



Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision

Scrutiny of Delivery Plan (Phase One)

November 2015

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1. INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR

Recently I Chaired a series of workshops which scrutinised the 20 pledges contained in the 5 year Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision. This provided an opportunity for the Council's scrutiny process to inform and shape the Wirral Plan Delivery Plan which will be published in the New Year. The workshops were very well attended by non-executive Members of the Council and I would like to thank all those who contributed to the discussions. This document is the product of those workshops and following discussion and approval by Co-ordinating committee, it will be submitted to the Executive as the scrutiny members' contribution to developing the Wirral Plan.

The importance of thorough scrutiny cannot be overstated and the Council's Policy and Performance committees are continually improving their skills in delivering this function. While a great deal of the work involves looking in depth at the impact of decisions made, an increasing part of our focus needs to be on looking at proposals in advance of decisions being taken and in doing so, contribute to policy development.

The Wirral Plan presents an exciting prospect for Scrutiny to focus its energy on the strategic priorities for the borough. The 20 pledges provide a clear framework to which the scrutiny work programme will be aligned going forward. This provides an opportunity for scrutiny to ensure it continues to add value to the on-going delivery for the duration of the Wirral plan. Once again, many thanks to all the Members and officers involved, for your hard work on this project.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin (Chair)

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Wirral Plan was published in June 2015. It sets out a series of 20 pledges which the Council and its partners will work to achieve by 2020, focusing on three key themes:

- People
- Business
- Environment

This is a Wirral Plan which has the support of our key partners from all public services and key private and third sector organisations. These partners have not just endorsed this Plan, they have committed to it becoming their Plan too. As such it provides a set of shared outcomes and priorities towards which every single pound of public resources which Wirral has at its disposal will be invested in.

Since its publication, a Delivery Plan (Phase One) was published on October as a means to engage our partners in the planning process and consult on the emerging delivery proposals. The scrutiny workshops were established to provide an opportunity for non-executive Members to be briefed on each of the pledges that make up the Wirral Plan, as well as providing an opportunity to feed in comments and suggestions to shape the final Delivery Plan, which will be published in February 2016.

In September, presentations were delivered to the Council's Policy and Performance Committees setting out this timetable and delivery framework. This proposed a two phase approach to scrutiny, with phase one being delivered through October and November to provide non-executive members with a chance to review and comment on the emerging Delivery Plan. Phase two scrutiny would then be for the duration of the Wirral Plan with the scrutiny work programme being prioritised by members around the key delivery arrangements across the 20 pledges.

The Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee agreed a mechanism for the phase one scrutiny to be delivered. This involved the delivery of three workshops, one for each Wirral Plan theme (People, Business, and Environment). The workshops, held in early November were open to all non-executive members and with key partners being invited to contribute and portfolio holders being invited to observe. The sessions were well attended with the attendance for each workshop being included as Appendix 1. The format of the sessions involved an allocation of time to each Wirral Plan pledge with the lead officer and partner (where appropriate) delivering an overview, followed by a question and answer session.

This report captures all the comments and feedback provided by the Elected Members attending those sessions. The report will be presented back to the Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee for discussion and referral onto Cabinet with any recommendations arising from that discussion.

3. PEOPLE THEME

3.1 OLDER PEOPLE LIVE WELL

Overview

We will support older people to live independently in their homes and help prevent social isolation. We will seek ways to show we value the experience and knowledge of older people and encourage more volunteering and mentoring opportunities within our communities.

To achieve this, we must talk more regularly to older residents in Wirral. Over the five years of this plan, we will ensure more older people tell us they have a good quality of life and feel valued and respected in their communities. We will identify a benchmark in our 2015 Survey and show continuous improvement over the life of this plan.

Elected Member Comments

- Priority should be given to combating social isolation, particularly in less affluent wards.
- The quality and affordability of bus services are important factors in countering social isolation. "The bus service is a lifeline".
- Greater local control of public transport provision (including buses) arising from the potential devolution deal could help to provide more focused services.
- There is a necessity for local services to be joined up, particularly in times of austerity. The Healthy Wirral event at the Floral Pavilion on 25 / 26 November will further demonstrate increasing integration of service provision.
- The starting age of the Ageing Well strategy is age 50 years in order to emphasise "What can I do to keep healthy".
- It would be beneficial to create greater inter-generational activity by bringing younger and older communities together. It is important to stress that older people are not a burden.
- Crime data shows younger people are in more danger than the older generation. However, there is a perception of unsafety among the elderly (based on an Age UK survey). This feeling of vulnerability can provide a barrier for a significant number of older people.

