



**COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES
LEADER OF WIRRAL COUNCIL**

CABINET
4 June 2018

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2018/19

Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council, said:

“Wirral residents expect good services; they expect their streets to be clean, their communities to be safe and their roads to be in good condition. They expect the vulnerable to be safe and protected, and for the economy to grow – creating the opportunities they need to secure good, well-paid jobs.

We will deliver on all of those expectations. Committing to delivering these priorities is about setting out our stall, it is about being clear with Wirral residents about what we will deliver and what they can expect from us.

We will also make sure we keep people informed on our progress, encourage residents to get involved in their local communities and shaping local services, and work with all of our partners to make sure we continue to deliver on our 20 Pledges.”

REPORT SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the strategic priorities for the Council in 2018/19. Progress against these priorities will be monitored and reported back on a regular basis throughout the year. The aim is to deliver outcomes against the 20 Pledges in the Wirral Plan.
- 1.2 Following last month’s local elections, the people of Wirral once again chose a Labour administration to run the Council, but they also told us what matters most to them and what they want us to deliver. We have listened and are taking action. This report reaffirms the importance of delivering the 20 Pledges in the Wirral Plan, agreed unanimously by Council in 2015. It also focuses on five strategic priorities to which particular emphasis will be given during 2018/19.

- 1.3 Against a continued back drop of austerity, Cabinet knows that we will be facing savings in excess of £45 million in 2019/20. In addition, the following year will see the removal of the Revenue Support Grant in its entirety. This will require the Council to make substantial changes to the way in which services are delivered and to continue to identify opportunities to generate additional income. For the immediate 12 months, and to begin to prepare for the huge change to local government financing in 2020/2021, a number of changes have been made to the Cabinet portfolio team. These were announced at Annual Council Part 2 on Tuesday 15th May, and included a new Cabinet role focussed on tackling law and order issues, a major concern for many residents.
- 1.4 This matter affects all Wards within the Borough. It is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.0 Cabinet are recommended to:
- i. Re-affirm its support for The Wirral Plan and endorse the Strategic Priorities for 2018/19 as set out in this report.
 - ii. Instruct relevant senior officers to work with their Cabinet leads to develop the detailed plans required to deliver on the Strategic Priorities, with a further report provided to Cabinet as soon as possible.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 As austerity policies continue, it is vital the Council continues to focus on those issues which are most important to local people, and seeks to find imaginative and efficient new ways of providing and commissioning services. This report provides the strategic direction for the Council for the next year, providing a clear framework upon which our work programmes can be based.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The priorities have been developed following conversations with communities, market research and the financial imperatives the Council is working within.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 From a policy perspective, the administration will focus on the following priorities:
- 3.2 **Getting the Basics Right:** While Council has to prepare for the financial challenges ahead, it is essential to maintain our focus on delivering excellent services to residents. This means getting the everyday services right, everyday – emptying the bins, repairing the roads, fixing the streetlights, keeping our parks and gardens and beaches in good order, tackling anti-social behaviour, and looking after our vulnerable residents.
- 3.3 **Jobs and Growth:** As exciting new developments with Wirral Growth Company emerge across the borough, construction starts on Wirral Waters, and progress is made with the Hoylake Golf Resort, it is important that local residents and businesses are the beneficiaries of these investments. ‘Spades in the ground’ should mean training, apprenticeships and skills opportunities for our young people, work and jobs for residents and, where possible, local procurement of services and contracts. Renewing our relationship with the Wirral Chamber of Commerce, playing a leadership role in the Liverpool City Region and using the powers and resources of devolution to support local firms and attract new investment to Wirral, will also help deliver our business pledges.
- 3.4 **Children’s Services:** While we have made a good start on our journey of improvement, we still have a lot of work to do. The over-arching aim must be to come out of intervention as quickly as possible. Specific priorities include a new management structure which ‘gets the basics right’, manages the budget, reduces the dependence on agency staff and creates a new work environment. We must ensure that early intervention improves so we can start to see a reduction in the number of children ‘looked after.’ Cabinet would also like to see more support for care leavers with housing and job opportunities, to give them the best possible life opportunities.
- 3.5 **Local Plan and Housing:** During 2018/19 we must complete the final Draft Local Plan for approval in July 2019. Our Local Plan must identify and secure long term opportunities to meet demand for homes and employment across the borough. It should inform and be informed by the emerging plans of the Wirral Growth Company and Wirral Waters amongst others, and it should recognise the importance of

protecting areas of Green Belt which contribute the most to the quality of life we enjoy in Wirral. To achieve this we will need to continue to make improvements in our planning department so we have the resources, expertise and systems to quickly deliver the new homes and developments we need.

- 3.6 **Leisure and Culture Review:** Over the past 12 months, a lot of time has been spent exploring possibilities and options to reform how we deliver Leisure and Cultural services. With huge changes to financing for local authorities emerging, it is vitally important we take action now to put these services on a sustainable foundation. We need to put a transformative action plan in place, and work more closely with existing and new partners to find sustainable income and revenue streams. We must also review which services the local authority should be providing and which ones can be managed and run better by other organisations, including local communities and charitable groups.

REPORTING BACK ON DELIVERY

- 3.7 Accountability to the people of Wirral on delivering The Wirral Plan and our 20 Pledges is essential. In order to fulfil this duty, Cabinet members will report back at regular intervals throughout the year on the delivery of the Pledges and the strategic priorities set out above. Work is underway to define relevant metrics and key performance indicators.
- 3.8 As part of reporting back on delivery, Cabinet will also highlight how we are ensuring that the key principles which underpin the policies of this administration, i.e. fairness and social justice, are being achieved.
- 3.9 Finally, work is underway to look at priorities for this Council post 2020. A report on some initial ideas will be produced later in the year.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Strategic Priorities will be delivered within existing resources and also support the delivery of a fair and sustainable budget for future years.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None arising as a direct implication of this report, although individual service and project plans to deliver programmes will fully consider legal matters.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 None arising as a direct implication of this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 None arising as a direct risk to this report, although individual service and project plans will include robust risk assessments and plans.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The priorities described within this report are based on consultations, conversations and market research with communities. Service changes, new developments and any new programme of work which emerge will of course be subject to full consultation with Wirral residents.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising as a direct implication of this report, although individual service and project plans to deliver programmes will include full Equality Impact Assessments.

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Leader of Wirral Council

APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL