

# WIRRAL PLAN 2020: PROGRESS REPORT

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## FOREWORD

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*“We have attracted more than £40million in new investment in Wirral, helped create in excess of a thousand new jobs, and major improvements in local neighbourhoods, infrastructure and communities are underway”*

When we launched our Wirral Plan in the summer of 2015, we set out a series of 20 Pledges which the Council and its partners would work together to achieve by 2020.

These were ambitious goals to bring about real change - not just in what can be achieved but in the manner in which it is delivered.

Our 20 Pledges are grouped around three key themes – People, Business and Environment - and reflect my administration's core values – Protecting our Most Vulnerable Residents, Driving Economic Growth, and Improving the Local Environment.

I am proud to report we have made good progress in our first 12 months.

We have attracted more than £40million in new investment to Wirral, helped create in excess of a thousand new jobs, and major improvements in local neighbourhoods, infrastructure and communities are underway.

In this report you will see the progress we are making against each of our 20 Pledges. You'll see examples of how our Pledges are making a real difference to residents' lives. You'll read about how the Pledges have begun to deliver lasting improvements in the borough, and you will see evidence of how the Council is changing, modernising and becoming more flexible and innovative in how we meet people's needs.

Of course, the report highlights many of the successes of which we are rightly proud, but it is also open and honest about where we still need to improve and focus more attention.

This year we suffered more severe cuts to our central government grant. The council tax freeze grant was also removed and we were forced to levy the government's additional 2% tax on all council tax payers to contribute toward the rising cost of elderly care.

This impacted both our finances and yours. It meant we all had to adjust our plans and budgets accordingly. We had to revisit some areas to find additional savings or efficiencies, and across the whole Council we looked for new ways to deliver the outcomes residents told us they wanted most.

Sadly, not everything got better in 2015. Reported crime has reduced and incidents of Domestic Violence have risen in the past 12 months and we know challenges remain in improving public health issues like tobacco-related disease, alcohol abuse and obesity.

Rather than shy-away from acknowledging these challenges, we have taken firm action to meet them head on.

We are stepping up our approach in tackling anti-social behaviour – a key concern for residents across the borough – and I have added a new Cabinet position focused on tackling the public health inequalities that still blight our borough.

Of course, the Council is just one player in achieving these ambitions and delivering our 20 Pledges. Every resident, business and community has a role to play too.

One of the early successes for The Wirral Plan was when it received unanimous approval from the entire Council in July 2015, and was subsequently adopted by all our partners as the first ever joint-Wirral Plan. This was fantastic news, not simply because for the first time all the partners in Wirral – the NHS, police, business and voluntary communities - were acting as one team, but because it also harnessed the almost £2billion annual combined investment made to improve the delivery of services to Wirral.

This report tracks our progress to date but I also want to take the opportunity to look forward as well.

For Wirral, 2016/17 must be about Delivery. I am demanding we build on our success and continue to see fast, sustainable, improvements across the borough.

We will have new challenges to face in the coming year – ones we didn't envisage only a few months ago - not least the outcome of the EU Referendum which will have significant long term implications for Wirral and the wider Liverpool City Region.

We will also see a Metro Mayor elected for the Liverpool City Region in 2017 and we must ensure Wirral punches its weight and uses these new powers and responsibilities to make further progress in delivering our 20 Pledges, especially on meeting our housing target, attracting further inward investment and growing our visitor economy.

I remain excited about the future of Wirral. Like you I am proud of our borough, the wonderful environment we share and the commitment and dedication of our local communities to make Wirral an even better place to live and work than it is already.

I encourage you to read this document and see for yourself how the Wirral Plan and the 20 Pledges are changing and improving our borough for all our residents.



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "P.L. Davies".

**Cllr Phil Davies**

Leader of Wirral Council and  
Chair of the Wirral Partnership

*“ I am proud of our borough, the wonderful environment we share and the commitment and dedication of our local communities to make Wirral an even better place to live and work ”*

# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Wirral Plan was an ambitious agenda. It set out 20 Pledges to transform Wirral, and the lives of its residents, over the next five years. We can point to many successes over the first year of this Plan, and also point to areas where we know we have more work to do.

This document demonstrates this. It shows where we are already seeing a major impact on residents' lives, and it shows clearly where we need to focus our attention in the coming year. The Wirral Plan is about improving this borough for every resident – we have made an excellent start, and are ready to deliver even more in the coming year.



