

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT OF THE TRADE CENTRE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL MEMBERS

TRADE CENTRE SCRUTINY REVIEW – FINAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides background information regarding the Final Report of the Trade Centre Scrutiny Review.

1. Background

- 1.1 Council Notice of Motion
Council, on 16th April 2012, unanimously agreed a Notice of Motion which included the following:

“Council therefore calls on the three Parties to agree membership for a 1:1:1 Member Working Party, reporting to the Economy and Regeneration OSC. This Working Party will scope a project leading to recommendations to ensure this Council and its partners are Trade Centre Ready and able to embrace all opportunities for development through its growing links with China and other countries and that potential barriers to businesses and investors are identified and recommendations made as to how these can be overcome”.

1.2 Panel Membership

As a result, at the meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, held on 7th June 2012, members agreed to undertake an in-depth scrutiny review to produce an informed response to the Notice of Motion. A Panel of Members was formed, the membership of which was:

- Councillor Mark Johnston (Chair)
- Councillor Andrew Hodson
- Councillor Jean Stapleton

The Panel has been supported by a Scrutiny Support Officer, Alan Veitch.

2. Scope of the Review

- 2.1 Subsequent to the Committee meeting in June, the Panel Members proposed that the review should consider a number of key areas. The Scope Document for the scrutiny review was agreed by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2012.

- 2.2 It was agreed that the review would concentrate on the following issues:
- What is the provision of local services available to Wirral companies as they prepare to trade with new companies and emerging markets?
 - How can Inward Investors be made to feel most welcome in Wirral?
 - What are the business support needs of companies operating in the International Trade Centre?
 - How is the International Trade Centre to be marketed and what role can the Council play?
 - How can cultural links be developed?
 - What are the issues regarding language and education barriers / opportunities?
 - What needs to be done to ensure adequate cultural awareness and training among Council officers and members?

3 Evidence Gathering and the Report

- 3.1 The Panel Members have met with a number of Council officers in addition to a series of visits to discuss relevant issues with representatives of organisations external to the Council, including some members of the voluntary and community sector.

The Panel members express their thanks to all those who have assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions.

- 3.2 The Final Report, 'Preparations for the International Trade Centre in Wirral', which includes nineteen recommendations, is attached for consideration by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Members are requested to support the contents and recommendations of the Trade Centre Scrutiny Review;
- (2) The Trade Centre Scrutiny Report should be referred to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting;
- (3) Further reports will be presented to the Economy & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update members regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations.

Report of the Trade Centre Scrutiny Panel Members:

Cllr Mark Johnston (Chair)

Cllr Andrew Hodson

Cllr Jean Stapleton