiatives include investment in IT to replace core IT systems and to improve customer access to services and the commitment to reducing dependency upon land and buildings through the Asset Review and working with local agencies.
- 4.2.8 The opportunities offered by the New Brighton, Wirral Docklands and Woodside developments seek to achieve the vision of the Investment Strategy. This incorporates regeneration, employment, innovation and enterprise, infrastructure and the maximising of the use of sites on Wirral and involves the Council and a range of external private sector partners working together.

4.3 Consultation process and stakeholder involvement

- 4.3.1 Improving the level of community involvement in public services is a key for the public sector. The value of public participation enhances the role of local government in community leadership and Wirral is committed to extending community involvement.
- 4.3.2 Wirral Council is preparing for a consultation process that will help to shape the future of local services. 'WIRRAL'S FUTURE. Be a part of it', will be the biggest public consultation undertaken by the Council to set budget priorities for the next financial year.
- 4.3.3 Wirral will also continue to undertake consultation with a range of stakeholders and members of the public ranging from the Wirral Citizens' Panel, Area Forum meetings to focus groups of specific service users and Community and Residents groups. The Youth Forums, Young People Parliament and Older People Parliament enable views to be sought across the breadth of the community.
- 4.3.4 Wirral continues to develop its Climate Change Strategy in consultation with local environmental groups and partners, including the living and working environmental partnership and the Wirral Coastal Partnership.

- 4.3.5 Wirral continues to consult and engage with all its business and community stakeholders in the delivery of its capital programme. The engagement and consultation with community groups has seen the establishment, with plans for further expansion, of centres which deliver a range of high quality, local community services from the other public sector organisations, the Wirral Metropolitan College and voluntary sector providers.
- 4.3.6 Member involvement is key and the three year capital programme is subject to an annual review and assessment. The programme is approved by Cabinet each December. In terms of the strategic documents the Sustainable Community Strategy, Investment Strategy, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan are all approved by Cabinet. The Capital Investment Programme Guidance Document provides more detailed practical information and is reviewed periodically.

4.4 Prioritising investment

- 4.4.1 The Capital Strategy is based on addressing the needs identified through corporate objectives and local priorities, issues of public concern and need; Asset Management Plans and national regulations and statutory obligations.
- 4.4.2 As demand for investment exceeds the resources available a process for the prioritisation and approval of capital bid submissions ensures the effective working of the strategy and results in the three year Capital Programme.
- 4.4.3 All bids require Business Case submissions that are scored and prioritised against criteria based upon the corporate objectives. Bids must include any impact upon revenue costs and, if approved, the implications are accommodated within the financial plans. The Business Cases are reviewed to produce a priority list for Cabinet with Members concluding the decision making process when approving a Capital Programme that meets the key priorities and targets of the Council.

4.5 Procurement

- 4.5.1 The Council Procurement Strategy is aligned with the National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in England and aims to support Council policy and seek continuous improvement in procurement to achieve best value.
- 4.5.2 Wirral recognises the need to be flexible and innovative in its procurement options. This can be shown by the range of alternative procurement initiatives developed or being implemented to improve delivery of investment projects.

- 4.5.3 These initiatives include the Wirral Schools Private Finance Initiative scheme; the appointment of private developer partners to support NewHeartlands; the transfer of the housing stock to provide the resources to meet the requirements of the Decent Homes standard; the involvement of stakeholders in plans and the use of Constructionline to provide a database of suitable contractors selected on technical, financial, and more health and safety criteria.
- 4.5.4 Whilst these initiatives continue Wirral is looking to further progress the work undertaken on sustainability and energy management. This includes working with contractors to develop sustainable construction initiatives.

4.6 Monitoring

- 4.6.1 The Investment Strategy Group, comprising Chief Officers, is responsible for overseeing the overall delivery of service outcomes. The Capital Strategy is kept up to date and formally agreed by Council each year.
- 4.6.2 The Capital Investment Programme - Guidance Document consolidates the guidance and procedures, including for Business Case submissions, into one document to support those involved with the capital programme.
- 4.6.3 Chief Officers have processes in place to regularly review the performance of projects. Monthly meetings review progress against the approved capital programme and the financial position / projections.
- 4.6.4 Monitoring and performance reports are submitted on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and there are also end of financial year reports to Cabinet reviewing the capital programme.
- 4.6.5 Responsibility for financial management within the Council, including the capital programme, is with the Director of Finance. All officers involved on capital projects have a responsibility to ensure that monitoring reports are comprehensive and reflect all current spend and commitments including any exceptional cases of schemes not explicitly in the agreed programmes.

