

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Phil Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO	Leader of the Council
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Eric Robinson, Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. WIRRAL PLAN: 2020 VISION

Work continues to take place to develop the arrangements and plans to deliver the 20 ambitious pledges we have signed up to deliver over the next five years. In October 2015, Cabinet considered a first phase delivery plan to review progress of the plans, and in January 2016 we will receive a set of strategies that will set out in detail how we will achieve the pledges by 2020.

Work is also underway to develop a five year budget strategy which is aligned to the Wirral Plan, and which will set out the resources to realise our ambitions and work in partnership to deliver our plans. Cabinet in December 2015 will consider a range of budget proposals that will be consulted on before Council approves its 2016-17 budget in March 2016.

2. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

In October and November 2015, the Council invited the LGA to assemble a peer review team to conduct a Financial Review and Corporate Peer Challenge which specifically focussed on our arrangements to deliver the Wirral Plan.

The Peer Challenge Team was led by Mark Rogers, Chief Executive of Birmingham Council who was accompanied by an experienced team of Elected Members, Officers and LGA associates. We asked the team to focus specifically on our capacity to deliver the Wirral Plan, our arrangements for working in partnership and our proposals to deliver new ways of working through innovative delivery models.

The headline findings from the peer review were presented to Cabinet, Opposition Group Leaders, Senior Officers and Partners and are extremely helpful to move the organisation forward at a considerable pace. We will receive a fuller report shortly, however the interim findings identified that there is strong political and officer leadership through the Council Leader and Chief Executive, and clear long term planning in place through the Wirral Plan and development of a five year budget strategy. The team also felt that there was an impressive sign up to the Wirral Plan by partners which provides a solid platform to deliver our ambitious plans.

Key areas of focus include moving quickly to create the Council's transformation capability and to consider our arrangements to move from short term financial planning to longer term planning which aligns our available resources to deliver the Wirral Plan pledges. The team also recommended that the Council reviews its organisational arrangements to ensure there is appropriate strategic capacity in place, especially around the transformation agenda. I have asked the Chief Executive to develop an action plan to promptly address the team's findings which have been fully accepted and acknowledged.

Since I became Leader of Wirral Council in May 2012, I have been committed to sector led improvement and regularly invited external challenge and scrutiny of the Council's plans and ways of working. This is the fourth external peer review that I have commissioned over the last three years, and I intend to publish the peer review findings when available to ensure we continue to be open, honest and transparent with residents, partners and other stakeholders on the progress of the Council to deliver against our plans.

3. DEVOLUTION

Since we submitted our devolution proposals to Government on 4th September, I have continued to lead the negotiations between Central Government and City Region partners in working up our Devolution asks.

I am very pleased to report that this has culminated in the successful agreement of a deal, which was signed off on 17th November by the Leaders of the 6 constituent Councils and the Government. The deal has now been ratified by special Council meetings which took place in each of the authorities on 19th November and followed by a meeting of the Combined Authority on Friday 20th November to accept the devolution deal.

As part of the deal, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will adopt a model of a directly elected City Region Mayor over the Combined Authority's area, with the first elections to be held in May 2017. Further details about these new Governance arrangements will be announced by Government in the coming weeks.

The deal will see almost £3 billion of additional funding for the City Region over the next 30 years, together with an increase in local decision-making and funding control over the key priority areas of economic development, transport, housing & planning, and employment & skills. I believe the deal will directly benefit Wirral residents and businesses, with more support and resources designed and delivered locally. I will continue to keep you updated about these significant events as they develop in the coming weeks.

4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION SHARED SERVICES PROJECT

Alongside the development of Devolution proposals for the Liverpool City Region, partners have also been having a series of discussions to look at how we can increase collaboration and potential delivery of shared services across the six Councils of the City Region and/or with neighbouring authorities.

Wirral is leading this initiative, supported by a working group from across the City Region. Following some initial analysis and discussion, a number of service areas have been identified as having potential for integration. Work is underway to analyse these, and develop some options for how we can generate savings through more integrated working.

One of the service areas being explored is Procurement - where the total current spend on this area is estimated to be over £400m a year across the City Region. Work is underway to look at a range of proposed options for future delivery that could result in some significant savings for all of our partners.