

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CABINET

29 MARCH 2012

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>CORPORATE AND BUSINESS PLANNING</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR JEFF GREEN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>YES</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 It is imperative the Council has a robust approach to business planning to ensure that decisions relating to the vision, priorities and resource allocation are based on a robust evidence base and analysis of community needs.
- 1.2 This report sets out an approach for developing a three year Corporate Plan and the timetable for doing so to ensure that consultation is embedded into the business planning arrangements which inform the future priorities and to enable the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan to be delivered by a sustainable budget over the three year period.

#### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The findings of an independent review, reported to Cabinet on 22 September 2011, highlighted failures in the Corporate Governance arrangements. The report by Anna Klonowski Associates advised that the Council governance arrangements needed to ensure that:-
- Authority policies are implemented in practice.
  - Authority values and ethical standards are met.
  - Laws and regulations are complied with.
  - Required processes are adhered to.
  - Published information is accurate and reliable.
  - Human, financial and other resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
  - High-quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 In response to the findings project teams were established to review critical functions including aligning business planning and budget setting, performance management and the policy. The Corporate and Business Planning arrangements are key to ensuring the organisation ensures that the agreed priorities are properly identified and then delivered from within the available resources. The findings of the project teams; including relevant best practice identified from both within the Council and from other local authorities has been reflected within the proposed approach of aligning business planning with budget setting, the business planning timetable and developing performance management.

2.3 Council on 2 February 2012 instructed officers to prepare a report that set out a process and timetable that would deliver an updated Corporate Plan within six months that:

- Captures any work done to date, particularly focussing on comments provided by Overview & Scrutiny Committees and partner organisations.
- Leads to the preparation of an updated draft Corporate Plan by the middle of May.
- Builds in a six week policy public consultation period.
- Reports back to Council at the end of August.
- Informs the Budget Planning process and enables publication of a draft Budget to December Council.

2.4 Council on 1 March 2012 approved the budget 2012/13 setting out a commitment to embed engagement and consultation in all Council budget and decision making processes. Council resolved that:

“We will ensure this Council is in the future focussed upon serving and protecting local people and in particular those who are most vulnerable and in need. This Council must do this through the engagement and empowerment of individuals and communities in both the design and delivery of local services, and by working together with partners in the public, private and the community, voluntary and faith and independent sectors. We therefore instruct the Chief Executive to bring forward proposals to change the Council’s policy framework to ensure that lawful consultation and engagement are central to all budget & decision making processes in the future.”

2.5 In responding to the independent review an Improvement Board has been established in partnership with the Local Government Association. This Board provides oversight, support and challenge to the improvement and transformation plans. The Improvement Plan includes five priorities of which two relate to this report in the Corporate Plan and Budget and Financial Stability. This means developing a Corporate Plan that sets clear priorities reflecting a good understanding of citizens views through consultation, participation and localism, is set with the knowledge of, and responding to, the reducing levels of resources available and is underpinned by rigorous performance management arrangements.

### **DEVELOPING THE 2013/14 CORPORATE PLAN**

2.6 In seeking to address the issues raised by the independent review and the decisions of Council the following approach is recommended for developing a three year Corporate Plan 2013/14 – 2015/16.

a) **Aligning business planning with budget setting**

The three year Corporate Plan will set out the delivery of the vision and priorities to inform the budget setting process. The resources available to the Council have reduced significantly in recent years and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Against this there are increasing demands in respect of social care and the increasing expectations local people. This puts pressure on allocating the resources available to deliver the aims and objectives as detailed in the Corporate Plan whilst ensuring that the budget is sustainable for the three year period. It is imperative that resources are aligned to the priorities.

An annual review will be undertaken to reflect local and national changes and any emerging policy which may impact upon these priorities, and any updated financial projections which include the decisions on funding from the Government flowing from the Spending Review and the Local Government Finance Settlement.

