

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

8 OCTOBER 2015

SUBJECT:	DELIVERY PLAN (PHASE ONE)
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with phase one of the Delivery Plan for consideration following the unanimous approval of the five-year Council Plan at the meeting of full Council on 13th July 2015.
- 1.2 The Plan provides a clear ambition for the borough and defines the outcomes towards which we will work for the next five years: the 20 pledges. This Plan has, since approval by Council in July, now been adopted by all strategic partners from the public, private and third sectors to create the first Wirral Plan.
- 1.3 This means that for the first time partners have formally agreed to work towards a shared set of outcomes, goals and objectives, to work towards integrating services and budgets and making best use of the totality of public sector resource in Wirral, for the benefit of Wirral people. As part of that agreement and progress since July, partners have committed to playing a lead role in achieving 8 out of the 20 pledges. This Delivery Plan (Phase One) provides an outline of the approach that will be taken to ensure that the ambitions and priorities set out within plan are achieved and that they secure positive outcomes for local residents.
- 1.4 Since July, significant progress has been made against all areas of the Wirral Plan. This work has been done at the same time as continuing the business of the Council which will benefit Wirral residents in relation to jobs, the local environment and their health.
- 1.5 The Council is embedding an integrated approach to planning, policy and financial strategy; ensuring that resources are invested and allocated in accordance with the priorities committed to within the Wirral Plan. Therefore, Cabinet are also provided within this report the strategic framework for the delivery of a balanced budget for 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016/17-2020/21. This framework will align the budget with the priorities in the Wirral plan and will inform the development of a detailed Delivery Plan in February 2016.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Wirral Plan is a key policy document of the Council. The production of the Delivery Plan (Phase One) follows two successful Partnership Summit events in July and September 2015 during which partners formally signed up to the Wirral Plan and its pledges. It has also been agreed that 8 of 20 Wirral Plan pledges will now be led by a partner organisation working closely with all relevant stakeholders.
- 2.2 This development provides the opportunity for the public service economy in the borough to harness our collective resources and invest them in the delivery of the pledges committed to in this Plan; ensuring that public money available in Wirral, nearly £2 billion every year, will be invested towards those 20 Pledges.
- 2.3 The plan sets out the borough's ambition related to three overarching priority areas, underpinned by 20 specific pledges which will be achieved during the life of the Wirral Plan:
 - **PEOPLE:** Wirral is a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, every child gets a good start in life and older residents are respected and valued.
 - **BUSINESS:** Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive.
 - **ENVIRONMENT:** Wirral has an attractive and sustainable environment, where good health and an excellent quality of life is enjoyed by everyone who lives here.
- 2.4 The Delivery Plan (Phase One) outlines the approach that will be taken to develop the plans and strategies that will deliver the pledges. A fundamental principle in delivering on each and every one of the 20 Pledges is that our work is rooted in strong, accurate insight and that the views, needs and aspirations of residents underpin everything that we do.
- 2.5 The first stage of that process started in September 2015, through a programme of resident insight. This programme is designed to hear directly from local people about what is important to them, and how they want to improve Wirral. The findings of this work will be reported to Cabinet in December 2015 and will enable the Council and its partners to develop the plans to secure the outcomes set out in the Wirral Plan. This programme of insight and research will be repeated on an annual basis and become an intrinsic facet of our business planning process.
- 2.6 Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Wirral Plan will be underpinned through the development and implementation of strategies and business plans. Progress against the identified outcomes will be regularly reported and published through the established Scrutiny process of the Council.

3.0 PROGRESS SINCE JULY 2015

- 3.1 It is essential that the plans and strategies that will underpin the Wirral Plan pledges are developed in partnership and that they signify a different approach which will be taken to deliver the ambition within the borough which the Plan provides. It is clear that the changing demands of our residents, coupled with our ongoing financial challenges, in turn demand a new approach from the Council and from all public services.
- 3.2 The Delivery Plan (Phase One) outlines the work that will be completed to inform the detailed Delivery Plan in February, which will be fully integrated with a five-year budget strategy. It is also important to recognise that a significant amount of work is taking place day to day to both deliver the business of the Council and to make immediate progress in realising the Wirral Plan ambitions. Since the approval of the Wirral Plan in July:
 - People: Significant progress has been made in the creation and establishment of two new, innovative service delivery vehicles: Edsential, to provide services to schools, and Wirral Evolutions, to provide Day Services to adults with a disability. We have also seen increases in attainment in GCSE results, and saw improvements in our early years provision, demonstrated by improvements in the rate of development of children at age 5.
 - Business: The new Wirral Metropolitan College campus is now open, at the Wirral Waters development. The innovative Lightbox development in Birkenhead, and the Tower Wharf complex near Wirral Waters are all nearing completion; bringing much needed office space to the borough and enabling successful and important local employers to grow. Hundreds of jobs have been created throughout the past year through Wirral working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership to support businesses through the successful investment of Regional Growth Fund funding. More work is underway to develop the Burbo Bank extension project with many national and global businesses visiting Wirral during September.
 - Environment: Birkenhead Park was highlighted by the Guardian as one of the top ten parks in the world, a source of huge local pride and a high-profile demonstration of the achievements of our staff and the dedicated Friends group. Many achievements in the day-to-day operations of our environmental services have been seen, including increases in the number of residents subscribing to garden waste collection, and the diversion of 2,722 tonnes of garden waste to be composted rather than sent to landfill. A behaviour change campaign targeted at the Woodchurch area saw a 54% reduction in dog fouling and over 3,000 fixed penalty notices were issued to reduce instances of littering.
- 3.3 On September 28, Audit and Risk Management Committee received a report from external auditors Grant Thornton which recognised that the Council had made real progress in arrangements for delivering value for money and achieved good financial performance.

3.4 These achievements, among many others, demonstrate the twin-track approach which the Council is currently implementing: resource is being invested into creating the strategic direction for the Council and its partners for the next five years; in terms of achieving outcomes for Wirral people and also setting a sustainable budget position. However, this does not come at the cost of delivering the day-to-day business of the Council which is continuing to deliver and make a difference to the lives of local residents.

4.0 FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 In February 2015, the Council approved the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2015/16-2017/18. This detailed the financial challenge that the Council faced and the size of the anticipated remaining funding gap to 2017/18. The Wirral Plan provides the framework within which the budget and the MTFS will be developed. It will inform the development of the budgets, the prioritisation of resources and the difficult decisions that need to be made over the coming five years.
- 4.2 Moving forward, the Council is taking a different approach to its budget setting process from that taken in previous years. We are looking long-term and will be setting a sustainable, stable budget and medium term financial plan over a five year period, rather than looking to bridge financial gaps on an annual basis.
- 4.3 Over the five years 2016/2021 the Council is facing a continued, challenging financial future: with an anticipated funding gap of £126 million, which includes a £24 million funding gap in 2016/17. This is due to a combination of reductions in Government grant and the combined pressures of inflation and changes in demographics. The objective is to develop a financial strategy and associated programme of changes to close the funding gap by focusing future limited resources on the delivery of Wirral Plan outcomes and pledges. We need to focus on using our remaining net revenue budget of £201 million by 2020/21 in the best way to deliver on our pledges, in partnership with our other public sector colleagues.
- 4.4 A number of the Pledges within the Wirral Plan can and must provide significant support to the Council's financial position, especially in respect of income from new building homes, and increased business rates from new and growing businesses. There are also a number of cross-cutting themes which will be explored to develop efficiencies, such as working across constituencies, capital investments into extra care housing and business, generating income, making much better use of our assets and ensuring our technology and access channels are fit for purpose and drive efficiency.
- 4.5 The five year MTFS sits within the overall Wirral Plan and associated policy framework of the Council. The budget for 2016/17 and medium term financial plan to 2020/21 will be developed with an understanding how all the plans and strategies of the Council fit together. The Council has to juggle the needs and demands of the businesses, people and communities of Wirral whilst being

responsible for setting a balanced budget that reflects and allocates resources to its pledges.