## Improving Outcomes for Residents

Immediately after agreeing the Wirral Plan at the Council and with our Partners, we set to work on making them a reality. For the first time since 2008, we gathered a detailed understanding of what residents wanted, needed and felt was most important to them.

We used this information to develop a set of detailed, ambitious and long term-strategies, creating a clear route-map for how we would deliver every one of the 20 Pledges. Those strategies are now in place, and the associated action plans will guide the work of the entire Wirral Partnership from now until 2020.



## Securing Excellent Services

We continue to deliver and commission consistently excellent services for our residents and have made major progress towards the achieving the 20 Pledges in twelve short months.

We are also looking internally, and have developed a comprehensive transformation programme for the Council; committing to making sure each and every one of our services is properly reviewed to make sure we are delivering it in a way which is most appropriate to meet our residents' needs.



## Being Well-Run

In the face of huge, ongoing financial challenges we once again agreed a sustainable and balanced budget for the coming year, and delivered a balanced budget for last year.

Our auditors – internally and independently – are clear in their view Wirral Council is a well-run organisation, which has made huge progress. Our Annual Governance Statement describes an organisation which is almost unrecognisable from the Wirral Council of just a few years ago.

Everyone associated with the Council should be proud of this progress, and possess a shared determination to continue our improvements and become the outstanding Council which Wirral residents deserve.

The next few sections of this document show you just what we have achieved towards our 20 Pledges since first agreeing them in July last year. There are some real-life examples of where we are already making a difference and also examples of what we are going to do next.



**£2 BILLION**

WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP  
ESTABLISHED



**£900 MILLION**

SECURED FOR LIVERPOOL CITY  
REGION THROUGH DEVOLUTION



**BALANCED BUDGET**

- DELIVERED IN 2015-16  
- SET FOR 2016-17



**1084**  
**NEW JOBS**

**820**  
**NEW BUSINESSES**



**69.8%**

OF CHILDREN REACHING A **GOOD**  
LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT BY AGE 5



**85%**

OF SCHOOLS RATED '**GOOD OR**  
**OUTSTANDING**' BY OFSTED



**61.8%**

OF PUPILS ACHIEVING  
**5 GCSEs (A\*-C)**

**£43 MILLION**  **NEW INVESTMENT INTO WIRRAL**



**5000 NEW MEMBERS**  
IN WIRRAL'S LEISURE CENTRES



**420 NEW HOMES**



**93.2% LEVELS**  
OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



“

*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.*

*Ensuring the most vulnerable among us are safe, and feel safe, is perhaps our most important responsibility. We will work across Council and agency boundaries to promptly identify and tackle problems before they develop.*

”



## The 'Walks of Life' Foster Care Campaign

Every 20 minutes across the UK, a child comes into care in need of a foster family.

Wirral residents were encouraged to do something life-changing this year by giving a vulnerable child a home – and they responded in their hundreds.

New foster carers are always needed, and anyone, no matter what your background, can apply to help change a child's life for the better. The Council launched the 'Walks of Life' campaign in 2015, which was aimed at dispelling myths about who could – and couldn't – become a foster carer.

Cllr Tony Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Families said: 'Some people think you

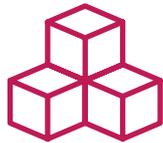
can't foster if you already have kids, or if you don't have kids, or if you live alone. None of these things are true.

'You can be male or female, single, married, with a partner, in a civil partnership, divorced or widowed. Anyone can be a foster carer. All we ask is that you can offer a child stability, consistency and a loving home where they can develop and grow.'

The campaign has been a big success, with hundreds of people across Wirral volunteering to become carers, helping us achieve our Pledge of ensuring 'vulnerable children reach their full potential'.



## PEOPLE PLEDGES



**69.8%**

OF CHILDREN REACHING A **GOOD**  
**LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT** BY AGE 5



**85%**

OF SCHOOLS RATED '**GOOD OR**  
**OUTSTANDING**' BY OFSTED



**61.8%**

OF PUPILS ACHIEVING  
**5 GCSEs (A\* - C)**



**48%**

OF RESIDENTS STATE THEY ARE  
**INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING**



**1 IN 3**

RESIDENTS **ARE CARERS**



**86%**

OF RESIDENTS SAY THEY LIVE  
**INDEPENDENT LIVES**

*When the Wirral Plan was first agreed it was clear that everything we did should be tailored and designed based on what people actually want and need to improve their lives.*

The Council has lived up to this promise, and have developed a series of strategies in partnership with residents, public agencies and community organisations. These strategies represent an entirely new approach to how we work with children, young people, families, older people and people with disabilities.