Whilst set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy the financial projections are subject of regular updates to Cabinet. The Settlement is announced by the Government each December with the figures being confirmed in advance of the 10 March by when the Council has a legal duty to set a Budget for the following financial year.

b) **Reviewing services using a robust evidence base**

The Improvement Plan adopted by the Improvement Board identifies the importance of developing a Corporate Plan which is clear and focussed with an understanding of the views of citizens and customers underpinning the plan. The Policy Unit will lead on the development of a robust evidence base which will be critical to determining the future priorities and identifying those that may not be priorities. This will include a series of challenge sessions at the beginning of the process for developing the Corporate Plan and will lead to the development of a series of issues papers including relevant information relating to performance, finance, equalities and the outcome of previous consultation programmes. This approach will ensure that the Corporate Plan has a strong evidence base as its foundation, and consultation and engagement with local residents, communities and businesses will feed into its development.

The developing Commissioning Strategy will become increasingly influential in determining the future provision of services to meet people's needs. This will involve services provided by the local authority, local health and other public sector agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sector.

c) **Engaging and consulting with Wirral's local communities**

Wirral is a borough of vibrant, active and committed communities, who are proud of their local neighbourhoods. The Council will commit to ensuring that their views are sought, listened to and acted upon in relation to decisions and issues that are important to them or affect them. No decision will be taken which affects our local communities without robust, comprehensive and genuine consultation.

The Council is currently acting upon what local residents have told us already with detailed actions for the 11 Neighbourhood Plans in development based on residents' views.

A critical component of business planning will be a 12 week consultation programme to ensure that local people, businesses, community groups and other organisations have the opportunity to tell us what they think and what is important to them. By ensuring that the consultation processes leave no part of Wirral behind and by acting upon what we are told this approach recognises that the people who know what is best for Wirral are the people living every day in the communities the Council is here to serve.

The Council Tax Explained Booklet is produced annually and sent with the Council Tax Demand to all households on Wirral. This Booklet provides a means to set out the Council plans for the forthcoming year alongside the financial information and the information provided by other agencies.

**d) Delivering the Plan through performance management**

There remain huge challenges across the public sector as the drive for improved productivity and efficiency continues. This changes the context for managing performance within local government; diminishing budgets requires us to make effective use of resources with an increased emphasis on local accountability through heightened public interest in performance and value for money. Performance management should therefore focus on securing better outcomes.

The Improvement Plan sets out the importance of having measurable targets and robust performance management arrangements in place. It is recommended that the Corporate Plan is accompanied by a coherent set of performance measures and targets to determine the intended level of improvement required for achieving the priorities over the three year period. All measures and targets need to be subject to regular and rigorous review as they are the basis of robust performance management and monitoring arrangements.

Performance reporting needs to be understandable for staff, Members, service users and citizens, enabling them to make their own assessment of service delivery. Performance information therefore needs to be accessible, clear and candid, leading to greater transparency both within and outside the organisation on how we are performing.

It is proposed to establish a Party Business Delivery Board to support the Cabinet by adopting a detailed oversight of progress on the Corporate Plan. The focus for Members and Senior Management will be on the Corporate Plan priority areas and those business critical indicators. This will be underpinned by broader performance information including intelligence on corporate health, citizen outcomes and experience, finance and risk.

The delivery of the Corporate Plan will be supported by key strategic documents including the Wirral Investment Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and Child Poverty Strategy. Departments will develop three year departmental plans which will underpin the Corporate Plan and set out in more detail how the activities identified within the plan will be delivered together with the agreed resources required.

All employees need to see how their contribution is reflected in what Members, the Executive Team and the public see as organisational performance. This will be achieved through the hierarchy of Corporate Plan, Departmental Plans and individual plans so that performance management creates an expectation of how we will behave, with everyone accepting a role in managing performance and taking the necessary actions to ensure improvement.

## **BUSINESS PLANNING TIMETABLE**

- 2.7 The proposed timetable and arrangements for developing the Corporate Plan and associated Departmental Plans:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Who is involved?</b>
May 2012	Review Of Services Challenge sessions take place with departments and relevant portfolio holders to discuss future challenges and opportunities.	Policy Unit Finance	Chief Officers Members
June 2012	Review Of Services Issue papers developed on a robust evidence base and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the borough. To include relevant performance and financial information, equalities considerations, existing consultation and commissioning findings.	Policy Unit Finance	Members Partners (inc the statutory, private and the voluntary, community & faith sectors)
June / July 2012	Review Of Services Committees review the issues papers and make recommendations to Cabinet on options for consultation.	N/A	Members
July 2012	Review Of Services / Consultation Report on the issues papers and approval of options for consultation.	N/A	Cabinet