5.0 TIMETABLE

- 5.1 A timetable is in place to ensure that there is an integrated approach to developing a detailed Delivery Plan (Phase Two) for February 2016 which is fully aligned to the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy and specific budget proposals for 2016-17.
- 5.2 The plans and strategies that will underpin the 20 pledges will be developed in the context of the available resources that the Council and its Partners will have in 2020. This will ensure that budget proposals for 2016/17 and the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy are developed based on the resources that will be required to deliver the ambitions set out in the Wirral Plan and outline the allocation of resources to deliver the 20 pledges by 2020.
- 5.3 In December 2015, a series of budget proposals for 2016/17 and a proposed MTFS to 2020/21 will be reported to Cabinet, alongside the feedback received from the Residents Survey 2015. These budget and MTFS proposals will be developed in accordance with Wirral Plan priorities and will then be consulted on with people using services and other stakeholders. The budget proposals will be developed in accordance with the 20 pledges to ensure they are focussed on the long-term picture and enable the organisation to deliver its budget and also deliver on the pledges committed to in the Wirral Plan.
- 5.4 In January 2016, Cabinet will receive a series of strategies and plans which are in development to provide a detailed approach on how the 20 Pledges will be delivered, in the context of the Wirral Partnership and the financial position of the Council.
- 5.5 In February 2016, Cabinet will receive the Delivery Plan (phase two) which fully aligns the plans and strategies to deliver the pledges by 2020. Cabinet will also receive a five year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), and the consultation feedback in relation to the budget proposals for 2016/17. These reports will support Cabinet in proposing a balanced budget for 2016/17 and 5-year MTFS to refer to Budget Council; to enable the budget to be set in the context of a long term, strategic plan.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.
- 6.2 A delivery group has been established which is chaired by a strategic director and has representation from Finance, Policy, change and communications. This group meets weekly and robust project and risk management arrangements are in place.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 As outlined, the Wirral Plan is a key policy document and drives all other business planning processes and is therefore vital for the Council's development in the coming year. Therefore no other options were considered.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 A new resident survey to further understand the needs of residents and communities is currently being carried out to influence the development of the underpinning strategies and business plan. Consultation will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process, and the delivery arrangements related to each of the 20 pledges will be rooted in insight, engagement and consultation.
- 8.2 Policy and Performance Committees are already engaged in the process for delivering the 20 Pledges.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 9.1 The Wirral Plan makes reference to working closely with all partners for the benefit of Wirral residents and communities. This includes voluntary, community and faith groups. This partnership approach will continue to be a key priority for the Council, with representation from the third sector forming a key part of the Wirral Partnership.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 10.1 The budget setting process is fully integrated with the Wirral Plan. A process is currently underway to determine the resources which are required to deliver on the 20 Pledges. The outcome of this exercise will form part of the Delivery Plan (Phase Two) in February 2016.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Wirral Plan will be addressed by directorates as appropriate.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Yes.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-april-2014/eias-chief-executives-d>

13.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 None arising as a direct result of this report.

14.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 None arising as a direct result of this report.

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Cabinet are requested to consider and endorse the contents of this report, and the associated Delivery Plan (Phase One) provided at appendix one.
- 15.2 Cabinet are requested to consider and endorse the overarching timeline provided that sets out the process of agreeing the detailed 5-year delivery plan (phase two), the budget process for 2016/17 and the 5-year medium term financial strategy.

16.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 16.1 The Council is required to produce a Plan which provides a robust approach to the business planning; ensuring that it is based on sound evidence and an understanding of community needs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Delivery Plan: Phase 1