

FOREWORD FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

This Corporate Plan is about a journey we are all taking together – Councillors, Officers, Council Staff and the people of Wirral. Travelling with us are our partners from public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

Our destination is a Wirral that is healthy and prosperous with a sense of well being that permeates all levels of our society.

It sounds simple but conditions for the journey are not good at the moment. We are in the middle of a Global and European financial crisis. Money is in very short supply and resources for the Council will be very limited for the foreseeable future. Individuals are feeling the pinch too, with pay increases restricted, jobs in short supply and prospects for the future very uncertain.

You might think this was the time to get our heads down, retreat into ourselves and try to weather the storm quietly. Think again.

The ground breaking Education Act which provided free secondary education for all was passed in 1944 at a time of great financial hardship for the Nation. Four years later, in a period of post war austerity, the National Health Service was created, providing free health care for all. Great changes are not just about money. They are about dreams and aspirations and a fierce collective determination to make things work, whatever obstacles may be thrown in the way.

We've come a long way since that post war period, but we haven't come far enough. Over 60 years later, if you live in one of Wirral's poorest areas the statistics show that you are likely to die (ten years) earlier than your counterpart in one of Wirral's wealthiest areas. That has to change. That mortality gap should not be tolerated in a civilised society.

We have a unique opportunity to make that change. The Public Health role is moving from the Health Service to Local Authorities which will allow us to work very closely together, using all our joint facilities and infrastructure, to tackle some of the most challenging problems which mean that gap stubbornly resists any attempt to narrow it.

All the evidence shows that poverty is one of the key factors in physical and mental ill health. Poor quality housing, poor job prospects, unemployment, low levels of education, low aspirations, failing family relationships, poor parenting, poor nutrition, fuel poverty, anti social behaviour, all play their part in creating the conditions which take away any sense of well being and allow ill health to flourish.

As a Council we have traditionally reacted to problems when they became apparent. But we've all heard the saying "Prevention is better than Cure". Well, that's the journey we are setting out on now, and which we are ideally placed to undertake. Identify the causes of problems and tackle them before it's too late. Before the consequences show themselves. Before it costs a great deal more money to put things right.

But this is something we all have to agree on. Preventing things happening is usually not visible. If we are successful, and there are no problems to point at, people may well

ask what we are spending the council tax payer's money on. If we change our priorities to release more money into early detection and prevention activities, there may be other areas that have to manage on less than before, which won't be popular.

We will need to be absolutely clear what we are doing, and why, and we will need real, hard evidence to back up what we are doing. No more decisions based just on anecdotes! If we don't have the evidence, then we will need to set up pilot schemes which can be properly analysed and evaluated first, before we move into a larger arena.

This does not apply only to new initiatives. We have been criticised by the District Auditor for taking decisions to let contracts without having sufficient detailed information and costings in place about our own activities to allow us to prove that an external contract will provide better value for money. From now on we will make sure that the right information is collected and evaluated on all the Council services so we truly demonstrate we are providing value for money for the Council Tax Payer. At a time when resources are limited this is more important than ever.

This brings me to the final element of our journey. We know where we are headed. We know the route map we are using to get to our destination. But we also need to know how to travel that route safely and cost effectively.

It's like driving a car. If you ignore the highway code, crash the gears, stall the engine at stop lights, forget to signal, take short cuts which turn into long cuts, u-turn illegally when you're lost, you may still reach your destination - eventually. But you may well have had several accidents along the way. You are likely to be stressed and exhausted. Your passengers will have had a very uncomfortable ride, and the costs of your journey will have escalated because of your bad driving.

Well right now everyone involved in driving Council activities forward is being put through the equivalent of an advanced driving course. The formal name is a Corporate Governance Review. The aim is to make sure that the basic rules and procedures which govern the way the Council runs, (a kind of Local Authority Highway Code), are brought up to date, and are understood and followed by everyone. That bad habits which have become standard over a period of time are eradicated and replaced with good habits, and that the whole process eventually becomes as automatic to staff and councillors as changing gears becomes to an experienced driver.

