



Coastal Strategy Scrutiny Review

A report produced by

The Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee

FINAL REPORT

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Coastal Strategy Scrutiny Review

FINAL REPORT

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wirral's Coastal Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2013 and identifies a timescale for intervention to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk. Four priority areas have been identified where intervention has been as being required in the next 20 years (West Kirby, Meols Parade, Rock Park and Wallasey Embankment).

The Review Panel heard that DEFRA (Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs) requires Shoreline Management Plans and coastal strategies to be in place in order for access to capital funding that is administered by the Environmental Agency. The Council is supported by the Environment Agency and heard from the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor from their Partnerships and Strategic Overview team on the excellent formal and informal working arrangements to help Wirral deliver the Coastal Strategy.

The Review Panel heard that central government funding is distributed as Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) and is allocated nationally based on ranking of projects. For grants to be successful when applied for, there needs to be a clear demonstration that a percentage of funding required has been raised by local partners. The Scrutiny Review identified that this can be challenging in the economic climate and that there is a need to be innovative in looking at other sources, including approaches taken by other local authorities and combining Coastal Strategy schemes with other regeneration opportunities.

Recommendation 1

Officers should ensure that all funding opportunities are fully explored to deliver the Council's Coastal Strategy, including:

- ii) Potential funding from the Devolution deal as part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority*
- ii) Maintaining a strong joined-up approach to deliver coastal strategy schemes with other regeneration opportunities where significant benefits can be realised; and*
- iii) Identifying any innovative approaches to meeting funding gaps taken by other local authorities.*

Recommendation 2

Where it has been clearly demonstrated that all funding opportunities have been exhausted, it is a recommendation of the Review Panel that any internal capital bids are considered and supported by Cabinet where deemed appropriate.

The Review panel learned the value of the Local Levy as a source of funding for schemes. Wirral Council makes annual contributions to the Local Levy for the Environmental Agency to administer flood risk management through the north-west region and for 2015/16, Wirral paid £166,222 (with an anticipated 2% increase each year). Decisions are made by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) which is comprised of a number of partnerships. The Merseyside Partnership includes Wirral who can apply for funding to be allocated to a scheme as long as it has DEFRA approval indicating that it is viable. In looking at the delivery of the four short-term schemes to be delivered, the Review Panel confirmed that the Local Levy funding is detrimental to ensuring their delivery. The review confirmed the Wirral is also one of the authorities that is currently benefitting the most through funding being provided

exceeding the contributions made up to the point when all four schemes are expected to be delivered.

Recommendation 3

The Review Panel recognises the value of Local Levy funding to enable Wirral to deliver schemes identified in the Coastal Strategy. It therefore requests that the Council strongly supports any proposed annual increases in Local Levy contributions by the RFCC to ensure the Coastal Strategy can be delivered.

The review identified that Members can help their constituents, particularly those that are part of Wirral's coastal communities. The Review Panel concludes that Members can play a more active role in engaging with residents and businesses to help them understand flood risk management.

Recommendation 4

Officers should establish a process to develop Members understanding of flood risk management to enable them to engage with their constituents on these risks. Although the Review Panel is concerned with those residents and business that are situated on Wirral's coastline, all Members should be included as part of this process.

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Regeneration and Environment Policy & Performance Committee's work programme, a scrutiny review of the Coastal Strategy was agreed and a Review Panel comprising of three Members of the Committee was established. The purpose of the review was to look at how the Council will deliver the Coastal Strategy, and in particular, the areas that require intervention in the short-term.

3. ORIGINAL SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope

A scoping meeting was convened with the Review Panel, the Head of Environment and Regulation and the Highways and Assets Team Leader to get an overview of the Coastal Strategy.

The agreed scoping document is included as Appendix 1. It was agreed that the focus of the review would concentrate on the following key areas:

- To review how Wirral Council is delivering the Coastal Strategy, particularly in relation to the four schemes identified as requiring intervention in the short-term.
- To ensure that all funding opportunities are explored where there are shortfalls.
- To ensure Wirral engages with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and that it seeks to get value from the contributions it makes to deliver the Coastal Strategy schemes.