3.2 CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL

Overview

We must make sure that every child has the emotional, social and developmental skills to be ready to start school and to learn. We will achieve this through a range of early interventions, engagement and support for families within our communities.

Currently 63% of our children are reaching their development target at the age of 5. Over the life of this plan we want to see a major improvement in this number so more of our young children get the best possible start in life.

Elected Member Comments

- There is concern relating to the proportion of parents who engage with pre-school education and nursery provision.
- There was recognition that funding of services for young children is disparate across the partnership and there are concerns about the ability to align budgets effectively. The annual budget for 0 to 5 year olds adds up to approximately £23 million across a range of services including Children's Services, health visitors, midwifery, the private and community sectors. Most of the services are aligned to a particular service area, but there are ways in which services can be integrated to remove duplication. Cambridge University has developed 30 indicators relating to outcomes for pre-school children. If all settings were aware of the indicators they would know what they were contributing to the outcomes.
- There is uncertainty relating to the impact of the closure of children's centres on the development of young children. In the future, it will be important to focus on the achievement of outcomes rather than on buildings.
- Provision for two year-olds is now offered to the most disadvantaged children. However, there is uncertainty relating to how far back in the child's development the disadvantage relates to.
- Greater priority in the future will be given to promoting high quality parenting; meaning a challenge to reach vulnerable parents. Effective engagement will require different methods in different communities.
- Higher priority needs to be given to ensuring access to services for the most vulnerable children.
- Higher priority will be given to developing vocational skills that enable support staff to better understand community need.
- There is a need to engage with the voluntary sector and harness the existing networks of volunteers in the borough.

3.3 YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY FOR WORK AND ADULTHOOD

Overview

Our children deserve to be educated in 'good' schools. We want to see continued improvements in literacy and numeracy skills with more of our pupils achieving GCSE level English and Maths. Today, 78.5% of Wirral schools are rated "good" or better by OFSTED.

By 2020, we want to extend that to cover all Wirral schools. We also want to support improving academic attainment for children in care and those in low income families. It is also important to support teenage parents and vulnerable young people back into education and we will reduce the number of young people classified as NEETS – not in employment, education or training.

Elected Member Comments

- The major barrier for many young people is the prevalence of limited skill levels and a limited job offer; with an economy reliant on casual labour. There is a need to raise aspiration towards employment and better job prospects.
- There is not sufficient focus on the value of apprenticeships, particularly in schools. There is a need to offer more diverse opportunities for those wanting a vocational route into employment.
- There are concerns relating to the role of the third sector, where a significant number of organisations are offering alternative provision. In the future, there is a plan to commission places in a more regulated way.
- It is difficult for teenagers to get into the workplace. There is a need to provide young people with better interview skills and to build resilience in order to enable them to withstand "knock-backs".
- There is a major challenge regarding poverty of aspiration. However, existing good practice includes Wirral Metropolitan College displaying examples of 'this could be you' on college walls.
- There should be no split between the university and apprenticeship pathways – both are good depending on the needs of the individual.
- There is a need to work across the pledges, for example, do the expected new jobs through the growth strategy fit the skills of young people developing into the jobs market.

3.4 VULNERABLE CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Overview

We want to see Wirral's children thrive and be safe in their own families and communities. Today, nearly 700 young people are living in care on Wirral. Over the term of this plan we aim to reduce that by a third.

By focusing on prevention, more children and young people will avoid the need to enter care, and for those who are looked after, we will provide quality care and services to enable them to reach their full potential.

Elected Member Comments

- It is important to develop the model of 'telling the story once' rather than young people having to repeat their experiences on multiple occurrences to different providers.
- To enable this to happen - the importance of data sharing and co-location of the providers was highlighted. This will lead to a core group of people developing a good understand of the child's background and need.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the ability of the Council to act effectively as corporate parent.
- The future will see a greater dependency on the early intervention model.
- Best practice is to listen to children and truly engage with them.
- The importance of the whole family approach was stressed, with particular reference to the success of the Family Intervention Service and its outreach work.
- One of the measures of future success should include feedback from meetings with the Children in Care Council.