### **Older people live well**

For the first time – there is a joint strategy for older people in Wirral. Agreed by the Council and all partners in January 2016, the Ageing Well in Wirral Strategy guides how all public and voluntary organisations in the

borough will work together to improve the support provided to older people. Detailed action plans have been developed to make sure older people can play an active part in strong, thriving local communities, enjoy a happy home life, be emotionally and physically healthy, financially secure and have better access to the right information and support.

### **Children are ready for school**

The Council has completely redesigned and improved how it works with our youngest children, with a new, more targeted and personal approach to how our early years'

services are delivered. This has resulted in more young people starting school ready to learn and excel. Almost 70% of Wirral's youngest children are now reaching a 'good' level of development in their Foundation Stage – an increase of almost 7% in just twelve months. Ambitions and aspirations are rising, with more young people leaving school with good qualifications, and less young people becoming NEET.

### **Young people are ready for work and adulthood**

Almost 9 in 10 Wirral schools are rated 'good' or better by Ofsted, helping our young people continue to improve their performance year-on-year. 69.7% of Wirral's young people now achieve 5 GCSEs at A\*-C grades, and less than 5% become NEET between the ages of 16-18. Schools are receiving excellent, market-leading services from Edsential, the new company created by the Council to make sure every Wirral school is able to get support at the highest possible quality. The new company is already going from strength to strength, developing new and innovative services to improve education and outcomes for young people in Wirral and Cheshire.

### **Vulnerable children reach their full potential**

People from across the borough continue to open their homes to support vulnerable young people, either through fostering or adopting. Through our 'Walks of Life'

campaign a dedicated group of foster carers - the Foster Care Ambassadors – have given up their time to speak to thousands of local residents, resulting in hundreds of local residents putting their names forward to help a young person in need.

We know nationally that too many young people are still being taken into the care of the local authority, and it remains the case in Wirral. We are focussed this year on putting even more energy on supporting families to stay together, concentrating on identifying problems at an early stage and working with families to resolve them. Our approach to the Troubled Families programme won national acclaim and we will roll out best practice from this area across all of our work

### **Reduce child and family poverty**

There are many examples of positive achievement of children in Wirral, for example, the proportion of young people achieving 5 A\* - C including English and Maths, which is above the England average. Unemployment locally is now lower than in previous years. However, despite all the positive aspects of living in Wirral there are still a high proportion of children and families (21.5%) living in poverty. This overall figure masks some very significant disparities within Wirral between more affluent and more deprived wards.

Tackling this is has never been more important to us. Raising aspirations for

children, young people and their families, is good not only for them, but is also important for the borough. Our new 'Improving Life Chances' Strategy was agreed earlier this year, and sets out our new approach; a radical and ambitious framework of targeted activity to – once and for all – tackle the root causes of poverty, as well as to mitigate the impacts on families.

### **People with disabilities live independently**

People with disabilities are getting better support, and being inspired to achieve more in their lives, through Wirral Evolutions, a new company created by Wirral Council. The company is designed to make our Day Services for people with disabilities both sustainable and able to flourish, allowing for new and innovative services to be developed to help people live their lives to the full. We are already seeing excellent results, with the rate of people with disabilities rising by 7% between June and December last year.

As well as being in fulfilling employment, it is also vital people with disabilities are able to live independently in appropriate, safe and attractive homes. There are 200 extra care home places available in Wirral, and through the work of our 'All Age Disability' Strategy, the Council and all of its partners will be working hard throughout the year to significantly increase this number, and with it the number of people who are able to live safely, independently and happily.

### **Zero tolerance to domestic violence**

Sadly we have seen an increase in the levels of Domestic Abuse reported in our borough. We know there is not one easy answer for how we will tackle this issue, but we commit to doing everything we can to support the victims and their families to keep residents safe. We were a lead partner in the 'Love not a Fighter' campaign during the year – we will continue to highlight Domestic Abuse, make sure victims know exactly where to go for help and support, and make sure we clamp down on perpetrators.