3.2 Methodology

The Review Panel agreed that the scrutiny review would fall under the category of a short review. An initial briefing session with the Review Panel, the Highway Assets Team Leader and the Head of Environment and Regulation was convened to provide a comprehensive overview of the Coastal Strategy prior to the formal scoping meeting. Question and answer evidence sessions were convened as the approach for the review to enable Members to determine its findings and recommendations.

The Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor from their Partnerships and Strategic Overview team was invited to attend one of the evidence sessions. This enabled Members of the Review Panel to further understand the role of the Environment Agency and provide further information relating to the funding element of the Coastal Strategy.

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Background to the Wirral Coastal Strategy

In England, coastal defence is managed through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and administered through the Environment Agency. The hierarchical approach to coastal management is demonstrated through Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) which sets out the policies for the coastline over three epochs; short-term of up to 20 years, medium term from 20 to 50 years and long-term which is up to 100 years. SMPs were first introduced in 1999 and the most recent review was completed in 2009.

The policies contained within the current North West England and North Wales Shoreline Management Plan to manage the long length of coastline were adopted by Cabinet in September 2010. In areas where there are a number of properties or businesses, the policy could be 'Hold the Line' and looks at taking action to maintain the current defence line which may or may not be artificially defended (hard structures) at the present time. In some cases 'the line' might be sand dunes, mud flats or cliffs and the stretch of coast in question could be subject of works, as necessary, in the future. A policy of 'No Active Intervention' could also be applied where no action is taken to protect the coastline.

Coastal Strategies identify how and when SMP policies can be implemented. Wirral's Coastal Strategy was a recommendation of this last SMP review with work starting in 2011. Wirral's Coastal Strategy was approved by Cabinet in October 2013 and is not a statutory document but Wirral, as a Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authority, undertook its production. Policies relating to all stretches of coastline are addressed in the strategy and those "Hold the Line" policies which require investment are subject to an outline business case with a timetable for implementation.

Local Flood Risk Management Strategies

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) created Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) and Wirral is one of them. The Act placed statutory duties on LLFAs including the production of Local Flood Risk Management Strategies (LFRMS). These strategies require LLFAs to identify all forms of flood risk in their area (whether it be from the sea, rivers, surface water, sewers or groundwater), identify the relevant Risk Management Authority for managing the source of risk and to identify how the risk can be managed through the delivery of FWMA statutory duties and through investment leading to greater understanding.

The LFRMS takes account of the Coastal Strategy and the Action Plan for managing flood and erosion risk at the coast, but it does not set out the business case for managing other forms of flood risk. It does, however, advocate further study, working with other flood risk management authorities, to understand that risk and to identify priorities for economic analysis and investment. This is particularly important to note in relation to the flooding that occurred in Wirral in September 2015. As Wirral is a LLFA, it needs to meet its statutory requirement under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to publish the results of an investigation into significant flooding in the Wirral.

The Coastal Strategy looks at tidal flood and coastal erosion risk in greater detail. This includes the number of properties at a strategic level that are protected by coastal defences

from tidal flooding and erosion. It also looks at how these risks change over the 100 years and how and when 'Hold the Line' policies can best be implemented.

4.2 Coastal Strategy Prioritised Works

The output from the approved coastal strategy is a management plan of actions for each strategic length of coastline. Each length of coastline has an identified policy which can be implemented. It was explained to the Review Panel that the Coastal Strategy looks at the whole coast and assesses the Shoreline Management Plan policy for each length of coast against more detailed information relating to coastal processes, environment, climate change and economics to identify where the Council needs to do work in the next 20 years. The Review Panel discussed the four areas that have been identified through this process.

West Kirby – Works are required to provide protection from flooding by construction of secondary linear defences. Properties along the West Kirby frontage were identified to be at significant flood risk and later demonstrated by the floods that took place in December 2013.