It's not newsworthy. It's not particularly exciting. It's a lot of hard graft without any instant rewards. But it is very, very necessary. This way we travel safely. We make sure taxpayers get real value for their money. We make sure services are delivered fairly and consistently, and we avoid unnecessary disasters. And we reach our destination more quickly.

Welcome to our journey to a healthy and prosperous Wirral, where the well being of every resident matters.

Cllr Steve Foulkes

Leader of the Council.

The Destination

Our Vision for Wirral.

A Healthy and Prosperous Wirral where a sense of well being permeates every level of society and where the place you live and the amount you earn no longer effects how long you live.

- A thriving society, with plentiful employment opportunities, and high levels of skills in the local workforce.
- A learning society with excellent nursery or pre-school facilities, excellent schools and excellent colleges for young people or older adults who want to re-train or improve their qualifications.
- A caring society that protects vulnerable people
- A decently housed society where warm, well insulated and affordable housing is readily available.
- A stress free society where no one lives in fear because of criminal activities, or anti-social behaviour, or excessive noise or threatening neighbours.
- A clean society with a rubbish and graffiti free environment and responsible dog owners.
- A relaxed society with plenty of opportunities for leisure and fitness activities.
- A greener society that works to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.
- A conservation minded society that respects its heritage and works together to protect everything that is best about Wirral, including our unique countryside, open spaces and coast line.

The Journey

The route map we need to follow.

- We will focus on the new Public Health role given to Local Authorities.
- We will seek in everything we do to recognise the way in which Council activities can have a direct impact on the Health and Well Being of Wirral residents.
- We will listen to what local residents and communities tell us are the priorities to improve their neighbourhoods and we will respond by providing services that meet their needs and aspirations.
- We will continue to tackle anti-social behaviour and work with all our partners to reduce crime
- We will ensure that effective safeguarding procedures are in place to protect vulnerable adults and children.
- We will work with our partners to reduce the numbers of children and young people living in poverty and support them and their families to build the foundations for prosperous, healthy and happy lives.
- We will respond quickly and effectively to local circumstances and needs and any potential impact of welfare reform.
- We will work actively to initiate and support early detection and prevention programmes for children and adults which seek to tackle potential problems before they develop.
- We will make sure those programmes are based on well researched evidence which can be analysed and evaluated in order to ensure the very best return in outcomes for any resources invested.
- Where evidence is not readily available, we will seek to run pilot programmes where outcomes can be properly assessed and used as guidance for future programmes.
- We will seek to raise the income of Wirral people by doing everything possible to build a strong and vibrant economy with high levels of employment and opportunities for Wirral residents to improve their skills and find work. We will focus on making sure our young people can achieve their full potential in education and in the workplace.
- We will work to improve the condition of Wirral's housing stock and improve the energy efficiency to reduce levels of fuel poverty.

Travelling Safely

Changing the way we do things. (Improving Corporate Governance).

- We will make sure that this Corporate Plan informs Service Development Plans and is reflected in the budget process.
- We will review and redraft the Council's Code of Corporate Governance
- We will make sure there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities between the centre of the organisation and individual departments.
- We will review the Council's Internal Audit Service and make sure any warnings they issue are acted on immediately.
- We will set up a Council Policy Unit to act as a think tank for the organisation, to link together new and established initiatives, to advise on best practice elsewhere and to give advance warning of the impact of any new legislation or policies.
- We will review the way information and advice is given to councillors, and the way in which reports are written, in order to create a democracy which is as open and transparent as possible.
- We will radically improve Corporate Performance Management so the cost of a Service, the way the Service is delivered, and the achievements of the Service are linked together so we can see exactly what the result is of any investment of Council Tax payer money. We will use this information to hold councillors and officers to account for the success or failure of service delivery and we will undertake effective staff training to help us change the culture of the organisation to one that is open, transparent and focussed on positive change.
- We will ensure that the Council meets best practice in respect of equalities and diversity legislation, in all areas of activity including policy development, service delivery, community needs and recruitment.
- We will create a fairer system by implementing a comprehensive schedule of fees and charges for all appropriate Council services in line with the law, the Council's Constitution, accepted best practice and the Council's objectives and we will review that schedule annually.
- We will make sure that anyone elected as a Councillor, on the back benches or in the Cabinet, receives the proper help and training to allow them to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively, to question and challenge, and be questioned and challenged themselves where necessary. We will ensure that any democratic structures reflect the best possible way of carrying out Council business in the interests of the Council Tax Payers.