We will join forces with our colleagues at Merseyside Police, and make sure in Wirral our services are joined up, seamless and offer residents the best possible protection and reassurance so they can live safe and fulfilling lives.



*Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive. We must seize the opportunities before us, and work hard to create new ones to transform Wirral's economy for this generation and the next.*

*We will focus on Wirral's priority growth sectors to promote and grow jobs in the visitor economy, advanced manufacturing, maritime and renewable energy sectors. We will work with our partners to deliver these ambitions for Wirral and ensure our plans are both economically and environmentally sustainable.*





## Burbo Bank Expansion

We have made incredible progress this past year in building Wirral's economy and ensuring good, high-paying jobs are available for our residents. One of these successes is the expansion of the Burbo Bank Windfarm. The first of 32 foundations has been installed at DONG Energy's Burbo Bank Extension offshore wind farm, marking the beginning of offshore construction.

Cllr Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council said: *"Wirral is gaining a reputation as a growing centre of clean energy manufacturing and innovation. The latest developments show the growing confidence global businesses have in the borough's ability to deliver."*

*"In addition to supporting Dong Energy's investment, Wirral as part of the City Region has*

*also gained the Centre for Offshore Renewable Engineering designation, the only such designation on the west coast of England."*

Construction is being monitored and coordinated from the DONG Energy office at Cammell Laird, which has over 40 people currently working at it. This number could increase to 150 people when workload is at its highest and is a key part of us delivering our Pledge to **increase inward investment and ensure greater job opportunities in Wirral.**



## BUSINESS



**1084**  
NEW JOBS

**820**  
NEW BUSINESSES



**£43 MILLION**  
NEW INVESTMENT INTO WIRRAL

**50%**

OF RESIDENTS WORK FOR COMPANIES  
WITH LESS THAN 250 EMPLOYEES

**6 IN 10**  
RESIDENTS  
WORK IN WIRRAL



*Wirral has huge opportunities before us – not least those presented by the historic Devolution agreement negotiated by the leaders of the Liverpool City Region authorities – and the emerging Northern Powerhouse.*

The result of the EU Referendum will bring profound implications on Wirral and the Liverpool City Region as a whole. While Wirral and parts of the region voted to remain in the EU, the country as a whole decided differently – it is now our responsibility to provide leadership and make sure Wirral's interests are considered and protected as the negotiations move forward.

### Greater job opportunities in Wirral

Wirral's new approach to generating economic growth – described within the Wirral Growth Plan – is already seeing positive results;

creating new and exciting jobs for residents all across the borough. Overall, we have helped created over 1,000 new jobs for Wirral residents, through developments such as the Tower Wharf HQ of the Contact Company, continued success at large employers such as Unilever and Cammell Lairds and the continued development and growth of smaller business all across the borough.

Wirral's GVA continues to grow, and the earnings for full time employees in Wirral is higher than the North West Average and the highest in the Liverpool City Region. Next year,

we will move up a level and make sure our drive to increase investment and business growth in the borough is translated into even more and better jobs for Wirral residents.

The EU Referendum result brings implications for our work in enabling and supporting our residents to access employment opportunities with many programmes funded through Brussels – such as the £43 million Liverpool City Region Ways to Work programme. We will be fighting for those promises made to Wirral and the Liverpool City Region to make sure our residents do not miss out.

### **Increase inward investment**

Investment in Wirral is thriving. Our plans for an International Golf Resort in Hoylake continue to take shape, the new ‘Maritime Knowledge Hub’ has officially opened its doors, and a £12 million investment into a new retail scheme at Junction 1 of the M53 is underway – creating over 350 new jobs. The redevelopment and rebirth of Birkenhead continues apace, with firm plans now in place to create a new retail and leisure hub within the town, revitalising the area and creating hundreds of new jobs. Wirral’s status as a world-leader in offshore, renewable energy was further strengthened with the announcement that DONG Energy are to build a windfarm operations and maintenance facility in Wirral, supporting the long-term expansion of the Burbo Bank windfarm.