4.7 Asset Management Plan

- 4.7.1 Wirral has been committed to proactively transferring assets into community ownership and disposing of underused, surplus and investment assets. This approach producing capital receipts, leveraging external funding or bridging the gap between the resources and requirements.

4.7.2 The key aims and objectives of the Asset Management Plan are:-

- To manage assets according to best environmental practices compatible with effective service delivery;
- To identify the Council's current and future building and land needs;
- To rationalise under-utilised or poorly performing assets;
- To increase the energy efficiency and sustainability of our buildings;
- To work more closely and share use of assets with other organisations and agencies to provide better front-line services to customers;
- To evaluate and explore new ways of flexible working to reduce the need for administrative accommodation.

5.0 CAPITAL PLAN

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The Government allocates funding based upon what the Council is expected to invest in the areas of education, transport and social services. It should be noted that the amount of money allocated by the Government for supported borrowing was halved in 2010/11 with future allocations subject to review. Under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance for Local Authorities additional spend on capital investment can be incurred as long as the plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. This is measured by a series of indicators integral to the Treasury Management policy of which the key is the revenue cost.

5.1.2 The Wirral Investment Strategy sees the Council and partners committed to encouraging focused and dynamic development while maintaining and enhancing Wirral's unique character and high quality of life. The Strategy will ensure Wirral continues to be a prosperous and sustainable place to invest in, live, work and visit.

5.1.3 Underpinning the Investment Strategy are the Full Employment Strategy for Wirral, a framework for improving employment rates, and An Enterprise Strategy for Wirral, a plan for increasing self-employment and business starts.

5.1.4 The Council increasingly works with the private sector to maximise resources in the continued regeneration of Wirral. The Capital Strategy identifies the links with the Corporate Plan and informs the programme of investment. With resources insufficient to meet all of the aspirations the programme is prioritised based upon criteria that take account of the priorities.

5.2 Capital Programme

5.2.1 The Capital Programme is agreed each December and any schemes considered for approval are subject to a Business Case submission and evaluated against the agreed priorities of the Council.

- 5.2.2 Under regeneration / housing the NewHeartlands initiative is a long term project, primarily focussed upon housing, to regenerate the east side of Wirral and is presently part of a wider area encompassing parts of Sefton and Liverpool and is government grant funded. This funding is subject to regular review and future allocations depend upon the progress being achieved.
- 5.2.3 The Local Transport Plan details the programme in respect of maintaining local transport routes and improving community safety. The major scheme is the M53 Bidston Viaduct scheme which is funded primarily by Central Government with the Council making a contribution towards the costs. Whilst Wirral is the waste collection authority, the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority provides the disposal facilities, with initiatives planned as part of the Merseyside Waste Management Strategy. The costs of these initiatives are met by the constituent authorities through the Waste Disposal Authority levy.
- 5.2.4 Improving facilities available for use by the people of Wirral, includes the Extra Care Housing facility at former Mendell Lodge site, due for completion in January 2011 and improvements to Cultural Service Assets (including the museum, libraries, leisure centres and parks). The Council 'Invest-To-Save' projects include improvements to residential care arrangements and the continuing energy efficiency programme reducing our energy use and CO₂ emissions in Council buildings and street lighting.
- 5.2.5 In supporting young people the major spending areas are the new Woodchurch High School and the Birkenhead High Girls Academy; the Primary Schools strategy and the development of Children's Centres. In addition significant resources are also allocated for smaller school projects. Approximately 70% of the programme is funded by government grants.
- 5.2.6 There are also ongoing IT enhancements which are linked to the accommodation and asset reviews which seek to provide facilities that meet the aspirations of the people of Wirral.

Capital Programme as at 30 September 2010

| Programme | 2011/12 £million* | 2012/13 £million* | 2013/14 £million* | 2014/15 £million* |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Adult Social Services | 0.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Corporate Services | 2.1 | 0.3 | 0 | 0 |
| Children & Young People | 25.9 | 17.5 | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| Finance | 1.5 | 1.5 | 0 | 0 |
| Law, HR & Asset Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Regeneration | 17.6 | 17.6 | 14.0 | 14.0 |
| Technical Services | 9.7 | 8.7 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Total programme | 56.9 | 45.6 | 39.0 | 39.0 |

* Estimated as future years will be informed by the Government Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 and Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12.