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Who is involved?</b>
July 2012 to September 2012	Consultation Public consultation commences with a 12 week comprehensive programme of community engagement events and activities. There will be a specific focus on engagement activities to ensure that all communities have an opportunity to provide their views during the consultation period.	Community Engagement Team	Local Communities Customers Workforce Members Partners (inc the statutory, private and the voluntary, community & faith sectors)
October 2012	Aligning Review of the key strategies supporting the Corporate Plan including Medium Term Financial, Capital, IT, Customer Access, People, Assets and Risk as well as the evolving Commissioning Strategy.	H R Policy Unit Finance	Members Departments
November 2012	Consultation Report on consultation findings.	Policy Unit	Cabinet
December 2012	Aligning and Consultation Report on draft priorities for the Corporate Plan and draft Budget proposals. Capital Programme and Insurance Fund Budget to be agreed and Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced. Further consultation of any specific proposals.	Policy Unit Finance	Cabinet Council
January 2013	Aligning Departments to draft three year Service Plans per the draft Corporate Plan priorities (to include the setting of three year targets which must be challenging but deliverable and developed by proactively using benchmarking and trend information).	Chief Officers	Departments
	Pension Fund Budget to be agreed	Finance	Pensions Committee
February 2013	Agreement Final Corporate Plan and Budget proposals for the Council and for Schools for referral to the March Council meeting.	Policy Unit Finance	Cabinet Council
March 2013	Agreement and Implementation Approval of departmental plans by the relevant Chief Officer together with the Chief Executive and appropriate Portfolio Holders. Council Tax Explained Booklet setting out the Plans distributed to all householders.	Chief Officers  Finance Press & PR	Chief Executive Portfolio Holders Finance Press & PR
On-going	Aligning and Planning Throughout the year there will be regular updates on the Projected Budget.	Finance	Cabinet

## **2.8 INTER-RELATED STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

- a) The Medium Term Financial Strategy is reviewed annually and covers a three year period. It identifies the resource requirements to deliver the Corporate Plan and inform the annual budget setting process. To support the Strategy there are regular in-year updates on the Projected Budget over the period of the Strategy presented to Cabinet. These updates include information from the Government in relation to future funding including the outcome of the Spending Review and the annual Local Government Finance Settlement.
- b) The Annual Budget of the Council has to be agreed by 10 March and includes the Capital Programme, Schools Budget and Insurance Fund. The level of Government support is detailed in the Local Government Finance Settlement with a provisional announcement made in December and the formal announcement in January. Any levying and precepting bodies must agree their budgets in February so that the Council is able to agree the Budget, and set Council Tax levels, by 10 March.
- c) The Capital Strategy is reviewed annually and informs the formulation of the Capital Programme. The Wirral Investment Strategy encompasses the wider vision for the area and reflects work with the private sector in developments such as Wirral Waters whilst the Capital Strategy outlines how the Council aims to prioritise its investment and links with partner organisations in order to deliver the aims of the Corporate Plan. The Programme is based upon the submission of Business Cases for the capital requirements emerging from service strategies and reviews and prioritises the investment with the Programme updated each year in order to inform the setting of the Annual Budget.
- d) The IT Strategy and IT Development Programme are reviewed annually in order to ensure that the available IT resources are used to support the effective delivery of services. As with the Capital Programme any submissions for consideration are based upon a Business Case so enabling the scarce resources to be directed towards those areas that will deliver the benefits desired in the Corporate Plan.
- e) The Customer Access Strategy, alongside the Library Strategy, sets how the Authority deals with contacts from service users and customers. It covers the main methods of access from face-to-face, telephone and on-line self access. Support is offered to all services looking to find efficiency in their public contacts by utilising the corporate access points of the Call Centre, Libraries and One Stop Shops and Web and the systems available with an annual development programme.

- f) The People Strategy aims to ensure that the Council has an effective and productive workforce in order to meet current and future objectives. This includes a detailed action plan to develop the workforce and deliver the changes needed to ensure the aims are delivered. The Council has agreed a set of clear values that staff and politicians will at all times demonstrate unity, integrity, understanding, excellence and responsibility in day-to-day work, to colleagues, and to customers.
- g) The Asset Management Strategy aims to rationalise and modernise the Council estate whilst promoting greater community involvement and ownership both in the process and in the management of assets. This builds upon the lessons learnt from the Community Asset Transfer programme. The review of office accommodation has seen a reduction in the number of occupied buildings with further rationalisation recently approved and so it remains a priority.
- h) The Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register are reviewed at least on an annual basis with the updated information on risks being included within the quarterly monitoring reports to Cabinet. On 13 October 2011 Cabinet agreed to the creation of a new framework and supporting processes for addressing risk and uncertainty which seek to apply the best practice model contained in the British Standard and to use other local authorities and public sector organisations to identify best practice. There are clear links to the findings of the report into governance and these will inform this work which is a medium-term project.
- i) A Commissioning Strategy brings together the key business planning, engagement and performance processes, providing a framework to ensure community needs are identified, and appropriate services are provided and reviewed within available resources. The development and implementation of an overarching Strategy will help ensure that the needs of the community are identified and prioritised; the Council has clear plans for meeting those priorities; and the Council can demonstrate the impact of its policies on meeting those priorities. This is being developed and a report on this agenda provides an update on the progress.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 3.1 The effective consideration and management of risks in relation to delivering the proposed arrangements and timetable set out above will be imperative. A project team will be established to oversee the delivery of this work and develop appropriate arrangements for managing risks at all stages of the approach. Central to these arrangements will be the development and monitoring of the risk register and future reports will include relevant risks and mitigating actions.



#### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The approach responds to the independent review of Corporate Governance arrangements, the priorities for improvement adopted by the Wirral Improvement Board and the Council decisions in relation to ensuring that lawful engagement and consultation are central to all Council budget and decision making processes. Therefore no further options have been considered.

#### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Council has agreed with the voluntary, community and faith sector to define and strengthen relationships between these sectors for the benefit of all Wirral communities. There is a commitment to consult with local communities including a 12 week consultation programme. The legal responsibilities regarding consultation and engagement are set out below.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 6.1 The Council with its statutory partner organisations has adopted an agreement with the voluntary, community and faith sector which is designed to define and strengthen relationships between these sectors for the benefit of all communities. The involvement of the voluntary, community and faith sector to inform the evidence base and issues papers will be crucial. Implications for the sector will be considered through the development and prioritisation of the Corporate Plan.

#### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 7.1 Resource implications in relation to finance, information technology and assets will be considered through the development of the evidence base and issues papers which will inform the prioritisation for the Corporate Plan. These implications will be considered further with planned actions identified through the relevant Strategies and Plans set out above.
- 7.2 Existing staffing resources will be used to develop the Corporate Plan. The Policy Unit will lead this work with a project team established to ensure a cross-directorate approach to this work.
- 7.3 For performance management and the progress of the Risk Management and Commissioning strategies there may be a need for additional resources to implement an effective corporate performance management framework and effectively implement any revised approaches to risk management and commissioning.

## **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Recent case law has made it clear that any consultation undertaken must be meaningful, informed and reasonable. Failure to ensure this could lead to legal challenge and any decision taken which takes into account the consultation could be undermined and open to challenge by way of Judicial Review.
- 8.2 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force in April 2009 and introduced a duty for local authorities to involve, inform and consult with their communities. The duty is wide-ranging and applies to the delivery of services, policy and decision making and means the Council must consult relevant individuals, groups, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders that the Authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, their actions and functions.
- 8.3 Under engagement, the Equality Duty 2010 places a legal duty on the Council to:-
- Gather equality information to provide adequate evidence for decision making in policy and service development.
  - Engage service users, residents, employees, trade unions, businesses and organisations to set equality objectives – which are most likely to make the biggest difference in tackling inequalities?
  - Review progress of equality objectives.
  - Publish all engagement undertaken