3.5 REDUCE CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY

Overview

We will continue to work with partners to look at opportunities to tackle child and family poverty in Wirral communities. Sadly, 22.4% of children in Wirral currently live in low income households. Our long term ambition is to ensure no child in Wirral lives in poverty and we will work with our partners to reduce this level over the five years of this plan.

Elected Member Comments

- Two major themes of the work of the Birkenhead Constituency Committee are anti-social behaviour and tackling hunger. Projects such as the Viking Centre's teen supper club and community supermarket were quoted as examples of good practice.
- The mechanism for effectively measuring performance is a concern. How will we measure we're getting it right?
- A number of concerns were raised relating to the ability to reduce child and family poverty at a time of austerity.
- Concern was also raised that the measures proposed do not align with the Council's ability to effect change, due to bigger forces outside of the Council's control.
- The importance of access and transport were highlighted, given the lower levels of car ownership in Birkenhead & Tranmere. The quality and affordability of public transport has a role in reducing family poverty.
- The borough should be aiming for good quality, sustainable housing – not just lots of housing.
- The definition of child poverty requires clarification.
- As so many of the other pledges impact on child and family poverty, the question was raised as to whether this should be a pledge in its own right. Although it inter-relates with other pledges, the Council does have a statutory duty to have a strategy to tackle child and family poverty.
- The importance of broader engagement with the community was stressed. Such engagement will include groups such as parent/carer and toddler groups.

3.6 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

Overview

It is our aim to support more people with disabilities to increase their independence and access to work, education and volunteering.

To do this we must listen to people with disabilities to fully understand their needs, how to best support them to be ready for work and enable more people to access employment opportunities over the next five years.

Elected Member Comments

- It is important to see the person; not the wheelchair. Why is a wheelchair used to depict this pledge in the Wirral Plan document?
- There is no mention of mental health in any of the documentation relating to this pledge. The importance of mental health was emphasised.
- The good work of the Best Bites Employment Project in conjunction with Wirral Metropolitan College was cited as examples of good practice which should be followed.
- The relationship between Highcroft Day Centre in Bebington and the Friends of the local parks was cited as an example of good practice. Another example of good practice was where people in wheelchairs were checking for suitable sites for dropped kerbs within the local communities.
- Supported Internships – a partnership with local employers – was named as a positive scheme and an effective way of educating employers.
- Again, the importance of understanding the inter-connections of the 20 pledges was emphasised.

Overview

Our focus will remain on prevention and early intervention and we will continue to facilitate an integrated response and effective court system to deal with cases quickly and effectively.

By working with our partners we want to see a significant reduction in repeat incidents of domestic violence by 2020. Nationally, Merseyside has second highest incidence of reports of domestic violence (next to West Yorkshire).

Elected Member Comments

- Concern was expressed regarding the ability of agencies to continue to identify vulnerable families in times of austerity. Particular unease was apparent relating to potential reductions in the budget of the Police Service.
- In Wirral, 50% of referrals are identified by the police; 50% by other agencies. In other Merseyside boroughs, the police account for 90% of the referrals. Potential cuts to police funding may, therefore, have a greater impact in those other boroughs.
- The statistic that 97% of reported incidents of domestic violence are male on female was cited as evidence that this problem is cultural. There is a need to concentrate more on perpetrators in order to challenge and change embedded behaviour.
- Research says that males are less likely to report incidences of domestic violence.
- It is necessary to break cycles of behaviour and the links with drug and alcohol issues.
- A major challenge in combating domestic violence is to become more successful in encouraging women to be prepared to give evidence, especially in court.
- Austerity has led to a reduction in funding for outside agencies, including the closure of the Zero Centre.
- Elder abuse is often “swept under the carpet” and is not given sufficient priority.
- There is an intention to engage more with private businesses in the future in order to raise awareness with the objective of contacting the hard-to-reach.
- It was suggested that training for members relating to domestic violence would be helpful.

4. BUSINESS THEME

4.1 GREATER JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN WIRRAL

Overview

We will provide an increase in the number and range of jobs in Wirral so all our residents can find employment opportunities. To make progress towards this goal we will see the creation and safeguarding of 5,000 jobs by 2020.

