

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Angela Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Jobs & Growth
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Brian Bailey – Corporate Director for Housing and Economic Growth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY

On 26 November, Cabinet agreed to launch a consultation which will help determine the future of Birkenhead. The ideas, suggestions and vision which is generated for the town over these next few months will determine how we revitalise this important retail centre.

By listening and engaging with local residents, community groups and businesses we will shape a Birkenhead town centre masterplan which will benefit local business, improve opportunities for residents and deliver thousands of new jobs.

At the heart of a thriving Birkenhead town centre will be a commercial district which includes Grade A office space, a new market and retail options, and an improved leisure offer. Creating a vibrant commercial district will attract new businesses to Birkenhead, provide space for existing Wirral firms to grow, and also offers the opportunity for our borough's largest employer, the public sector, to consolidate its real estate and office requirements in line with One Public Estate policies.

The new Birkenhead Commercial District will attract an investment of up to £150m. Our ambitions for Wirral Growth Company are anchored in our desire to see economic, social and environmental opportunities increase for Wirral residents and businesses.

Our plans for Wirral are ambitious and progressive. To ensure we deliver these social outcomes and they are recognised as central to the ethos and actions of Wirral Growth Company, I was delighted to be recommended to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors for Wirral Growth Company.

Read more in [Wirral View](#).

I also want to highlight to Members the new Strategic Investment Fund for the Liverpool City Region. Launched last month by Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, the SIF is a half-billion-pound fund to help transform the city region's economy, creating high-quality jobs and boosting living standards for local people.

The Strategic Investment Fund will make delivering local jobs and positive social impacts, like paying the living wage, an increasingly significant factor in approving funding. Around £100 million will be available in the first year of the fund, rising to £500 million over four years.

Read more in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

I want to update Members on the excellent performance towards our Pledge targets in this area. The first achievement to mention is our progress towards creating and safeguarding jobs, with 373 jobs created/safeguarded in just the first two quarters of 2018/19. This performance is as a result of a number of SME's reporting success and growth, following support from the Council and the Wirral Chamber of Commerce.

It is also heartening to see our overall employment rate continue to rise, with businesses continuing to report good performance. We will continue to support every local business in our borough to grow and succeed.

Finally, I would like to highlight continued exceptional performance in supporting people with disabilities into employment, and pass on my congratulations to my cabinet colleague Cllr Christine Jones. Almost 50% of people with disabilities are now in employment – Wirral's highest ever level – and we are rapidly closing the gap on the North West and National levels.