With this being undertaken in order for the Council to:-

- Identify particular needs, patterns of disadvantage and poor relations between groups. Protected groups can be well-placed to help here.
  - Understand reasons for disadvantage, low participation rates and poor relations.
  - Design initiatives to meet needs and overcome barriers for more appropriate services.
  - Identify opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
  - Determine priorities.
  - Understand the relevance of Council functions to equality.
  - Monitor and evaluate initiatives, policies and programmes
  - Analyse the equality impact of particular programmes, policies and proposals
- 8.4 The Constitution will need to be amended to give effect to the proposed changes outlined in this report with any changes proposed in relation to the Constitution requiring Council approval.
- 8.5 The Council is legally required to agree a Budget, and set Council Tax levels, for the forthcoming year by 10 March.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.
- 9.2 In developing the Plans equalities implications will be addressed as appropriate, including the undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments in line with corporate requirements.

## **10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Carbon reduction implications arising during the development of the Corporate Plan will be reported to Cabinet as appropriate.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Planning and community safety implications arising during the development of the Corporate Plan will be reported to Cabinet as appropriate.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 12.1 That the approach and timetable for developing a three year Corporate Plan for 2013/14 - 2015/16 as set out in this report be agreed and specifically the programme of engagement and consultation and the arrangements to align the Corporate Plan and financial planning.
- 12.2 That this report be referred to the Improvement Board for approval.
- 12.3 That a further report be presented on how the performance management arrangements will ensure the successful delivery of the 2013/14 – 2015/16 Corporate Plan.

## **13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 13.1 The recommendations respond to the independent review findings of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements, the priorities for improvement adopted by the Wirral Improvement Board and the Council decisions in relation to ensuring lawful engagement and consultation are central to all Council budget and decision making.
- 13.2 The report confirms the commitment to implementing robust performance management arrangements including investing the necessary resources to enable development and implementation of an effective performance management framework.

**REPORT AUTHORS:** Lucy Beed  
Corporate Policy  
Telephone: 0151 691 8006  
Email: lucybeed@wirral.gov.uk

Tom Sault  
Financial Services  
Telephone: 0151 666 3407  
Email: tomsault@wirral.gov.uk

## **SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet – Delivering The Corporate Plan	14 April 2011
Cabinet – Independent Review	22 September 2011
Cabinet – Estimates 2012/13	22 February 2012
Council – Estimates 2012/13	1 March 2012



## Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

**Section 1:** Your details

**Department:** Policy Unit

**Date:** March 2012

**Section 2:** What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

**Corporate and business planning arrangements (2013-14)**

**Section 2b:** Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

**Yes** If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Cabinet – 29 March 2012

**And please add hyperlink to your published EIA on the Council's website**

.....

**Section 3: Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in?**  
(please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 4: Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council**  
..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to [equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk) for publishing)

**Section 5:** Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
All	To be determined through individual Equality Impact Assessments which will be identified / undertaken in relation to the specific actions identified in the Corporate Plan	Issues papers will be developed to inform the prioritisation of the Corporate Plan. Equalities consideration will be fully considered through the development of these issues papers.	Chief Officers / Heads of Service as appropriate and in conjunction with the Corporate Equality Group	The business planning timescale sets out the review of issues papers will take place May to July 2012 followed by a comprehensive 12 week consultation programme.  The draft priorities for the Corporate Plan will be considered by Cabinet in December 2012.	To be determined

**Section 5a:** Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

The Corporate Equality Group will monitor the programme of Equality Impact Assessments linked to the Corporate Plan. An initial exercise will be undertaken to identify the actions in the Corporate Plan which require EIA; some will be covered by existing assessments.

The Corporate Equality Group will also consider the issues papers in relation to equalities considerations.

**Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?**

Not applicable

**Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?**

The issues papers to develop the Corporate Plan and inform the Council's prioritisation process will be based on a robust evidence base including relevant performance and financial information and previous consultation findings. Equalities considerations will be clearly identified in these papers.

**Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?**

Yes

**Section 8: How will consultation take place?**

A comprehensive 12 week consultation programme of community engagement events and activities involving local communities, customers and the Council's workforce will take place. The consultation will follow the principles of Wirral's COMPACT agreement and all legislative requirements. There will be a specific focus on engagement activities with those groups who share protected characteristics and to ensure that all parts of Wirral's communities have an opportunity to provide their views during the consultation period.