Wallasey Embankment – This is to reduce flood risk to Moreton and Leasowe. Erosion at the toe of the embankment is increasing the risk of failure of the structure with an associated increase risk of flooding inland. However, the rate of erosion, at present estimates, does not require immediate intervention, but towards the end of the "Short Term" 20 year period.

Rock Park – This length of coastline comprises of predominantly residential developments to the south of the Shell Tranmere Oil Terminal. The works here are related to the maintenance and refurbishment of the existing river wall that is in poor condition and at risk of failure. Failure of the defences would result in increased erosion thereby threatening the waterside properties.

Meols – there is a requirement to carry out works to improve the long term integrity of the defences at Meols Parade, where damage to the existing defences threatens the integrity of residential property and highway infrastructure. Erosion risk is significant as the sea wall is over 110 years old and residual life is less than 25 years.

4.3 Funding Approaches

To help Members with the review, the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor from the Environment Agency was invited to discuss the funding approaches to help deliver coastal strategies. The Review Panel learned that, given the economic pressures being experienced in the public sector, securing enough funding for flood and coastal risk management work has been challenging and that the need heavily outweighs total funding available. Although there has been an increase in investment from central government, more funding is required and resulted in the 'partnership funding approach' being introduced by Defra. There is now a move to a partnership funding approach which means schemes would not be able to rely solely on central government funding but would have to look at obtaining financial input from local partners. This approach allows central government to contribute to a larger number of projects but would require funding to be found from other sources.

Flood Defence Grant in Aid

The Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor provided an overview of how central government provided funding for schemes through Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA). It was explained that historically, government used to only be able to fund some coastal strategy schemes but with 100% funding provided. However, following a government review in 2011, changes were made to ensure that more schemes can be funded through contributions being made by local authorities to meet shortfalls. Allocation of funding would now be determined as an outcome of prioritisation on a national level through ranking all projects according to a defined scoring system.

It was further explained that every proposal will be eligible for a certain amount of FDGiA funding based mainly on the properties that the scheme will protect and the benefits the scheme will deliver. Although schemes will generally achieve 55% of FDGiA funding, this does depend on the merits of each scheme and the score it will generate to determine how much is awarded. The Environment Agency needs to know over the full six years when the requests for funding are coming from local authorities which it can then approve to enable it to give more certainty on funding for schemes. Until recently, government only provided the EA with funding on a year by year basis so it was difficult to plan. In the last two years, the EA has secured a six year settlement from government to provide a more secure programme.

Schemes need to be included in the Investment Programme that is coordinated by the Environment Agency. Some schemes will be fully funded whilst others will get some or very little. Prioritisation of schemes is based on the likelihood of meeting the shortfalls to ensure all funding is available. West Kirby is a priority scheme because the business case in the Coastal Strategy determined that if the Council delivered a scheme after 20 years, a lot of properties are currently likely to be subject to frequent flooding, would not incur further flood damage. The Review Panel commented that, in respect to tourism for the area, would also be crucial. Through accelerating works and making it a priority, these damages will not be incurred and the scheme will get a better cost-benefit ratio. This also helps build the business case to support a request for grant aid from the Environment Agency as cost-benefit ratio is one of the areas considered by the Environment Agency, along with the number of properties removed from flood risk and Partnership Funding contributions secured.

Local Levy Funding

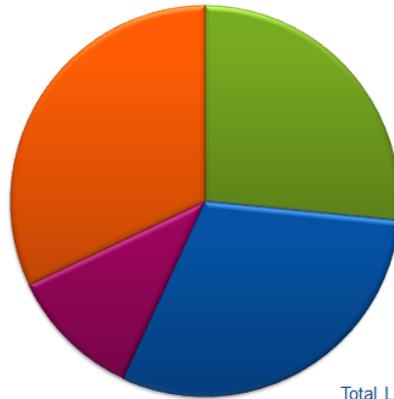
The Review Panel learned that a critical source of funding for schemes come from the Local Levy that Wirral pays into each year for the Environment Agency to administer flood risk management through the North West Region.