The International Festival for Business (IFB) also took place in the Liverpool City Region this year. Over 100 delegations from 95 countries representing around 800 companies visited the Liverpool City Region during the festival. Delegations from Latin America, the USA, Europe, and the Middle and Far East took part in the festival, with tours to sites in Wirral, Knowsley, Liverpool and Halton showcasing local businesses and investment opportunities. The IFB continues to be an exciting global event, bringing unparalleled opportunities to the Liverpool City Region to grow its economy and delivering new businesses and jobs to residents across the entire region.

### **Thriving small businesses**

The Wirral Chamber of Commerce is the UK’s fastest growing Chamber and a key partner for the Council. The successful establishment of a Business Improvement District for Birkenhead (BID) will play a major role in helping local businesses take an active role in improving the town, making sure more people visit, shop and enjoy the unique architecture and varied retail offer in the heart of our borough.

We are also pleased to see so many more businesses opening their doors in Wirral; creating jobs and helping to further strengthen our economy. There are 820 more businesses in Wirral than there were last year – a huge increase, and one we must maintain to enable us to deliver the vibrant economy we all want for Wirral.

### **Workforce skills match business need**

It is vital for us to help business grow and create jobs, and it is equally important that when we are successful, Wirral residents have the skills to benefit from those jobs and excel in them. Our approach to adult education and skills training continues to be good, with thousands of Wirral residents improving their skills every year through courses offered by the Council and partners.

Wirral Metropolitan College also officially opened its doors this year to a new, state-of-the-art construction and engineering campus at Wirral Waters, providing the opportunity for residents to learn vital skills in these sectors. . In addition a key component of the Maritime Knowledge Hub is to respond to the skills needs of businesses operating within the marine sector through stronger links with the city region universities, in particular Liverpool John Moores University, to deliver further relevant skills and training opportunities.

The Devolution Agreement gives the Liverpool City Region more local decision making powers and responsibility over skills provision and employment support, including full devolution of the Adults Skills Budget from 2018/19. This will ensure that the training and skills being developed are relevant to the needs of our local employers and will enable our residents to have the skills to be able to compete for jobs and improve growth and productivity. This includes the responsibility for chairing an Area Based Review of post-16 Provision which

started in April 2016 and the devolution of the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers from August 2016.

### **Vibrant tourism economy**

Wirral continues to out-perform City Region colleagues in relation to the growth of the visitor economy. The 'Wonders of Wirral' and 'Play, Eat, Stay' campaigns continue to deliver positive results. A new strategy and implementation plan, developed based on extensive insight and research, is in development and will be delivered to complement work within the Growth Plan.

Wirral's visitor economy is the fastest growing in the city region, estimated to be worth over £355 million in 2014; employing 4,800 full time equivalent jobs; and attracting 7.5 million visitors. The major campaigns for the current year have been delivered and evaluation is ongoing; with projections that higher levels of involvement and response than ever before.

Representatives from Visit Britain have made visits to Wirral and enjoyed tours of the main attractions, leading to more extensive coverage in national travel guides. The Wirral Tourism Business Network continues to grow and is leading the development of our new Tourism Strategy, with particular focus on the wedding and group travel markets.

### **Technology and infrastructure**

Our residents' survey has told us that transport networks – roads and pavements, specifically

– are extremely important for residents across the borough. We have continued to deliver in this area, with and other notable achievements including almost £4 million in improvements to our roads and highways such as the provision of more walking paths and cycleways across the borough, road safety enhancements and moving forward with the a major programme to upgrade and replace the Dock Bridges in Birkenhead.

We are also making fast progress in installing 7,700 LED and dimmable street lights in the borough, as well as improving the current lighting and investing almost £4 million in improving roads and highways.

Our new Transport Strategy – Connecting Wirral – will guide how over the next few years we deliver huge improvements to our road network, public transport connectivity and residents’ ability to easily, quickly and safely travel around the borough and the Region.

### **Assets and buildings are fit for purpose**

All public agencies in Wirral are taking a completely different approach to buildings, assets and land. Wirral Council owns and operates from hundreds of buildings, as do our partners all across the public sector. Our ambition is to create ‘one public estate’ where public services from all agencies are available, as much as possible, from the same buildings, co-locating to make sure residents receive the best, most joined up service.