Our Values

We will put the interests of all the people of Wirral above other considerations.

Elected members and staff will behave with honesty and integrity at all times.

We will practice openness and transparency and remain focussed on positive change.

We will welcome suggestions on how the Council can improve and positively encourage members, staff and the public to tell us when we have got something wrong.

We will be a “learning” organisation, where good practice is captured and rolled out across the Council, and where we actively seek ideas from other local authorities and external agencies.

We will make sure our decisions are based on clear evidence.

We will welcome public involvement in the work of the Council and we will carry out effective consultation, where appropriate, with the public and key stakeholders.

We will make sure that Council services fairly and transparently take into account the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups when changes are made and that the Council is responsive to the diversity of Wirral’s communities.

We aim to be excellent in everything we do.

Health and Wellbeing

In following our route map:

- We will focus on the new Public Health role given to Local Authorities.
- We will seek in everything we do to recognise the way in which Council activities can have a direct impact on the Health and Well Being of Wirral residents.
- We will work in partnership to develop clear priorities and joined up services for improving the health and wellbeing of Wirral residents.
- We will improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people and maintain a clear focus on tackling health inequalities that exist within Wirral. This is a priority area in our child and family poverty strategy to ensure that we increase the impact of our activities in partnership with others.
- We will make sure services are in place to help keep older people fitter for longer and that the value and contribution they can make to society is properly recognised and respected.

Child Poverty

In following our route map:

- We will work with our partners to reduce the numbers of children and young people living in poverty and support them to build the foundations for prosperous, healthy and happy lives.
- We will work actively to initiate and support early detection and prevention programmes for children and adults which seek to tackle potential problems before they develop.
- We will make sure those programmes are based on solid evidence which can be analysed and evaluated in order to ensure the very best return in outcomes for any resources invested.
- Where evidence is not readily available, we will seek to run pilot programmes where outcomes can be properly assessed and used as guidance for future programmes.
- In developing approaches to early detection and prevention, we will build on existing activity such as Wirral's involvement in developing Community Budgets around the needs of families with multiple problems.
- We have placed child poverty as a central theme of this Corporate Plan; we will ensure that Council services are developed in line with the needs of children and families in poverty.

- The Council will also lead co-ordinated action to work with partners and local communities to improve the lives of children and families living in poverty and add value to existing services and activity.
- We will improve information sharing amongst partners about best practice, and 'what works' in identifying and addressing issues of poverty.
- We will take co-ordinated action with partners to engage more children and families experiencing issues of poverty

Neighbourhood Plans

In following our route map:

- We will listen to what local residents and communities across the borough, from the poorest to the wealthiest areas, tell us are the priorities to improve their neighbourhoods. We will respond by providing services that meet their needs and aspirations.
- We have recently completed a major consultation exercise with Wirral's communities to listen to what local people like about their neighbourhoods, and what they would like to see improved. We will use this consultation to help shape our neighbourhoods and the services they receive and we will continue to listen to local people's views as we do this.
- We will help each area to use the devolved funds available to improve and shape where they live.
- Local people overwhelmingly told us that they have pride in their community and that neighbourhoods in Wirral have strong senses of identity and community spirit. We will work to build on this positive asset to strengthen our neighbourhoods and engage local people to help make a real difference to where they live.

Investment Strategy

In following our route map:

- We will pay particular attention to Wirral's revitalised Investment Strategy which aims to build a strong, vibrant economy, through increasing the competitiveness of our people, places and businesses.
- We aim to have a borough with high levels of employment and investment, where businesses flourish, and all residents have the skills and opportunities to work. We will place a clear focus on increasing the number of jobs and employment opportunities for Wirral residents alongside our efforts to ensure longer-term prosperity through our Investment Strategy.

- We will seek to address the high levels of economic inactivity in disadvantaged groups and in the most deprived parts of Wirral through improving access to employment and skills, and tackling barriers to work. We will ensure that our young people are engaged in education, training and employment and are developing the skills they need for the future.
- We will make Wirral one of the most business friendly Councils in the country and a leading, vibrant global location for businesses and visitors. The delivery of our Investment Strategy is supported by a clear investment package and brand, including support for Wirral's tourism and visitor economy and a strong focus on international investment marketing.
- The Wirral Waters investment opportunity is now being promoted on an international basis. The Wirral Waters site has been designated as an Enterprise Zone, which will assist businesses through tax incentives, superfast broadband, improved infrastructure and simplified planning rules. We will also work hard to maximise the opportunities presented by the proposals to develop an International Trade Centre on the Wirral Waters site.

Your ECONOMY

- We will seek to raise the income of Wirral people by doing everything possible to build a strong and vibrant economy with high levels of employment and opportunities for Wirral residents to improve their skills and find work. We will focus on making sure our young people can achieve their full potential in education and in the workplace.
- As the global recession has impacted on Wirral's economy, the Council has maintained a focus on supporting businesses and individuals during difficult economic conditions. We will make Wirral Council one of the most business friendly and supportive Councils in the country and develop the role of social enterprises in Wirral's economy.
- If we are to deliver a better future for Wirral and eliminate poverty, we need to improve access to employment and skills and tackle barriers to work for our most disadvantaged communities. We will work with partners and local communities to identify innovative ways of achieving this.
- We will position Wirral as a leading, vibrant global location for businesses and visitors. We will continue to support international trade links and develop our relationships with the private sector, to maximise inward investment and enable Wirral businesses to access new markets, sectors and opportunities. We will support Wirral's tourism and visitor economy and a strong focus on international investment marketing.
- We will work hard to deliver all of the opportunities presented by the Wirral Waters development.
- We will support the creation and growth of small and medium sized businesses.

Your ECONOMY	
Our goals for the next three years are to...	This year, we will focus on...
Improve access to employment and skills and tackle barriers to work	<p>Increasing the number of jobs and employment opportunities for Wirral residents</p> <p>Ensuring that new investment, economic and business growth is linked to tackling worklessness</p> <p>Tackling barriers to work and low skills in parts of Wirral and within disadvantaged groups, working with partners to ensure that pathways for skills and employment provide the best route out of poverty for local people and families</p>

	<p>Ensuring that our young people have excellent skills and opportunities into employment, including through Wirral's Apprenticeship programme</p> <p>Ensuring that young people not in education, employment and training are effectively supported to access the opportunities available</p> <p>Working with our partners to provide sustainable transport opportunities to access centres of employment.</p>
Position Wirral as a leading, vibrant global location for businesses and visitors	<p>Promoting and expanding our portfolio of high quality opportunity employment sites through the facilitation of priority projects</p> <p>Supporting the start up and development of key sectors by facilitating investment into specific key projects such as the infrastructure for renewable energy opportunities.</p> <p>Continuing to improve our relationships with the private sector to increase levels of inward investment and increase jobs</p> <p>Developing and implementing the Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone to support the Wirral Waters proposals</p> <p>Market Wirral as a business and visitor location through supporting Wirral's Tourism Business Network and delivery of successful visitor attractions including the 2012 Women's Golf Open</p>
Make Wirral Council one of the most business friendly and supportive Councils in the country	<p>Maximising available resources by co-ordinating all business support services through Invest Wirral</p> <p>Supporting the development of successful businesses, particularly those in key growth sectors</p> <p>Enabling an increasing role for social enterprises in Wirral's economy</p> <p>Adopting a more targeted approach to promoting Wirral as an investment location on an international stage and supporting Wirral businesses to access new markets and opportunities</p>

YOUR FAMILY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Reducing child poverty is a priority for the Council and we are clear about what we will do to achieve this. We will have a strong foundation to achieve this on the basis of the excellent Children's Services we provide and history of strong partnership working in Wirral.
- We will continue to work with our partners to protect children and young people from harm and improve the lives of the children and young people already in our care.
- We promise to deliver Children's Services that give all children the best possible start in life. As we are clear from our commitment to work actively to initiate and support early detection and prevention programmes, we will provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families through projects and activities with a focus on identifying problems early and stopping them developing.
- We will ensure that the services provided through our Sure Start and Children's Centres deliver effective support based on the needs of our local residents and communities.
- We will pay particular attention to early intervention measures, including the need to make sure youngster are school ready and that outreach work and the multi agency approach contained in the Roots and Wings programme are used to make contact with hard to reach families.
- The attainment of children who are affected by poverty and disadvantage is an area of focus for the Council and its partners. We will therefore focus on ensuring that these children and young people have the additional support they need to improve their attainment and achieve their full potential and that 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training can access opportunities
- Local people have told us that activities for children and young people in their area are an important priority for them. We will ensure that children and young people have access to a range of activities.
- We will continue to engage with our children and young people through forums such as the Youth Parliament and the Children in Care Council to ensure that the views of children and young people are central to the design of the services we provide.
- Our success in designing services to divert vulnerable young people from crime and anti-social behaviour has received external recognition. We will continue to work in partnership to promote an integrated approach to supporting young people.

Your FAMILY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	
Our goals for the next three years are to...	This year, we will focus on...
Protect children and young people from harm and improve the lives of the children and young people already in our care	<p>Safeguarding children and young people in need of protection</p> <p>Ensuring that children in care and care leavers have appropriate support which best meets their needs</p> <p>Commencing the delivery of Munro reforms to ensure that systems are centred on the needs of children and young people</p>
Support schools and other settings to improve educational provision and attainment, maintaining a clear focus on outcomes for those children and young people affected by poverty and disadvantage	<p>Implementing and evaluating the new School Improvement Strategy; ensuring we meet our statutory duties and meet the needs of schools, including Academies, through effective traded services</p> <p>Improving educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty and disadvantage</p> <p>Improving the educational attainment of children in care</p> <p>Improving provision, choice and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities</p> <p>Reviewing the provision of behaviour support and reducing school exclusion</p>
Provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families	<p>Commissioning effective support and intervention services, for example Sure Start, improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families through parenting programmes, children and young people with disabilities and tackling harmful behaviour in children, young people and families</p> <p>Implementing the national Children's Centre payment by results research pilot to further improve the quality of targeted provision</p> <p>Ensuring every child is school ready</p> <p>Further developing effective partnership working to deliver joined up services for vulnerable families with complex needs through the delivery of the Community Budget pilot</p>
Ensure children and young people have	Providing children and young people with access to a range of appropriate developmental activities which meet their needs

opportunities to participate in activities which will help them achieve their potential	<p>and encourage take up by making activities easily accessible</p> <p>Providing opportunities for children and young people to be actively engaged in community and democratic decision making processes</p> <p>Ensuring that all young people aged 16-18 particularly those in vulnerable groups are effectively supported to access the education, employment and training opportunities available and, as part of this, implement the strategy for raising the participation age to 18 by 2015</p>
Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people, maintaining a clear focus on tackling health inequalities	<p>Effectively implementing the Child Health Strategy and so reducing inequalities in the physical and mental health of children and young people</p> <p>Encouraging and supporting all children and families to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle</p>

YOUR FAMILY: ADULTS

- We will safeguard vulnerable adults in Wirral and seek to protect them from harm through working in partnership to ensure that our arrangements and policies for protecting are robust.
- The way the Council delivers social care services is changing. Wirral is now amongst the best in the country for the numbers of eligible people using Personal Budgets, which give adults more choice about the support they receive.
- We will build on these improvements to ensure that local people receive excellent standards of support and care and are protected and feel safe.
- We will listen to people who use services, their carers and communities, to enhance the quality of life of the people of Wirral who have care and support needs. We will work with our local communities to ensure that people can access services that meet their needs locally, and have greater choice and flexibility in the packages of support and care available to them.
- In circumstances where people develop care needs, we will work effectively with our partners to provide them with appropriate support to help them recover and regain their independence as quickly as possible.
- We will make sure that the services we commission from other organisations are high quality, cost effective and meet the needs of local people.
- We will place a specific focus on ensuring that when children with disabilities move into adulthood, they receive quality information, advice and support services to make sure this transition is seamless.