Local Levy is set by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) and charged to Lead Local Flood Authorities in that region. The RFCC is comprised of a number of partnerships and Wirral is part of the Merseyside Partnership that is represented and chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Environment. Decisions to support coastal projects as well as wider flood risk management activities are made by the RFCC with some funding being 'pooled'. Wirral can apply for Local Levy funding to be allocated to a scheme as long as it has DEFRA approval indicating that it is viable.

Wirral paid £166,222 in Local Levy contributions for 2015/16 but each year there is a review of the local levy contributions and a vote by RFCC members about whether to increase the levy or keep it at the same level. A 2% increase was recently approved by the Committee. The benefit of Local Levy funding is that you are not bound by constraints that you would get from

FDGiA funding and having to compete against other local authorities around the country. The graph below compares contributions made within for the Merseyside Partnership in 2015/16.

Local Levy Contributions (15/16) for Merseyside Partnership



Merseyside	
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	145,708
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	166,222
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	60,682
Liverpool City Council	175,737
TOTAL	548,349

Total LLFA Local Levy contribution to NW RFCC = £3.7 m, £548k from Merseyside is 15%

4.4 Funding and delivery of short term priority schemes

The Review Panel was updated on the current progress of delivering the four short-term priority schemes from the Coastal Strategy.

West Kirby

The profile of West Kirby following the storms in 2013 has been raised with a number of houses and businesses having been subject to flooding. Economic analysis was carried out after the Wirral Coastal Strategy was developed and at the time it was determined that the Council would need to find £1.8M to £2M of investment. The number of properties that could be protected from the initial assessment identified that £650K Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) from the EA could be secured with approximately a £1.3M shortfall. £200K was identified through the Flood and Water Management Act and Cabinet approved £500K of capital. Local Levy funding of £500K completed the total amount required to deliver the scheme. The proposals to reduce flood risk in West Kirby went out to public consultation to gauge opinions and the popular option was a structure set back on the promenade as opposed to at the railings. The project appraisal report which looks at the whole economic benefits in detail for delivering the scheme has now been completed and finalised for submission to the EA for scrutiny. The EA needs to ensure that it is correct and that what Wirral says it will deliver is feasible economically and technically. Once the project is assured by the EA, the grant aid to deliver scheme will be made available.

The scheme was brought forward due to the funding opportunities available even though it was determined that it was not needed for a few years. The Review Panel considered the scheme for West Kirby as being important as it is an established area that can improve the visitor economy to Wirral. The fact that the scheme was brought forward was seen as beneficial.

Meols Parade

This is the next likely scheme to be delivered and requires the most local levy funding. The proposal is to simply strengthen the wall and will require £4M funding. It is likely only £1.2M FDGiA will be made available so there will be a significant shortfall and £1.2M has been requested in the Local Levy bidding process. There is still a shortfall but the scheme will not need to be delivered for a few years because of limited budgets being made available each year. Public contributions have been identified as a source of funding for year 3 (2018/19) so various capital bids will be submitted. There will be a £1.7M shortfall so contributions over 5 years are being looked at as it is a 5 year scheme.

Rock Park

This is essentially a restoration project which the Coastal Strategy has identified £1.66M of funding being needed to restore the esplanade. As it is in an area of deprivation, it can draw in more FDGiA funding. £760K grant in aid can be obtained due to the properties at risk as well as being in an area of deprivation. Local Levy funding of £900K has been identified and should meet the £1.66M that is needed.

Wallasey Embankment

Because of the scoring for funding, this will receive the full allocation of grant aid due to the high number of properties so there are no immediate concerns on funding. The works carried out will look at reinforcing the embankment. However, there is a non-immediate erosion problem so the area will need intervention towards the end of the 20 year "Short Term" timeframe.