5.3 Resources

- 5.3.1 Under the Prudential Code the authority can borrow to fund capital spend up to the level that can be afforded. The Government provides funding to support a certain level of borrowing known as supported borrowing. However the level of supported borrowing was halved in 2010/11 and future levels are subject to review by the Government. Assumptions on the level of borrowing have been reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan.
- 5.3.2 Government Grants are specific to schemes and are allocated in accordance with the terms of the grant approval. Primarily within the areas of educational development and regeneration this includes NewHeartlands as well as employment/regeneration projects. It should be noted that the Government is undertaking a review of capital grants with a view to reducing the level of grants and moving toward more non specific grants. Further information should be available after the Comprehensive Spending Review is complete.
- 5.3.3 The unpredictable nature of the timing of capital receipts means that they are used to provide flexibility in funding the programme. The receipts are projected from the likely sale of assets resulting from the Asset Management Plan and include former school sites and the agreement with Wirral Partnership Homes for the sharing of receipts from sales of former Council houses.

Capital Resources as at 30 September 2010

| Resource | 2011/12 £million* | 2012/13 £million* | 2013/14 £million* | 2014/15 £million* |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| General Capital Resources | 9.6 | 8.7 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| Supported Borrowing | 6.2 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| Government Grants | 40.8 | 31.3 | 30.0 | 30.0 |
| Revenue, Reserves, Contributions | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Total resources | 56.9 | 45.6 | 39.0 | 39.0 |

* Estimated as future years will be informed by the Government Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 and Local Government Finance Settlement 2011/12.

5.4 Management

- 5.4.1 A summary of the governance arrangements for the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme with the key tasks, responsibilities and target dates.

| Task | Responsibility | Time / Date |
|---|---------------------|-------------|
| Identify departmental priority schemes | Chief Officers | On-going |
| Ensure that approved projects are procured and delivered | Chief Officers | On-going |
| Oversee the financial management of the capital programme | Director of Finance | On-going |

| | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------|
| Report variations to schemes within the approved programme | Chief Officers | As required |
| Authorise increases in the budgeted levels of expenditure for schemes | Cabinet / Council | As required |
| Produce monitoring reports for Director of Finance | Chief Officers | Quarterly |
| Produce monitoring reports to Cabinet | Director of Finance | Quarterly |
| Review Capital Strategy and report to Cabinet | Director of Finance | September |
| Consider the annual review of the Capital and other Strategies and Guidance Document | Cabinet | September |
| Prepare Business Case submissions for schemes to be included in the programme | Chief Officers | October |
| Consider and prioritise Business Case submissions | Capital Group | November |
| Produce the annual Capital Programme report to Cabinet / Council | Director of Finance | December |
| Approve the Capital Programme – including the new schemes | Cabinet / Council | December |
| Produce year-end reports to Cabinet | Director of Finance | June |

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

PRIORITISATION EVALUATION CRITERIA AND WEIGHTINGS

| PRIORITISATION CRITERIA | % | CORPORATE OBJECTIVE |
|---|----|--|
| 1 Will the scheme create employment opportunities or assist in attracting private sector investment? | 15 | To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral. |
| 2 Will the scheme have environmental or streetscene benefits or impact on crime or health and safety? | 15 | To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment. |
| 3 Will the scheme cater for vulnerable people or address health inequality or contribute towards healthy lifestyle? | 15 | To improve health and well-being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society. |
| 4 Will the scheme have any educational attainment or learning opportunities or training benefits? | 15 | To raise the aspirations of young people. |
| 5 Will it impact on revenue or attract significant external funding and build upon partnership working? | 15 | To create an excellent Council. |
| 6 Does the scheme contribute towards more than one Corporate Strategy or the achievement of cross-cutting aims? | 10 | Partnership working is seen as integral to the future of the Council |
| 7 Does the scheme provide value for money for the Council in terms of the use of its resources? | 10 | Value for money is desired in the delivery of all services |
| 8 Are the outcomes clear and result in improvements in performance? | 5 | Performance, and improved performance, is recognised as a priority |

NOTES

- 1 Schemes, as per the Business Cases are scored against the criteria on the basis of not meeting to fully meeting the objectives on a 0-2 scoring. (0 - not meeting the criteria; 1 - partly meets criteria; 2 - meets all criteria).
- 2 The % shown is the weighting that applies to each of the criteria.
- 3 Schemes which score in excess of 50% will be recommended for inclusion in the Capital Programme.