

# POLICY INFORM:

## Business



### Policy Inform - September 2017

*The Policy Inform briefings will provide an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament and emerging policies.*

The Policy Inform briefings have been produced specifically to inform Portfolio Holders and Elected Members and will be taken to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees for discussion.

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# INTRODUCTION

**The Wirral Plan:**

A 2020 Vision which sets out a shared partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents.

**The Plan focuses on three key theme areas:**



**The Wirral Plan Business Theme states:**

***“Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive.”***

**Business Policy Briefing:**

This policy briefing focuses specifically on policies and legislation relating to the Business Priority and is intended to provide Members of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the latest position on emerging policy and legislative developments to support the committees work programme and future scrutiny work.

The following table outlines the timetable for the preparation and reporting of policy briefing papers:

Overview & Scrutiny Briefings	
September 2017	This policy briefing will provide an overview of emerging policy and legislation outlined within the Queen’s Speech, with a particular focus on legislation emerging as a result of the UK’s exit from the European Union. This policy briefing will also provide an initial analysis of any opportunities and implications for Wirral as a result of emerging policy and legislation.
November 2017	This policy briefing will provide an update on policy and legislation and will consider relevant opportunities and implications for Wirral.

<p>January 2018</p>	<p>This policy briefing will provide an update on emerging on policy and legislation and will further consider any relevant opportunities or implications for Wirral.</p>
<p>March 2018</p>	<p>This policy briefing will provide an update on emerging on policy and legislation and will further consider any relevant opportunities or implications for Wirral.</p>

The September policy briefing focuses on the key announcements from the Queen’s Speech and provides an overview of emerging policy and legislative developments that have been aligned to the Wirral Plan pledges for consideration.

The Committee may wish to identify specific policy areas to focus upon which are in line with the Committee’s work programme. Detailed briefing papers can be prepared for these subject matters at the request of the Committee which would be in addition to the regular policy briefing papers outlined above.

## QUEEN'S SPEECH 2017

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017, the Queens Speech was delivered, outlining the Government's programme of legislation and policies for the coming year.

Below is a list of each individual Bill that will have implications for local government that was announced during the speech, including those Bills carried over from the 2016-17 session. The list identifies the Overview and Scrutiny Committee remit that the legislation most closely aligns:

Legislative Plans	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Repeal Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Customs Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Trade Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Immigration Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Fisheries Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Agriculture Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Nuclear Safeguards Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
International Sanctions Bill	<b>EU Exit - All Committees</b>
Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill	<b>Business</b>
High Speed 2 Phase 2A Bill	<b>Business</b>
Good Mortgages Bill	<b>Environment</b>
Smart Meter Bill	<b>Environment</b>
Draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill	<b>Children and Families</b>
Courts Bill	<b>Environment</b>
Data Protection Bill	<b>Business</b>
Draft Patient Protection Bill	<b>Care and Health</b>

Draft Tenants' Fees Bill	<b>Environment</b>
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Additional Bills that have been announced are outlined below. These will be monitored in relation to any emerging implications for Local Government and reported to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee as appropriate.

Additional Legislative Plans
Space Industry Bill
National Insurance Contributions Bill
Travel Protection Bill
Civil Liability Bill
Financial Guidance and Claims Bill
Armed Forces Bill

The Bills relevant to Business are discussed in further detail in this paper.

## EU EXIT BILLS

*This year's Queen's speech came in the wake of a General Election that left the Conservative Government without a majority. Below are the bills within the 2017 Queen's Speech which directly relate to the EU Exit.*

### REPEAL BILL

The Repeal Bill will be introduced to repeal the European Communities Act and provide certainty for businesses and individuals; this affects a wide range of laws from workers' rights to the environment. It will allow for a smooth and orderly transition as the UK leaves the EU. This will convert EU law into UK law, this will enable some continuity after what the bill calls "exit day". The UK Parliament will be free to make any future changes to its laws, and where appropriate the devolved legislatures.

It will create temporary powers for Parliament to make secondary legislation, allowing corrections to be made to the laws that do not operate appropriately after exiting the EU. It will also maintain the scope of devolved decision making power immediately after exit and replicate the common UK framework created by EU law.

The Bill includes a clause, "The charter of fundamental rights is not part of domestic law on or after exit day", it is thought this will be opposed by opposition parties. Both Scottish and Welsh governments have said they will try to block the bill, they do not have the power to block Brexit but refusing legislative consent would be difficult for the government.

The Repeal Bill could be an opportunity for local government, if shares of repatriated powers are devolved to local government there is an opportunity to shape legislation.

The Government recognises that the following fields will be particularly affected by Brexit and therefore more extensive legislative intervention will be required at the domestic level.

### CUSTOMS BILL

The Customs Bill will ensure that the UK has a standalone UK customs regime on exit. It will establish a degree of flexibility to accommodate future trade agreements with the EU and others. The changes can be made to UK's VAT and excise regimes on exit from the EU, whatever the outcome of negotiations.

It will ensure the government can collect payments of customs duties, tackle duty evasion and administer the customs regime. It will also bring control over the UK's import and export of goods.

### TRADE BILL

This Bill will put in place to allow Britain to strike free trade deals with countries around the world while ensuring domestic businesses are protected from unfair trading practices. It will establish an independent trade policy on exit from the EU. It will cement the UK as a leading trading nation, "driving positive global change through trade".

## IMMIGRATION BILL

The Immigration Bill will end the free movement of people of EU nationals into the UK and allow the government to control the number of incomers from Europe. However the Bill would still allow the country to attract “the brightest and the best”.

It will allow for the repeal of EU law on immigration (primarily free movement), that will otherwise be saved and converted into UK law by the Repeal Bill. It will also ensure that the migration of EU nationals and their families are subject to relevant UK law upon exiting the EU.

## FISHERIES BILL

The Bill will ensure the UK controls access to its waters and sets UK fishing quotas once it has left the EU. It will bring control of its waters back to the UK and allows the government to set its own fishing quotas after Brexit. It is claimed that this will “help ensure prosperity for a new generation of fishermen as well as preserve and increase fish stocks”.

## AGRICULTURE BILL

The Agriculture Bill will ensure there is an “effective system” in place to support UK farmers and protect the natural environment after the UK leaves the EU, i.e. leaving the Common Agricultural Policy. It wants to bring about “stability” for farmers.

## NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS BILL

This Bill will ensure a nuclear safeguards regime is established as the UK leaves the EU and Euratom (Brexit may require the UK to leave the auspices of Euratom). The UK continues to meet its international obligations for nuclear safeguards, as applies to civil nuclear material through the International Atomic Energy Agency.

This Bill will give the Office for Nuclear Regulation the powers to take on the responsibilities to meet international nuclear rules.

## INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS BILL

This Bill will ensure that as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK continue to play a central role in negotiating global sanctions to counter threats of terrorism, conflict and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as bringing about changes in behaviour.

This Bill will establish a new UK framework to implement international sanctions on both a multilateral and unilateral basis. It will also return decision making powers on non-UN sanctions back to the UK.



# WIRRAL PLAN BUSINESS PLEDGES- POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

## GREATER JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN WIRRAL

*We will provide an increase in the number and range of jobs in Wirral so all our residents can find employment opportunities.*

### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

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.

### **Outcome Strategy:**

1. Ensure that residents furthest away from work have the right support to access employment,
2. Build growth in target sectors such as energy and advanced manufacturing,
3. Work with the Combined Authority (CA) to co-design and then co-commission with DWP the future employment support for harder to reach claimants,
4. Work with the CA to identify strategic employment sites for inclusion in the proposed single city region framework.



### **Associated Legislation:**

#### **Unpaid Work Experience (Prohibition) Bill**

**Reporting stage:** Received its first reading in the House of Lords on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016. A date for its second reading is yet to be announced

**The purpose of the Bill is to:** To make provision for the prohibition of unpaid work experience exceeding four weeks and for connected purposes.

**Concerns and progress so far:** There is concern in both houses that banning unpaid internships could reduce the opportunities for young people to gain valuable work experience. Additionally, it is unclear what effect this bill would have on volunteering and other employment law if it were to achieve royal assent.

**Associated Legislation:**

**Employment and Workers' Rights Bill**

**Reporting stage:** The Bill received its first reading in the House of Commons on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The Bill is scheduled for a second reading on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Make provision about employment conditions and workers' rights; and for connected purposes.

**Concerns and progress so far:**

Further details regarding this bill have yet to be published.

**Associated Legislation:**

**National Living Wage (Extension to Young People) Bill**

**Reporting stage:** The Bill received its first reading in the House of Commons on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The Bill is scheduled for a second reading on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Extend the National Living Wage to people aged 18 to 24.

**Concerns and progress so far:**

Further details regarding this bill have yet to be published.

**Associated Legislation:**

**Unpaid Trial Work Periods (Prohibition) Bill**

**Reporting stage:** The Bill received its first reading in the House of Commons on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017. The Bill is scheduled for a second reading on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Prohibit unpaid trial work periods in certain circumstances; and for connected purposes.

**Concerns and progress so far:**

Further details regarding this bill have yet to be published.

## **Policy Developments:**

### **The Taylor Review of modern working practices**

[LGiU, 02/08/2017](#)

#### **Summary –**

This report was commissioned amidst concerns that formal rights and responsibilities of employers and workers were not keeping pace with the growth and impact of new and modern business models. Employment practices need to change in order to keep pace with modern business models. The review addressed 6 main themes:

- Security, pay and rights
- Progression and training
- The balance of rights and responsibilities
- Representation
- Opportunities for underrepresented groups
- New business models.

The review calls on government to adopt the ambition that all work should be fair and decent with scope for fulfilment and development. Despite impact of national living wage and tax credits, there will always be people who are in work but finding it hard to make ends meet.

Technological change will impact work and types of employment and we need to adapt but technology can also offer new opportunities for smarter regulation, more flexible entitlements and new ways for people to organise.

#### **Brief Analysis -**

The Review found the best way to achieve better work is not national regulation but responsible corporate governance, good management and strong employment relations within the organisations. It is vital to individuals and the economy that everyone feels they have realistically attainable ways to strengthen their future work prospects and that they can record and enhance the capabilities developed in formal and informal learning.

The Review believes the National Living Wage is a powerful tool to raise the financial base line of low paid workers. However work poverty is not just about pay, it's about guarantee of work from week to week which affects the ability to pay bills and can increase stress and put strain on family life.

## **Policy Developments:**

### **Work and Pensions Committee Report: Self-employment and the gig economy**

[LGiU, 06/06/2017](#)

#### **Summary-**

The Work and Pensions Committee's inquiry into self-employment and the 'gig economy' was launched to investigate whether the UK's welfare system adequately supports the growing numbers of self-employed and 'gig economy' workers. An abridged report was recently produced which deals with; the inquiries evidence from companies like Uber, Amazon, Hermes and Deliveroo, and from people who work with them.

**Policy Developments Continued:**

**Work and Pensions Committee Report: Self-employment and the gig economy**

**[LGiU, 06/06/2017](#)**

**Brief Summary**

- After examining the 'gig economy' evidence of low pay, inflexibility in working time, long hours, instability, and difficulties in taking time off, such as for holiday or for sick leave were all found. It is recommended that an assumption of the employment status of 'worker' by default, rather than 'self-employed' by default are adopted to protect both workers and the public finances; this would put the onus on companies to provide basic safety net standards of rights and benefits to their workers. The Committee also recommends that an incoming government "set out a roadmap for equalising the National Insurance contributions made by employees and the self-employed".

**Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

## WORKFORCE SKILLS MATCH BUSINESS NEEDS

*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 businesses for the future.*

### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

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.

### **Outcome Strategy:**

**Wirral's Growth Strategy** – 1. Greater job opportunities in Wirral, 2. Workforce skills match businesses needs, 3. Increase inward investment, 4. Vibrant Tourism Economy.



### **Associated Legislation**

*Currently there is no emerging legislation aligned to this Wirral Plan Pledge. The Pledge will continue to be monitored for any developments.*

### **Emerging Policy:**

#### **£16 million boost to improve maths skills**

**DfE, 20/07/2017**

#### **Summary –**

A £16m million investment to increase the quality of teaching in post-16 maths is part of a major drive to see more students studying the subject after GCSE and ensure Britain's future workforce can compete in the global marketplace post Brexit.

The introduction of a rigorous maths curriculum, new AS & A Level's maths qualifications and high quality "core maths" qualifications are ensuring more young people are leaving education with the skills they need to secure their first job, an apprenticeship or go on to further study.

The investment will boost the capacity of schools, colleges and universities to deliver good quality teaching for post-16 Maths courses including Core, A Level and Further Maths. While maths continues to be the most popular subject at A level, with 88,000 entries in 2017, up 3 per cent on last year, almost three quarters of students with an A\*-C in GCSE maths at age 16 choose not to continue studying the subject.

This follows a review by Sir Adrian which made a strong case for the value of maths skills for all students, whichever route they take. He highlights, however, a number of challenges that need to be addressed in order to drive up participation, including tackling the negative perceptions of maths. He has called on government, employers, universities, schools and colleges to take action so that more students choose to study the subject post-16.

**Emerging Policy:**

**Work Local**  
**LGA, 05/07/2017**

**Summary –**

Research for the Local Government Association (LGA) reveals 17 funding streams managed by eight departments or agencies, spending more than £10 billion a year. Despite this investment, they often fail to meet local need, address economic and social challenges, or make a decisive impact on outcomes for people or places. Therefore, they suggest local areas need more influence and control.

**Brief Analysis -**

In response, the LGA suggest that a positive vision for an integrated employment and skills service would enable strong, resilient economies where residents contribute to, and benefit from, growth.

The new vision would: devolve funding to respond to local economic needs, provide more personalised, joined-up services and deliver a locally rooted, demand led and integrated approach.

The LGA is now calling on representatives from Local Councils to give their views to help shape the new approach.

**Emerging Policy:**

**12 million people to be caught in skills gap by 2024**  
**LGA, 05/07/2017**

**Summary –**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has released data predicting that 12 million people will be without a job or be in work that are over-qualified for by 2024. The report calls for new duties on councils to help avoid skill gaps in the workforce.

**Brief Analysis -**

The LGA argues improving the country's skills bases is an urgent matter as we move towards a Post- Brexit Britain where a skilled migration system can no longer be relied on.

Learning Work Institute (LWI) analysis of official data found that almost 2 million migrants from the European Economic Area are in highly-skilled jobs or are qualified at the equivalent of degree level or higher. By contrast, 790,000 work in low-skilled jobs or have low or no qualifications.

Local Authorities and their partners can more effectively reduce long-term unemployment and the number of young people out of work by targeting support far better than our current complex and fragmented national employment and skills system.

**Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

## INCREASE INWARD INVESTMENT

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

### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

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.

### **Outcome Strategy:**

We will have a clear focus on key growth sectors and aim to become a world class location for investment in those sectors, taking advantage of having one of the UK's strongest small business sectors and our unique geographical position at the Western gateway to UK and Europe.

### **Associated Legislation**

*Currently there is no emerging legislation or policy aligned to this Wirral Plan Pledge. The Pledge will continue to be monitored for any developments.*





## THRIVING SMALL BUSINESSES

*Our economy is also supported by entrepreneurs and small businesses.*

### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

We will work with our partners and other community groups to deliver net additional 250 new businesses in Wirral over the coming five 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.

### **Outcome Strategy:**

1. Create a more dynamic and growth focused business population, 2. Raise the level of business starts; 3. Increase growth aspiration, skills and competence among business leaders; 4. Improve productivity and competitiveness; 5. Encourage diversification into emerging markets; 6. Increase the scale of export activity and the number of businesses that export their goods and services; 7. Promote supply chain development activity in key sectors.



### **Associated Legislation**

*Currently there is no emerging legislation aligned to this Wirral Plan Pledge. The Pledge will continue to be monitored for any developments.*

### **Policy Development:**

#### **New help for small businesses launched**

[Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk), 01/08/2017

#### **Summary –**

A new online tax forum and dedicated webchat service has been launched for small businesses and the self-employed. It is a quick way to get answers to tax questions as well as help with:

- Starting a business
- Support growing a business
- Buying and selling abroad
- Completing tax returns
- Tax credits.

Mel Stride, Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General, said “the UK’s 5.4 million small businesses play a vital role in our economy. We want to help businesses get off the ground and support them as they grow...Webchat service will give companies useful hints and tips”.

**Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

## VIBRANT TOURISM ECONOMY

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

### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

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.

### **Outcome Strategy:**

- 1) Developing Wirral's tourism marketing strategy and positioning the peninsula as an outstanding destination
- 2) Generating greater benefit from conferences, business meetings and events
- 3) Developing Wirral's tourism assets and experiences to increase competitiveness and attract new visitor markets
- 4) Encouraging sustainable and accessible tourism in Wirral.