The Review Panel identified that the working relationship between Council officers and the EA was crucial to help deliver schemes and assurances that this is in place was provided by the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor. It was explained to the Review Panel that the Environment Agency has a national strategic overview for managing flood and coastal erosion risk. In practice, this means that on coastal matters Wirral works closely and collaboratively with the EA with strategic studies such as the SMP and Wirral Coastal Strategy demonstrating compliance with the Environment Agency's overall vision. The Review Panel welcomed that, on a local level, Wirral Council and the Environment Agency are professional partners, working closely through informal and formal arrangements to try and maximise the benefits for investment to Wirral through delivery of the Wirral Coastal Strategy. This is particularly important where there is a challenge to boost Wirral's score by ensuring the partnership funding element is supported by other funding.

It was explained that opportunities to identify other sources of funding would form part of the respective business case for delivering schemes which may lead to them being successfully delivered early. The Review Panel queried the feasibility of a number of options as potential avenues for funding. One of these was through applying a Community Infrastructure Levy which is a levy against developers on new properties. However, it was explained that for existing properties in an area, a Community Infrastructure Levy would already have had to be in place to raise funds.

Other sources of funding explored by the Council have included Lottery funding, the Regional Growth Fund and the potential for resident contributions. At the time when the Coastal Strategy was developed, it was anticipated that a Heritage Lottery Grant would be received but this may now be unlikely. Members noted that there is reference to the environment and River Mersey as part of the Liverpool City Region Devolution arrangements as well as the

single investment fund of £30 million over 30 years. The issue in identifying sources of funding is that the Coastal Strategy identifies schemes to be implemented so you cannot change where you need to invest. The Review Panel acknowledges the funding gaps as a significant challenge to deliver schemes is a national issue and that officers may need to make capital bids to meet these shortfalls. However, there is also a need to be innovative in looking at other ways of securing funding in the future with the Council facing competing demands for capital investment.

In relation to the Rock Park scheme, the Review Panel pointed out that it is located where there is a lot of potential for regeneration opportunities and that if regeneration work was carried out on the esplanade, this could help the Council deliver the scheme detailed in the Coastal Strategy in terms of securing the FDGiA funding. It was explained by the Highway Assets Team Leader that the figures detailed in the coastal strategy for Rock Park were informed by the Mersey Coastal Park Strategy which considered improved access and a cycle way. If the regeneration strategy was to go ahead, this would benefit the scheme for Rock Park. It was explained by the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor that this is the principal of government changing funding where in the past engineers simply concentrated on preventing flooding and regeneration opportunities would be considered later. It is more holistic in looking at everything together by combining schemes to see what opportunities can be gained. Furthermore, the Review Panel acknowledged a comment made by the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor that Members should be encouraged to consider opportunities and promote ideas which could be raised with council officers which the Council may not be fully aware of.

Recommendation 1

Officers should ensure that all funding opportunities are fully explored to deliver the Council's Coastal Strategy, including:

- ii) Potential funding from the Devolution deal as part of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority*
- ii) Maintaining a strong joined-up approach to deliver coastal strategy schemes with other regeneration opportunities where significant benefits can be realised; and*
- iii) Identifying any innovative approaches to meeting funding gaps taken by other local authorities.*

Recommendation 2

Where it has been clearly demonstrated that all funding opportunities have been exhausted, it is a recommendation of the Review Panel that any internal capital bids are considered and supported by Cabinet where deemed appropriate.

As part of the Scrutiny Review, Panel Members wanted assurance that Wirral was taking all opportunities to access Local Levy funding to help deliver Wirral's schemes as well as considering the return on the investment through the annual contributions made. As stated earlier in this report, Wirral's contribution for 2015/16 is £166,222. The Local Levy contributions Wirral has made since 2013 against the expected Local Levy funding which will be drawn is shown in Fig.1 below. Contributions made from 2017/18 are based on an assumption that a 2% increase will be applied by the RFCC. IT should also be noted that

contributions for the delivery of recommendations of the LFRMS (74K) are not included in the table below as these do not form part of the Wirral Coastal Strategy.