We will also seek to increase the number of employers who pay the living wage and will work with partners and others to reduce unemployment and improve access to skills. We will encourage more young people into work who are currently not in employment, education or training.

Elected Member Comments

- Members were keen to understand the progress with the Wirral Waters scheme. The Tower Wharf and Wirral Met developments were acknowledged as a catalyst for the wider scheme and other projects are now gaining some momentum.
- Concern was raised about the Wirral International Business Park being re-located to the A41 Business Park, rather than being located on the Wirral Waters site. The A41 was highlighted as a key, strategic employment site and that the scheme moving there was a better fit.
- Members were positive about proposals for Birkenhead Town Centre but wondered when this will be delivered. Proposals are being worked up with developers and will be presented when these are ready.
- The Birkenhead Improvement District (BID) was acknowledged as an opportunity but the success of this approach and the prevalence of sufficient support was still to be confirmed.
- Concern was raised about government proposals regarding business rates as Wirral is a net receiver. Officers are considering the possible impact of the proposals and the Growth Plan is fundamentally about redressing this issue.
- Members highlighted concerns about the skills gap with Wirral residents. The strategy is to train local people to have the skills for the job opportunities being created. The focus on construction skills at the new Metropolitan College site is an example of this. There are also proposals for the Chamber of Commerce to work more creatively with the schools.
- Although falling JSA rates were welcomed, there was concern about the numbers going into the retail sector under zero hour contracts. This was acknowledged due to the growth of the retail sector which does need to be responded to. However, there is still a large number being employed in manufacturing, but more analysis will need to be carried out.

4.2 WORKFORCE SKILLS MATCH BUSINESS NEEDS

Overview

To meet the needs of local businesses and attract those interested in investing in Wirral we must develop an appropriately skilled workforce that meets the needs of business for the future.

We will work with our partners in education and training to closely align the provision of training offered with the skills businesses will need to develop the borough. We will measure and close this skills gap by 2020.

Elected Member Comments

- The college is a key partner for this pledge. Every year the college curriculum is aligned with the borough's economic growth strategy. Wirral Met has also acted as the lead in the Liverpool City Region in an initiative supporting small business.
- Concern was raised about the difficulties in measuring and evidencing success in achieving this pledge. Clear targets will need to be set to measure the impact. Engagement with businesses will be key to delivering this pledge.
- Members highlighted the importance of apprenticeships and how they provide a more practical route into work for many residents. The need for apprenticeships to be meaningful and long term for proper skills development was also emphasised.
- The provision of support for younger people was acknowledged, however it was also stressed that there needs to be a meaningful offer for older members of the population.
- The need to develop workforce skills for to seize opportunities with businesses relocating into the borough was also highlighted and how this will provide an incentive for additional business relocations.

4.3 INCREASED INWARD INVESTMENT

Overview

To continue to grow our economy we have to identify local, national and international opportunities to bring more investment into Wirral.

We will increase the borough's gross value added at a faster rate than the regional average and commit to securing £250 million of private sector investment into Wirral by 2020.

Elected Member Comments

- Members were keen to understand the level of engagement with the 7,500 businesses located in Wirral and how the Council and its partners are reaching out to those businesses not currently engaged. The role for the Chamber in growing its membership was acknowledged.
- The importance of small industrial estates and business parks scattered across the borough and the benefits these provide was highlighted. An idea was put forward for refreshing these sites i.e. the business units and the infrastructure supporting them. This would support growth across the borough, including providing local employment. The investment in Pacific Road to provide 25 business units was recognised as an example of this.
- The need for an approach to inward investment that operates at the local, national and international level was recognised.
- The importance of measuring all private sector investment secured was noted. For example retail investments might be attributed to the parent company located in another part of the country. However, the jobs are created and the benefit is felt here.
- Members highlighted the need to cultivate a specific business offer in the borough. The emphasis on the river, deep water access and maritime economy, off shore wind, automotive and civil nuclear industries were acknowledged as some of our key growth sectors.

4.4 THRIVING SMALL BUSINESSES

Overview

Our economy is also supported by entrepreneurs and small businesses. We will work with our partners and other community groups to deliver net additional 250 new businesses in Wirral over the coming 5 years.