### **Associated Legislation**

*Currently there is no emerging legislation aligned to this Wirral Plan Pledge. The Pledge will continue to be monitored for any developments.*

### **Policy Development:**

#### **£200 million boost for rural England**

[Gov.uk](http://Gov.uk), 29/07/2017

#### **Summary –**

Funding for rural businesses that will generate thousands of jobs and provide new support to expand and improve their premises has been announced as part of £200 million grant offer.

This is the latest round of the Rural Development Programme which is currently expected to generate 6,750 new jobs. The grant is to invest in rural tourism developments.

Lord Gardiner, Rural Affairs Minister, said “one in three businesses in this country are based in the countryside and this government is committed to providing the support they need to create a strong and prosperous rural economy.

**Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

# TRANSPORT AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE

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

## **Our Pledge Ambition:**

We will use engineering to improve our road networks, to build new cycle routes, improve pedestrian facilities and take advantage of new technology to travel efficiently, safely and sustainably. People will feel confident to change their travel habits and try healthy, environmentally friendly ways of getting around. Residents, business and visitors will know how to get around and where to find information. 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.

## **Outcome Strategy: Transport**

1. Keep traffic moving safely and efficiently
2. Reliable and affordable public transport
3. Encourage healthy active travel
4. Inclusive integrated transport that supports our residents needs

## **Outcome Strategy: Digital**

1. Every resident with the ability and the skills to get the most out of technology to improve their lives
2. Every business benefitting from market-leading technology infrastructure, helping them to open up new markets and compete globally
3. Every public service is joined up, integrated and available online in a way which makes it simple and accessible to get support online.



## **Associated Legislation:**

### **Data Protection Bill**

The Data Protection Bill was announced during the Queens Speech, but has yet to be presented by either House.

### **The purpose of the Bill is to:**

Whilst the Bill has not yet been published, it will propose to make provision for a new data protection law, ensuring that data protection rules are suitable for the digital age and confirming that citizens' data protection rights will be enshrined in UK law after Brexit.

### **Associated Legislation Continued:**

#### **Data Protection Bill**

##### **Summary:**

While the Bill has not yet been presented as so its specific contents cannot be evaluated, potential implications include the strengthening of citizens' rights, for example to have more control over their personal data including a right to be forgotten when they no longer want their data to be processed.

### **Associated Legislation:**

#### **Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill**

**Reporting stage:** A date for this Bill's first reading has not been announced.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:** Ensure the UK continues to be at the forefront of developing new technology in electric and automated road vehicles.

The Bill will:

- Allow the regulatory framework to keep pace with the fast evolving technology for electric cars, helping improve air quality
- Provide for the installation of charging points for electric and hydrogen vehicles
- Extend compulsory motor vehicle insurance to cover the use of automated vehicles, to ensure that compensation claims continue to be paid quickly, fairly, and easily, in line with longstanding insurance practice

##### **Concerns and progress so far:**

Concerns have been raised regarding the skills gap facing the industry. A recent study conducted on behalf of the IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) showed that 81% of independent garages found it difficult to recruit technicians with the skills and competences to undertake work on technologically advanced vehicles, such as hybrid and electric cars. Out of 183,869 vehicle technicians in the UK only 2,000 are qualified on EVs and these are all employed in manufactures dealerships.

The lack of competition will exasperate the issue of the skills gap that would be taking place in the market. Manufacturers will train technicians and provide them with the equipment to repair EV and FCEV; this will lead to a group of skilled technicians who can repair the modern vehicles and a large percentage of technicians who have only been trained on the old technology.

This will mean that the market will fail to open up because of high repair and insurance costs. ULEV insurance costs are 50% more expensive than petrol and diesel because of the skills shortage.

**Associated Legislation:**

**High Speed 2 Phase 2A (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill**

**Reporting stage:** A date for this Bill's first reading has not been announced.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- build and maintain HS2 and its associated works
- compulsorily acquire interests in the land required
- affect or change rights of way, including the stopping-up or diversion of highways and waterways (permanently or temporarily)
- modify infrastructure belonging to statutory undertakers (e.g. utility companies)
- carry out work on listed buildings and demolish buildings in conservation areas
- carry out protective works to buildings and third-party infrastructure
- make necessary changes to existing legislation to facilitate construction and operation of HS2

**Concerns and progress so far:**

It is hoped that HS2 will reduce overcrowding on the existing network and generate economic growth across the country. However, critics say the project is too expensive (estimated £55.7bn) and will damage the environment.