Your FAMILY: ADULTS	
Our goals for the next three years are to...	This year, we will focus on...

Enhance the quality of life of the people of Wirral who have care and support needs	<p>Transforming in-house day services through engagement with local communities, residents and carers</p> <p>Providing integrated, high quality services in local settings</p> <p>Ensuring that people can manage their own support as much as they wish so that they are in control of what, how and when support is delivered to match their needs</p> <p>Provide support for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs to access training and employment opportunities</p>
Delay and reduce the need for care and support	<p>Ensuring that when people develop care needs the support they receive enables them to recover and regain their independence</p> <p>Reduce the need for formal care by increasing the use of high quality cost effective preventions services</p> <p>Ensuring that services commissioned from the voluntary, community and faith sector are cost effective and appropriately targeted</p>
Ensure that the people of Wirral who use services have a positive experience of care and support	<p>Ensuring that children with disabilities are effectively supported with the transition into adulthood</p> <p>Providing universally accessible information and support to people and their carers so that they are able to make choices about the care that they need to remain independent</p> <p>Ensuring that people who use social care and their carers are involved in the planning and evaluation of services, and are satisfied with their experience of care and support services</p>
Safeguard people in Wirral whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protect them from avoidable harm	<p>Ensuring that there are robust arrangements and procedures in place and followed in order that vulnerable people are kept safe and protected</p> <p>Ensuring that the provision of support and care in the independent sector is of the highest possible quality</p>

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

- In line with the results of the Neighbourhood Plans, we will continue to use devolved funding to allow each area to meet the specific needs of their own communities.
- We will continue to tackle anti-social behaviour and work with the police and other partners to reduce crime. Local people told us that feeling safe in their neighbourhood is an important priority.
- We will work with partners to improve the condition of Wirral's housing stock and improve the energy efficiency to reduce levels of fuel poverty.
- Reducing Wirral's carbon footprint is an important priority for us and we work in partnership with local residents, partners and the private sector to address this.
- We have made impressive year on year progress to improve the amount of waste recycled in Wirral. Forty per cent of all household waste is now recycled and we will continue to build on this success, improving our recycling rates and reducing waste being sent to landfill sites.
- Local residents in all parts of Wirral have told us that having streets that are clean and tidy is an important priority to them. We will ensure that we deliver a reliable street cleansing service in all parts of the borough and use feedback from local residents to help us maintain standards. Wherever possible we will trace and prosecute flytippers
- Local people also want us to focus on having safe and well maintained roads. We have seen reductions in accidents on some of Wirral's busiest roads and we will continue to make Wirral's roads safer and target our resources effectively and in line with what local people have told us about their areas.
- Wirral's parks and countryside are very important to local communities and we will secure their future by improving how they are managed. We will also create even more opportunities for people to get involved and benefit from using these well-loved facilities in the areas in which they live and elsewhere in the borough. We will also encourage greater use of our high, quality and value for money leisure and cultural facilities in Wirral.
- We will respond effectively to the impact of welfare reform on the availability of and access to housing, including close partnership working with landlords in the borough.
- We will support those who are experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness and we will continue to work hard to improve access to advice and information about the housing options that local people have.
- The Council recognises that vulnerable people, including some of our children and young people, have additional housing needs and we will review the services we deliver to ensure that support is effective and targeted appropriately.