We will make it easier for our small businesses to grow and will work to improve local high streets and our town centre economy.

Elected Member Comments

- Members recognised the importance of developing small businesses across the borough and were interested to understand how we engage and monitor progress with those businesses not registered with Companies House.
- It was recognised that some businesses will want to remain under the VAT threshold.
- For new business start-ups in their first two years, there is a high risk that they will not succeed. However, beyond this point they are likely to survive and therefore a key period to develop them is in years 3 and 4.
- Members welcomed the availability of new grant funding available and that the Chamber had received 60 applications from new businesses.
- The impact of the forthcoming referendum on continued membership of the European Union was seen as a key issue. Members were concerned about what the impact would be for local business if Britain left the EU, particularly in terms of activities that were being funded from European Regional Development Funds (ERDF). The Chamber is considering the impact and is meeting with over 50 businesses in the coming weeks as part of its consultation on developing an international strategy.

4.5 VIBRANT TOURISM ECONOMY

Overview

We are proud of our home and will work to promote and grow the borough's tourism offer; making Wirral a place even more people enjoy visiting.

We will review and make best use of our heritage, leisure and cultural assets to drive tourism, the associated creation of jobs and increase revenue for Wirral's visitor economy to £450 million by 2020.

Elected Member Comments

- The success of the growing tourism economy was acknowledged including the success of the two Open Championships.
- Members were interested to understand what we could do to attract any private investment for a major signature attraction in Wirral. A new attraction being developed at the Seacombe Ferry Terminal was welcomed.
- Concern was raised that all elements of Wirral's visitor offer were being marketed equally, such as the heritage attractions and the offer for bird-watchers.
- There was recognition that the Open had been very well marketed, with everyone knowing that it was happening. However, it was felt that other signature events are not as effectively marketed.
- Some concerns were raised about the loss of certain events such as the Wirral show and facilities such as the campsite at the Wirral Country Park (Thurstaston).
- The quality of Wirral's offer i.e. a five star hotel and Michelin Star restaurant were seen as very positive assets for the borough. But it was suggested that this needed to be supported by a more basic and affordable offer to encourage more overnight stays.
- The potential for the borough to stage more air shows was highlighted due to new legislation requiring these to be over coastal areas.
- There was recognition that we are not going to get more public funding for Tourism. The borough needs to look creatively at sponsorship, more commercial opportunities in partnership with the private sector and any grant funding that is available.
- The need for aggressive marketing was highlighted and the need for state of the art digital marketing in terms of name recognition on search engines such as google.
- Members also highlighted the opportunity for the borough to secure more TV and film opportunities.
- The potential of Birkenhead Park should also be harnessed particularly if it gains World Heritage status.

4.6 TRANSPORT AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Overview

Ensure that Wirral has safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community and services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

In a digital economy we will also complete the deployment of a high speed broadband network for more residents and businesses in Wirral with 98% having access by 2017.

Elected Member Comments

- The importance of the A41 as a key strategic route for business and commuters was highlighted. Members were keen to know that traffic levels were being reviewed on this route.
- Members acknowledged that broadband coverage was being successfully widened. However, there was concern whether this was to a capacity that harnessed the highest broadband speed available. Only high speed broadband would ensure that investment is secured as this would provide business with a competitive advantage.
- The success of the Birkenhead Park and Bidston Station park and ride schemes was acknowledged. The potential for additional schemes at other stations was highlighted to reduce parking in residential areas.
- Members highlighted the importance of investing in the non-car offer, such as bus routes/services and cycle routes.
- The quality of Merseyrail was acknowledged by Members. It was suggested that the Liverpool City Region devolution deal would need to ensure the best deal from Network Rail.
- Members welcomed the proposed investment in new dock bridges. It was requested that disruption be kept to a minimum during this work.
- Members were keen to understand how detailed insight on the quality and the safety of the network could be secured. The proposal to sign up to a nationally benchmarked customer satisfaction survey process for the network was acknowledged.
- The importance of road safety was highlighted. It was recognised that the cause of people being killed or seriously injured on the network were often outside the Council's control but there is an opportunity to work more with communities to try to mitigate this.

4.7 ASSETS AND BUILDINGS ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE FOR WIRRAL'S BUSINESSES

Overview

Wirral businesses are looking for new and refurbished commercial space to grow and expand into. We must ensure the best use of our real estate assets by linking them to business and community aspirations.

We need to make Wirral a business-friendly borough and one way to achieve this is to make our planning processes simpler to encourage growth over the next five years.

Elected Member Comments

- Members acknowledge the number of built assets the Council owns and the need for the estate to be managed to generate income but to support both business and community interests.
- The need to review the best way forward with Council owned assets will mean letting some go, keeping others to secure continued revenue and working with partners to realise the best use for others.
- Members were concerned that the Council maintains good levels of occupancy. This is currently strong at around 85%. However, a bigger issue is whether the assets are aligned to the right offer or usage and this is where much work needs to be done.
- Members were concerned that the old ways of silo management across Council departments would be at odds with this more dynamic and corporate approach. Assurance was provided that the silo mentality in terms of assets was a thing of the past.
- Members recognised that as the Wirral plan is a partnership plan, the asset strategy needed to be broadened out to include our key public service partners and that this was a new direction for us.
- It was also acknowledged that particularly in terms of brownfield sites, we need to think about our wider strategic objectives, such as housing and extra care. It should be recognised that at times we will need to consider the best fit rather than the highest value.

5. ENVIRONMENT THEME

5.1 LEISURE AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Overview

We will encourage more people to enjoy the wide range of leisure, culture and sporting opportunities on offer across Wirral. We will listen to residents' ideas and requests, and by 2020, will have increased access to events and activities to all our residents, regardless of age or income.

We will review the borough's leisure and cultural offer to make it fit for the future, and optimise the use of public spaces, parks and gardens across Wirral as community assets.

Elected Member Comments

- The value of arts and culture in Wirral can be a tool for people to have a voice and the participatory element of the culture strategy should be enhanced as we move forward.
- Wirral can learn from Liverpool in how culture was used to deal with issues such as attainment and aspiration in young people. However, Wirral should have its own distinctive culture and not just be led by the Liverpool experience.
- It is vital that the Arts Council is engaged and there is potential to carry out some good work with them.
- Following the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise (PACSPE) review, the Council made the decision in 2011 to keep the service in-house. Future service models will be reviewed but the potential solutions may well be different from those considered previously.
- Members learned that the consultation work on tennis courts and playing fields carried out in 2014 will be used as part of the current insight work to help the development of a playing field strategy.
- More volunteers should be encouraged to help retain and enhance our facilities at Wirral's parks and gardens.
- The Council's view of leisure and culture should be expanded to bring in the arts and raising important issues - such as domestic abuse - at a younger age. The Council could look at disadvantaged schools for children to participate and learn as well as staging events to raise awareness. This could also link in with other pledges.
- There is a real issue with the Council in diminishing resources so it is critical that we spend on areas that make the most impact.
- Members agreed that this pledge should not be looked at in isolation as it connects back to all pledges in the Wirral Plan. There are links into employment and skills as well as giving people confidence. It is a big driver for change and the focus shouldn't just be on buildings as it is about people.

5.2 WIRRAL RESIDENTS LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES

Overview

We remain committed to addressing health inequalities in Wirral through encouraging residents to lead healthier lifestyles, and promoting physical activity and healthy eating.

We will also continue to reduce the prevalence of smoking amongst our residents and reduce levels of alcohol related ill-health and anti-social behaviour through reducing availability of 'super strength' alcohol. We want to see 30% of Wirral's off-sales retailers sign up to the council-supported "reducing the strength" campaign.

Elected Member Comments

- It is important that there are clear links with leisure and education to act as preventative measures.
- The health budget is significant in size. It is vital this is focussed on areas of greatest need.
- The 'Reducing the Strength' campaign is very important and there is a clear role for Councillors to be involved with it to make real changes across Wirral.
- The Takeaway for a Change scheme was a success in Rock Ferry. This pilot is now being extended across the Wirral with a focus on the East of the Borough where there are major challenges. Eat Well Wirral, the Healthier Takeaway Award Scheme has now also been launched, and is gaining momentum across the Borough.
- Tobacco is still a significant risk factor that drives health and inequalities in Wirral. With legislation on smoking, there is a perception that work around tobacco is complete so it is important to continue working on driving down smoking prevalence and stopping people from smoking.
- The Council should look at how it can further promote healthier eating and demonstrate that it is affordable. Diabetes, in particular, should be a key focus for more promotional work due to the link to other related health issues.
- Health and social care is not included in the devolution proposals at this time but 95% of the NHS budget is with the CCG so there will be a need for CCGs across the region to work together.
- The Council's planning and economic regeneration strategy is not always aligned with the big health issues such as alcohol and obesity. There needs to be more consideration of how these can be better joined up as part of future plans and strategies.

5.3 COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE JOINED UP AND ACCESSIBLE

Overview

We are already integrating public sector and community services to make sure they are fully joined up.

We will integrate more services with our partners, and work with voluntary and community groups to transfer local assets for them to manage directly, providing

Elected Member Comments

- If the Council is looking at integrating services and bringing them together (such as youth clubs) it is important not to withdraw services from wider geographic areas.
- There is no clarity on how many buildings are viable for asset transfer but Members acknowledged that the Council should be targeting as many as possible. Members were informed that the Council would concentrate on those areas where the community partner is less confident in doing so due to lack of skills, time or confidence.
- It is important we do not impinge on vital public services and that some buildings could be better utilised with Council partners coming in and contributing to other pledges, such as sports, art and youth culture.
- Members acknowledged that the Partnership has a challenge due to diminishing resources and the need to do more with less.
- The principle of integration and pooled budgets was supported. However, it was suggested that where the Council or a partner has a strong track record in good delivery for a particular service, they should be lead provider.
- The measures selected to show progress with this pledge need to evidence the impact on residents.

5.4 GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS

Overview

A safe and secure home is vital to all Wirral residents. We are working to improve the quality and supply of Wirral's housing stock, providing more affordable homes and specialist housing solutions, including extra care homes and supported living accommodation.

We will build and improve 7,000 houses over the lifetime of this five year plan. Our plans include building 3,500 new homes, improving 2,250 private sector properties and bringing 1,250 empty homes back into use by 2020. We will also continue to tackle the challenges and causes of homelessness in Wirral.

Elected Member Comments

- With changes made to the Housing and Planning Bill, there is a concern that developers may not build sufficient affordable housing in development areas as this may impact on their profitability. Smaller developments will also not be required to have any social housing.
- Wirral's Selective Licensing Scheme is crucial to help provide quality rented accommodation and to ensure continual improvements are made in the private rented sector. Most landlords are positive about the scheme but a concern was raised in relation to the high number of landlords being targeted if the Council is expanding further from the hotspots as well as the impact on rental charges if costs are passed onto tenants.
- There is concern regarding the reducing size of properties and this is noticeable on the Council's Planning Committee where there is an increase in applications received for houses with multiple occupation and bedsits. Members were concerned regarding the resources needed to monitor and regulate these properties.
- A greater emphasis should be placed on future proofing new homes by ensuring that the designs allow alterations such as doors, bathrooms and other facilities to be modified at a lesser cost once occupants grow elderly or infirm.

5.5 Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe

Overview

Unfortunately, the actions of a small minority can have a negative impact on the majority of residents. We are increasing our efforts to quickly and effectively deal with anti-social behaviour, including street drinking and neighbourhood noise issues.

Over the next five years we will place a greater emphasis on activities which will positively engage young people and communities to prevent anti-social behaviour. We will also look at improving potential licensing and planning enforcement powers.

Elected Member Comments

- There is a reliance on Police Community Support Officers and there is concern about the impact of reducing police resources on communities. The reducing visibility of Police Community Support Officers could feed into the distortion of the perception of crime. There is a need to intelligently use the Council's limited resources.
- A concern was expressed in relation to the possibility of Group 4 being asked to do more in Neighbourhood Watch areas and the extent of the powers they may have. It was acknowledged that this is a matter for the police to address but as the Council is looking at different delivery methods, there could be a role for other organisations to participate.
- With the falling crime rate in Wirral, it was queried if this is due to crime being under-reported. It was acknowledged that under-reporting could be possible with certain crimes such as anti-social behaviour due to public frustration. The perception work being conducted should draw this out.
- There is no apparent guidance in terms of what people need to do in terms of safeguarding and this is an issue if communities, volunteers and charities are being asked to do a lot more.
- Concern was raised that if the Council was to lose key community assets such as the youth club in Leasowe, this may have an impact on trying to reduce anti-social behaviour. Members considered that these community assets could be used to draw in services such as the police and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- It was suggested that feeling safe in the community also includes travelling around the borough and Wirral has poor statistics in relation to pedestrian casualties. This affects the more deprived areas in the borough disproportionately where there is low car ownership. Disappointment was expressed that the Wirral Plan has not addressed this although it was acknowledged that this could be more of a policing issue.
- Taking an average crime rate across Wirral might not be the best measure. Pockets of crime should be identified and different types of crimes need to be reported separately across localities to reflect the level of impact they have on residents.