The Cheshire Wildlife Trust said, 'the proposals could directly or indirectly damage or destroy important sites for nature conservation such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Ancient Woodland and Local Wildlife Sites, as well as impacting the coherence of our 'ecological network.'

**Associated Legislation:**

**Digital Economy Act**

**Reporting stage:** The Digital Economy Bill received Royal Assent on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017. However, the Bill is currently in the House of Lords to discuss a proposed amendment. The date for the second reading is yet to be announced.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- A Bill to make provision about electronic communications infrastructure and services
- To provide for restricting access to online pornography
- To make provision about protection of intellectual property in connection with electronic communications
- To make provision about data-sharing
- To make provision about functions of OFCOM in relation to the BBC
- To provide for determination by the BBC of age-related TV licence fee concessions
- To make provision about the regulation of direct marketing
- To make other provision about OFCOM and its functions; and for connected purposes.

**Associated Legislation:**

**Digital Economy Bill**

**Concerns and progress so far:**

The following amendments were agreed by the House of Commons Public Bill Committee:

- The Bill will now include a specific obligation for providers to fix faults with connections within appropriate timescales.
- The Bill will now allow an end-user to terminate a contract on repeatedly failing to meet a specific standard or obligation; this is currently optional.
- Courses of study for qualifications in IT are free of charge for persons in England aged 19 or over.
- A new clause has been inserted to compel the government to report annually on the progress, success and take up of the Universal Service Obligation (USO).
- Suppliers will be obligated to provide consistent upload speeds at a minimum of 2Mbps with the aim of doubling that figure over the next 10 years.

However, Labour's Shadow Minister for the Digital Economy, Louise Haigh, doesn't believe the Bill goes far enough in terms of the USO for broadband (the legal right to every household in the country for 10Mbps by 2020). She believes that by the time the scheme is rolled out the 10Mbps broadband speed will be outdated and leave the UK falling behind in terms of digital infrastructure.

**Associated Legislation:**

**Telecommunications Infrastructure (relief from non-domestic rates) Bill**

**Reporting stage:** This Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017. It is scheduled for the committee stage on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Make provision enabling relief from non-domestic rates in England and Wales to be conferred in respect of hereditaments used for the purposes of facilitating the transmission of communications by any means involving the use of electrical or electromagnetic energy; and for connected purposes.

**Associated Legislation:**

**Bus Services Act**

**Reporting stage:** This Bill received Royal Assent on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

**The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Strengthen arrangements for partnership working in the sector



## **Associated Legislation Continued:**

### **Bus Services Act**

#### **The purpose of the Bill is to:**

- Introduce 'enhanced partnerships'. Introduce new franchising powers with decision making at a local level
- Provide for a step change in the information available to bus passengers

#### **Concerns and progress so far:**

Clause 21 of the Bus Services Bill initially read as follows:

#### **21 Bus companies: limitation of powers of authorities in England**

- (1) A relevant authority may not, in exercise of any of its powers, form a company for the purpose of providing a local service.

However, members of the House of Lords voted to remove clause 21 from the Bill after receiving public criticism. The Clause essentially prevented Local Authorities from setting up and running their own bus companies, and with many currently publicly owned bus companies providing large amounts of revenue for local authority budgets the decision will be welcome news to many councils.

## **Emerging Policy:**

### **Councils share £75 million for major road improvements**

[\(DfT, 01/08/2017\)](#)

#### **Summary**

Councils in England have been awarded funding to refurbish bridges, improve junctions and boost flood defences as part of a multi-million government investment. Nineteen projects across the country will receive a share of £75 million of government investment for essential road maintenance.

Councils will now be challenged to put forward schemes which could make a real difference to road users. Successful projects include junction improvements, repairs and resurfacing, flood resilience measures, bridge and viaduct refurbishment, and improved drainage.

For example, certain improvements are expected to cut congestion, journey times and improve reliability, as well as helping to support local businesses and boost economic growth. Named the challenge fund, its one part of the £6.1 billion being provided to local highway authorities in England, outside London, between 2015 to 2016 and 2020 to 2021 to help keep the country moving and the economy growing.