Cabinet, 2nd February 2012, Draft Corporate Plan 2012-13

Your NEIGHBOURHOOD	
Our goals for the next three years are to...	This year, we will focus on...
Reduce anti-social behaviour and ensure that people feel safe in their neighbourhoods	<p>Working in partnership to ensure that preventative measures to reduce anti-social behaviour are in place and that there is a quick response when incidents occur</p> <p>Engaging with the community to ensure that Community Safety interventions are effective</p>
Reduce Wirral's carbon footprint	<p>Delivering the Council's carbon budget</p> <p>Working with local residents, partners and the private sector to improve energy efficiency</p>
Minimise waste by encouraging waste reduction and recycling	<p>Educating and raising awareness to reduce the amount of household waste being sent to landfill and improving recycling rates</p>
Have high standards of environmental quality in all of Wirral's neighbourhoods	<p>Delivering a reliable street cleansing service to keep Wirral's streets clean and tidy</p>
Have a safe and well-maintained highway network for all users	<p>Maintaining and improving Wirral's roads through a programme of highway maintenance and road safety improvements</p>
Provide and maintain high quality parks and countryside in partnership with local communities	<p>Delivering an improved in-house parks and countryside service that is value for money</p> <p>Working with local communities to maximise the use and benefits of Wirral's neighbourhood parks and open spaces</p>
Provide high quality, value for money leisure and cultural facilities for Wirral residents	<p>Promoting the leisure opportunities available within Wirral to impact positively on health and well being</p>

Prevent and alleviate homelessness	<p>Providing a range of interventions to assist people who are at risk of homelessness</p> <p>Ensuring a co-ordinated partnership approach in response to welfare reform, including providing benefits advice</p> <p>Improving access to privately rented accommodation</p>
Support for people, including those who are vulnerable, to access suitable housing options	<p>Reviewing housing services for vulnerable people in order to deliver efficiencies and improved outcomes</p> <p>Developing a plan to address the housing needs of vulnerable children and young people, incorporating the review of housing services for at risk young people and young people in care</p>
Provide high quality and affordable homes and make the best use of the existing housing stock	<p>Responding to housing market failure and restructuring housing market with partner organisations</p> <p>Exploring alternative funding and delivery mechanisms to provide high quality new and affordable homes</p> <p>Improving housing standards in the existing stock to make a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing</p> <p>Bringing empty properties back into use</p> <p>Developing partnership working with landlords to respond to the impact of welfare reform</p>

YOUR COUNCIL

- We will complete the actions under the Corporate Governance Review, (outlined above under Travelling Safely.)
- We will subject the Council to an external peer review in the summer of 2012 in order to assess how effective those actions have been.
- We will make sure that we know what outcomes are being delivered for the level of investment in resources used, both within the Council and in the commissioning of external services.
- We will make sure that we collect and evaluate the appropriate information in order to allow sound judgements to be made on whether or not we are delivering Value for Money in house, and whether or not any planned external contracts would provide better Value for Money or not.
- In taking key decisions, or planning new initiatives, we will move away from the use of anecdotal based evidence to the use of well researched factual evidence which can be clearly used to demonstrate the benefits of a planned course of action.
- We will make sure that the democratic structures in place reflect the most effective way of delivering sound services.
- We will be a skilled, committed and flexible workforce that is willing to go the extra mile for our local residents.
- We will take into account the needs of all Wirral residents and communities and meet our statutory duties in relation to equalities.

Your COUNCIL	
Our goals for the next three years are to...	This year, we will focus on...
Ensure Wirral Council's Corporate Governance arrangements are robust, transparent and effective	<p>Ensuring members and officers continue to work together to build on the foundations put in place by the Corporate Governance Review</p> <p>Ensuring that the Council's policies and practices are fit for purpose, consistently applied and transparently used by everyone</p> <p>Implementing outcomes of peer review taking place in Summer 2012</p>

Improve the efficiency and value for money of Council services	Improving the delivery of services within available resources Ensuring the information provided for all service delivery decisions includes value for money considerations
Ensure we have a well led, skilled, committed and flexible workforce working to deliver excellent services to Wirral's communities	Ensuring Council staff are engaged and supported through cultural change Ensuring Council staff have the skills, training and capacity to deliver the Council's priorities and policies Ensuring the effective integration of the public health workforce and function into the Council Embedding our approach to equalities to ensure the Council fully meets its statutory duties relating to employees
Ensure that Council services fairly and transparently takes into account the needs of vulnerable and marginalised groups when changes are made and that the Council is responsive to the diversity of Wirral's communities	Developing, consulting on and implementing the Council's Equality Scheme Ensuring that the Council publishes and uses information relating to customers who share protected characteristics to shape services.