Fig. 1

Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	TOTAL
Levy Paid (£)	164,044	163,358	166,222	167,920	171,278	174,704	178,198	181,762	185,397	189,105	192,887	1,934,875

Forecast Contributions (£)												
West Kirby				60,000	440,000							
Rock Park Esplanade								543,992	524,898			
Meols Parade						50,000	219,404	228,231	235,013	243,246	251,756	
Wallasey Embankment	No Levy Contributions required as funded completely by Grant Aid											

Total (£)	0	0	0	60,000	440,000	50,000	219,404	772,223	759,911	243,246	251,756	2,796,540
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Looking at the funding that is to be drawn covering the period where Wirral's short-term schemes are to be delivered, there is a clear demonstration of the importance of Local Levy funding and that Wirral is an authority that is likely to be a net receiver against contributions made (£1,934,875 paid in against an anticipated £2,796,540 in funding received up to 2024). It is also noted that across the North West Region, some authorities will get more out than others over the coming years and Wirral is one that is currently benefiting.

To support local levy applications, The Review Panel was informed that the Chair of the North West RFCC was invited to Wirral to see the damage caused at Meols, the flooding at West Kirby and the significant erosion at Wallasey Embankment. By demonstrating the impact of the coast to the Chair of the Committee, the Review Panel was encouraged that this provided support to the bids that Wirral put in for local levy contributions.

Recommendation 3

The Review Panel recognises the value of Local Levy funding to enable Wirral to deliver schemes identified in the Coastal Strategy. It therefore requests that the Council strongly supports any proposed annual increases in Local Levy contributions by the RFCC to ensure the Coastal Strategy can be delivered.

4.5 Engagement with coastal communities

The Review Panel acknowledged comments made by the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor that outside of hard structures and coastal defences, consideration also needs to be given to flood risk management along the coast and the importance of engaging with residents and businesses to enable them to understand these risks. This is an area that the Environment Agency strongly advocates to local authorities. As well as the Council supporting this, it was also stated and agreed by the Review Panel that Members would also have a key role through talking to their constituents. Key messages could be conveyed about what they could do to manage flood risk and what they should do if there is going to be a flood. Key areas which may flood easily could be targeted so residents and businesses would

be a lot more aware of the risk than they were beforehand. The Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor added that the Environment Agency could support this through providing key messages. The Review Panel endorsed this approach but stressed that all Members should fulfil this role and not just those whose wards are located on the coastline.

Recommendation 4

Officers should establish a process to develop Members understanding of flood risk management to enable them to engage with their constituents on these risks. Although the Review Panel is concerned with those residents and business that are situated on Wirral's coastline, all Members should be included as part of this process.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Review Panel was encouraged by the collaborative partnership arrangements in place between Council Officers and the Environment Agency to enable the Coastal Strategy to be delivered. This is particularly important when trying to maximise the investments to Wirral.

The Review Panel acknowledged the funding gaps for delivery of the Coastal Strategy and that all opportunities for funding schemes must be considered in light of this. As this is a national issue, it is prudent for Wirral to look at any innovative approaches taken by other local authorities. Maintaining a joined-up approach to delivering the strategies schemes with other regeneration opportunities is also important as this could help deliver schemes quicker through access to more funding.

The value of Local Levy funding has been demonstrated and the annual contributions made provide an invaluable crucial source of funding for the Coastal Strategy delivery.

The Review Panel believe that Members' flood risk management awareness across Wirral's coastline should be enhanced as they can fulfil a role of working with their constituents on managing risks. This is particularly important to help protect those residents and business that are at risk of flooding.

6. MEMBERS OF THE TASK & FINISH GROUP

Councillor Mike Sullivan (Chair)



Chair's Statement:

“The flooding experience in September 2015 and, in particular, West Kirby in 2013 has highlighted the importance of managing flood risk. The Coastal Strategy plays a key role in this in protecting our coastal communities.