### **Emerging Policy:**

#### **Investing in Cycling and Walking: Rapid Evidence Assessment**

[LGiU, 26/06/2017](#)

The Local Democracy Think Tank (LGiU) has created a briefing summarising a review of evidence by Department of Transport on investing in cycling and walking. The review centres around the issues and barriers relating to commuting by bicycle and on foot. It also investigates the benefits of different types of investment in this field.

The Department of Transport's review covers issues such as trip rates, health, absenteeism and local economies. It concludes that the limited evidence available currently on the impact of investing in walking and cycling makes it more difficult to make a case for future investment. The research also highlights the benefits of merging capital and revenue spending as projects which combine infrastructure improvements with behaviour change interventions are likely to be more effective.

### **Emerging Policy:**

#### **Huge economic boost for the North of England as Transport Secretary confirms HS2 routes**

[\(DfT, 17/07/2017\)](#)

#### **Summary**

The Transport secretary confirms high speed rail lines between Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and the East Midlands. The decision is set to bring massive economic boost to the relevant city regions. It is also expected to free up thousands of extra seats and additional services and also free up local routes by new high speed train line.

#### **Brief Analysis**

The new connection will all be linked to London by the same line. The economic boost for the North and the Midlands will be sought by increasing productivity and creating new business opportunities. Recent research also indicates the impact of HS2 potentially meaning more than double rush hour seats from Manchester Piccadilly towards Stoke and Crewe; and from Leeds towards Wakefield. The announcement means journeys from Birmingham to Manchester in 40 minutes- a trip that currently takes more than 80 minutes.

By providing new routes for intercity services, HS2 will free-up space on our existing railways for new commuter, regional and freight services, taking lorries off our roads.

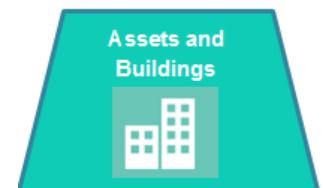
#### **Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

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

*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.*



### **Our Pledge Ambition:**

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

### **Outcome Strategy**

1. Delivering more integrated and customer focused services, 2) Creating economic growth, 3) Generating capital receipts and revenue streams, 4) Reducing running costs

### **Associated Legislation – Royal Assent:**

#### **Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017**

Following agreement by both Houses on the text of the Bill it received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017.

The Bill is now an Act of Parliament (law).

### **The purpose of the Bill is to:**

A Bill to make provision in relation to the procedure to be followed by local authorities when varying the charges to be paid in connection with the use of certain parking places.

### **Summary:**

The Act amends sections 35C and 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, allowing for the amendment of the existing regulation-making powers of the Secretary of State in relation to the variation of charges of both off-street parking places and designated parking places. The Bill provides for regulations in respect of the procedure to be followed for varying charges to make different provision for different purposes. It also provides that regulations could provide for local authorities to consult about their proposal to vary charges. This means that regulations could be made that provide for different procedures to be followed depending on whether local authorities intend to raise or lower their charges, potentially minimising the procedure to be followed when charges are being lowered. The Act comes into force at the end of the period of 2 months beginning with the day on which the Act is passed.

Full details of the Act are available at Legislation.gov.uk through the following link:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/11/contents>

**Emerging Policy:**

**Funding boost for local authorities to transform local communities**

[Gov.uk](http://gov.uk), 01/08/2017

**Summary**

The Government has launched a £54 million package to transform local communities and release land for thousands of new homes. The new cross government partnership is to make smarter use of government owned property. The Land Release Fund is launched in partnership with Cabinet Office and Local Government Association's One Public Estate programme. This will ensure local councils release some of their unused or surplus land for housing. This will help meet the ambition to unlock council owned land.

Councils can bid for funding for land remediation and small scale infrastructure. The partnership between DCLG and One Public Estate will give local authorities greater access to support from across government and help them release more land, more efficiently.

LGA Chairman said, "Councils have shown that they are perfectly positioned to act as leaders of place and deliver effective cross public sector asset placements.

**Potential implications for the Wirral Plan as a result of emerging legislation and policy:**

*There are currently no potential implications as the emerging legislation is in the early stages of development.*

*The legislation will continue to be monitored and implications will be captured in the next Policy Inform paper which will be published in November 2017.*

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