“

*Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive. We must seize the opportunities before us, and work hard to create new ones to transform Wirral's economy for this generation and the next.*

*We will focus on Wirral's priority growth sectors to promote and grow jobs in the visitor economy, advanced manufacturing, maritime and renewable energy sectors. We will work with our partners to deliver these ambitions for Wirral and ensure our plans are both economically and environmentally sustainable.*

”



## Footgolf craze sweeps Wirral!

Arrowe Park, The Warren, Wallasey and King's Parade, New Brighton all now offer golf and footgolf, as the demand in the new sport shows no signs of slowing down.

Footgolf is an emerging sport that attracts all kinds of different people to use golf courses. Footgolf players attempt to complete 9 or 18 holes of a golf course in as few shots as possible, with larger holes to accommodate footballs. Footgolf holes are shorter than traditional golf holes, at only around 100 yards long.

The investment the Council made in making the sport possible in Wirral has already been repaid, and the ongoing interest from residents and visitors is making Footgolf in Wirral look like it is here to stay.

Cllr Ann McLachlan, cabinet member for Transformation and Leisure, said: "We've already seen thousands of people playing the course at Arrowe Park, including children's parties.

*"Giving everyone the opportunity to take part in leisure and cultural opportunities is one of our pledges for 2020, and bringing in exciting new sports like footgolf will play a part in that."*



## ENVIRONMENT



**5000 NEW MEMBERS**  
IN WIRRAL'S LEISURE CENTRES



**420 NEW HOMES**



**#1 PRIORITY** FOR RESIDENTS  
REDUCED CRIME & ASB

**78%**

SATISFIED WITH  
WHERE THEY LIVE

**9 IN 10**  
**VISIT PARKS**



**93%**

ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY

*Wirral residents told us clearly what their priorities were; they told us what was important to their lives and what brings the biggest impact on their quality of life. Focussing on the environment, and on making Wirral safe, was top of the list for residents and must be top of the list for the Wirral Partnership too.*

The new Environment Strategy – LOVE Wirral – and our Community Safety Strategy will guide our work, and are going to make sure Wirral residents can continue to be proud of the borough; protecting its countryside and streets and improving recycling and the local environment in every community. We know we still have work to do in reducing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour, and soon will be announcing a major programme with Merseyside Police to help us crack down on those small minorities who make life difficult for others.

**Leisure and cultural opportunities for all**  
Thousands more Wirral residents are taking advantage of the fantastic leisure facilities on offer across the borough. The Council has invested over £2 million into leisure centres over the past year and it is already paying dividends – Membership levels have increased by almost 50% during the past five months, making our leisure services more financially sustainable but, more importantly, giving Wirral residents the opportunity to get fitter and healthier.

To many, Wirral remains the 'leisure peninsula'; we have fantastic beaches, parks, tourist attractions, cultural and sporting facilities all across the borough. It is our job to make the most of them, to encourage more people to use them and to make sure they're improving our residents' quality of life. To get there, we have developed Wirral's first Leisure Strategy, to help us achieve our pledge of leisure and cultural opportunities for all.

### **Wirral residents live healthier lives**

The 'Healthy Wirral' programme continues to support health and social care services; we are quickly moving towards integration, ensuring residents enjoy much better, more seamless and joined up services when they need support. Programmes such as 'Reduce the Strength', 'Eat Well Wirral' and 'Takeaway for Change' have also continued to deliver real, lasting change in people's lifestyles across the borough.

We have redesigned our stop-smoking services, giving thousands of Wirral residents the opportunity to quit smoking with the help of a modern, expert service on their doorstep. Wirral's libraries are also continuing to play a big part in keeping our residents healthy through holding hundreds of events throughout the year, bringing people together from all across the borough to enjoy books but also learn new skills, find employment or spend time with friends.

Our commitment to improving the health of Wirral residents is demonstrated by the creation of a new, dedicated Cabinet lead and the development of our Healthier Lives Strategy, which will guide the work of the entire Wirral Partnership as we continue to work towards improving the health of Wirral residents.

### **Community services are joined up and accessible**

Making sure residents can access services easily and quickly is vital and we have been making good progress in this area. Services for older people, access to information and advice, foster care, adoption and many other areas are being looked at now to join up with other services, other areas, to provide a more joined up and accessible approach for residents.

We are working with Merseyside Police to begin co-locating community police stations within Council buildings and working with partners across the public sector to make sure that our services and approaches are designed around them, not around the organisations which provide them.