The Review Panel concluded that delivery of Wirral's Coastal Strategy depends on the excellent relationship the Council has with the Environment Agency to maximise benefits for Wirral and this was demonstrated through the review. Additionally, securing funding to deliver the Coastal Strategy schemes is a fundamental challenge and the Council must ensure that all funding opportunities are explored to reduce the impact on capital bids being requested.

I would like to thank the Members of the Review Panel, Officers and the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor from their Partnerships and Strategic Overview team for their contribution to this review.”

Other Panel Members were:

Councillor Dave Mitchell



Councillor John Hale



Scope Document

Review Title: Coastal Strategy

Date: July 2016

1. Contact Information:	
<p>Scrutiny Panel Chair: Councillor Michael Sullivan michaelsullivan@wirral.gov.uk</p> <p>Panel members: Councillor Dave Mitchell davemitchell@wirral.gov.uk</p> <p>Councillor John Hale johnhale@wirral.gov.uk</p>	<p>Scrutiny Officer(s): Michael Lester Scrutiny Support Officer michaellester@wirral.gov.uk 691-8628</p> <p>Departmental Link Officers: Mark Smith Head of Environment & Regulation marksmith@wirral.gov.uk 606-2103</p> <p>Neil Thomas Highways and Assets Team Leader neilthomas@wirral.gov.uk 606-2004</p>
<p>Other Key Contacts: None identified at this time</p>	
2. Review Aims:	
<p>Which Wirral Plan Pledge does this review relate to? The Coastal Strategy supports the Pledge of 'Attractive local environment for Wirral residents'.</p>	
<p>What are the main issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coastal Strategy identifies areas that require intervention to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk. Four areas have been identified for intervention in the short-term. Members are interested in how these are to be delivered to improve management of flood and coastal erosion risk at these areas. • Funding to deliver the schemes is challenging and requires other sources to be identified outside of what can be provided by the Environment Agency. How is Wirral Council taking up opportunities to secure funding to bridge the financial gaps? • How the Local Levy has been used as partnership funding to support delivery of the areas identified for intervention in the Coastal Strategy. Is Wirral taking all opportunities to access the Local Levy against what it pays in on an annual basis? How does Wirral engage with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee who determine local levy funding priorities? 	
<p>The Panel's objectives in doing this work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review how Wirral Council is delivering the Coastal Strategy, particularly in relation to the four schemes identified as requiring intervention in the short-term. • To ensure that all funding opportunities are explored where there are shortfalls. • To ensure Wirral engages with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and that it 	

seeks to get value from the contributions it makes to deliver the Coastal Strategy schemes.

The desired outputs/outcomes:

- Assurances will be provided that short-term priorities identified in the strategy are being delivered.
- Opportunities for further funding may be identified as part of the review

3. Review Approach

How will the Panel engage with the Executive?

- The findings and recommendations arising from the review will be discussed with the Portfolio Holder.
- The final report will be referred to Cabinet for consideration of the recommendations

Who will the Panel be trying to influence as part of its work?

- Senior Managers
- Cabinet

Duration of review?

It is anticipated that this will be short review conducted over a number of evidence sessions.

Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?

None identified at this stage

4. Sources of Evidence:

Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).

- Cabinet Report October 2013 (Approval of Coastal Strategy)
- Coastal Strategy

Primary/new evidence/information

- Background information relating to delivery of four areas identified for intervention in the short-term.
- Information on Local Levy contributions / funding arrangements
- A report on other potential sources of funding to support scheme delivery.

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc).

council officers to include:

Council officers

Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Officers (See above)

Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor –

- Feedback on the effectiveness of the arrangements between Wirral Council and the Environment Agency
- Information on funding approaches and how schemes are considered for inclusion on the Environment Agency's investment programme

What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).

- Face to face questioning

In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).

Not applicable at this stage

Should we involve the Press & Public Relations Team at any stage of the review? (Homepage news release, press releases etc)

Not applicable