5.6 Attractive local environment for Wirral residents

Overview

We want to encourage residents' pride in their local communities, and increase personal responsibility to keep Wirral 'clean and green'.

We will listen to local residents and act on their suggestions to ensure more residents see their quality of life improve over the five years of this plan by supporting communities to deal with local environment issues such as litter, fly tipping and dog fouling.

Elected Member Comments

- If the Council is serious about tackling dog fouling and littering, the fines for this should be increased to the maximum level possible. Currently the issuing of fixed penalty notices is considered to be a cost-neutral operation, which is less about income generation and more about behavioural change with the public. A sensible, moderated approach has been taken.
- More should be done to educate people about recycling. This would highlight the cost to Wirral Council of residents not recycling properly as well as the impact this has on the environment.
- The Council should consider what it could do for residents to encourage food waste recycling. It was commented that some other local authorities provide small bins (kitchen caddies) specifically for food waste.
- There is no specific mention of air quality in the environment pledge and the Council should conduct a study into the cumulative impact that transport and industries have on Wirral's communities.
- An observation was made that 97% of fixed penalty notices are for cigarette butts. Members learned that the Council is looking at how we can work with people and communities and raise the awareness of this as a specific issue.

6. NEXT STEPS

A special meeting of the Coordinating Committee has been convened for the 10th December 2015 to review the feedback from the workshops as set out in this report. Members of the committee will consider the points raised and identify any appropriate recommendations to be referred on to Cabinet.

The phase two scrutiny of the Wirral Plan will design the scrutiny work programme around each of the Wirral Plan themes and pledges. The work programme will be prioritised and regularly reviewed to ensure it aligns with the delivery timetable of the Wirral Plan. This will ensure the Council's scrutiny function has the opportunity to add value to the on-going planning and development of the Wirral Plan as well as holding the Council and its partners to account for its effective delivery.

Appendix 1

People Theme	Business Theme	Environment Theme
Non-executive Members		
Bruce Berry	Chris Carubia	Tom Anderson
Eddie Boulton	Angela Davies	Alan Brighthouse
Alan Brighthouse	David Elderton	Chris Carubia
Phillip Brightmore	Phil Gilchrist	Pat Cleary
David, Burgess-Joyce	Dave Mitchell	Angela Davies
Chris Carubia	Christina Muspratt	David Elderton
Pat Cleary	Matthew Patrick	Phil Gilchrist
Wendy Clements	Cherry Povall	Treena Johnson
Angela Davies	Denise Roberts	Dave Mitchell
David Elderton	Jean Stapleton	Christina Muspratt
Gerry Ellis	Mike Sullivan	Cherry Povall
Phil Gilchrist	Adam Sykes	John Salter
Dave Mitchell	Geoffrey Watt	Chris Spriggs
Christina Muspratt	Jerry Williams	Mike Sullivan
Tracey Pilgrim	Steve Williams	Adam Sykes
Cherry Povall		Geoffrey Watt
John Salter		Jeanette Williamson
Walter Smith		
Mike Sullivan		
Geoffrey Watt		
Irene Williams		
Janette Williamson		
Partners		
Sue Higginson (Wirral Metropolitan College)	Sue Higginson (Wirral Metropolitan College)	Jon Develing (Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group)
	Paula Basnett (Wirral Chamber of Commerce)	Gary Oakford (Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service)
Cabinet Members		
Adrian Jones	George Davies	George Davies
Chris Jones	Adrian Jones	Adrian Jones
Ann McLachlan	Ann McLachlan	Chris Jones
Chris Meaden	Chris Meaden	Chris Meaden
Tony Smith	Stuart Whittingham	Bernie Mooney