### **Good quality housing**

Housing is incredibly important. A resident living in a good home is more likely to stay healthy, to be in employment and enjoy a better quality of life. Last year, more than 400 new homes were built in Wirral, we have improved twice this many, and we have

supported our most vulnerable residents by delivering a hugely successful 'Selective Licensing' scheme for private rented homes.

Next year, will see a step-change in our approach, we will move faster, and we will work to encourage more house-building as part of our drive to attract investment and jobs. The new Housing Strategy we are developing sets out the vision for housing in the future.

The Government says that it wants 1 million new homes built in England by 2020. The population is growing, ageing and establishing smaller households. It is clear housing supply has not kept pace with demand. Affordability and the ability to access the housing ladder, not just for those on low incomes, has become a major issue for the people all across the UK. It is clear a major improvement in the scale and pace of house-building is urgently needed.

### **Attractive local environment**

Birkenhead Park was named by the Guardian as one of the top ten parks in the world; an appropriate accolade for a stunning location which Wirral residents are rightly proud of. This is due in no small part to the ongoing excellent work of the friends of Birkenhead Park. Issues such as litter and dog fouling are a major problem for our residents, and we have responded – thousands of irresponsible people have now been fined for dropping litter or not cleaning up after their dogs.

Our zero-tolerance approach will continue, as we seek to protect and improve the quality of our local environment for all residents.

Recycling rates in Wirral are also set to soar after the Council announced proposals to invest in a new, weekly, household food recycling service for every resident. In a move that will also significantly reduce the environmental impact of our food waste, the council is proposing to invest in a new weekly collection of leftover or unused food to be recycled and turned into fuel.

The evidence from looking at what we throw away in Wirral shows that almost 40% of rubbish that goes in the green waste bins is food, so by investing in a food recycling collection service we will significantly boost our recycling rate. We have come a long way in the last 10 years in Wirral with our recycling. Back in 2006, we were recycling 12% of all household waste. Now, our recycling rate stands at around 36%.

However, we still have a way to go in order to get to 50% by 2020. The food recycling service will help us transform our recycling rate and make sure we are doing all we can to protect the environment for this generation and the next.

### **Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe**

Sadly we know that some Wirral residents continue to have their lives affected by

anti-social behaviour. This is not acceptable to us: Wirral residents have told us that keeping their communities safe should be our number one priority. We are responding to this, and making sure our actions are stepped up, become more visible and create a significant impact in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and making people feel safe.

The rate of Anti-Social Behaviour in Wirral continues to fall, as do reported instances of assault and other crimes. We must and will do more to support residents, to tackle perpetrators and to make sure Wirral residents feel safe and are safe regardless of where they live.

We are working more closely than ever with our colleagues at Merseyside Police and Wirral will be the first in the Region to adopt a much more integrated, visible and effective deterrent to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.

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## CONCLUSION

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*“We are all proud of Wirral. It is a great place to live, to work and to grow up.”*

It brings together beautiful, rural countryside with cutting edge technology and industry and has a cultural and economic history which is second to none.

The Wirral Plan, and the 20 Pledges we have committed to, are about its future and delivering for our residents.

We have achieved a lot already, but we know there is still much more to do;

- *The financial challenges across the Wirral Partnership remain acute; only by working together, by focussing on what is important to residents and thinking differently will we be able to meet all our goals.*
- *We must change the Council, and put in place a new way of working; one which is focussed on improving outcomes for residents, on being strategic and driving real improvements.*
- *Moving from working in partnership to integration is the next step, one which will bring huge benefits to Wirral; our collective money will go further, and services for residents will improve.*

- *We have to create more jobs and new businesses. Wirral residents need a strong economy which offers secure, high-paying job in the borough. To do this we must continue to promote Wirral and make sure the world knows about the remarkable opportunities we have to offer.*
- *Wirral residents want to live and work in the borough and we must not only provide jobs but also new homes to meet this growing demand and improve the quality of the homes our residents currently live in.*

We will do all this and more in the coming year. I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and look forward to delivering a bright future for Wirral.



*P.L. Davies*

**Cllr Phil Davies**

Leader of Wirral Council and  
Chair of the Wirral Partnership

# WIRRAL PLAN 2020: PROGRESS REPORT

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