

WIRRAL PLAN 2020

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

THE WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
KEY ACHIEVEMENTS	4
PEOPLE	5
HIGHLIGHTS	6
CASE STUDY - Community Matters Partnership	8
CASE STUDY - Supporting DA Victims	8
CASE STUDY - Foster Care Awards	9
BUSINESS	10
HIGHLIGHTS	11
CASE STUDY - LCR Tourism Awards	13
CASE STUDY - Wirral Growth Company	13
CASE STUDY - Borough of Culture	14
ENVIRONMENT	15
HIGHLIGHTS	16
CASE STUDY - LCR Year of the Environment	18
CASE STUDY - Environment Awards	18
CASE STUDY - £6m boost for Wirral's roads	19
CONCLUSION	20

FOREWORD

“The progress we have made is outstanding. In almost every area of our work, we have delivered”

The Wirral Plan was the borough's first ever shared set of priorities and goals which the Council, the private, public and voluntary sectors committed to own and deliver together.

It committed us to working together, towards a shared ambition for Wirral. It created the launchpad to joining up services, pooling resources and focussing completely on what is best for the resident, not what is best for our organisation.

The progress we have made has been outstanding. We are not finished, we still have challenges to overcome but, in almost every area of our work, we have delivered.

A few results which jumped out at me include:

- More than 4,000 jobs have been protected or created
- Wirral now boasts its highest ever employment rate
- We have helped more than 20,000 people with adult care, just last year
- A quarter of a million people joined us at events in 2018/19
- We have brought more than 1200 empty properties back into use

We made a commitment when we first agreed this Plan to report back to Wirral residents – to keep residents informed, and give open, honest appraisals of our progress so we can be held to

account on the promises we made.

This Annual Review does just that.

Through reading this document you will see how every member of the Wirral Partnership has made an impact in improving the lives of residents. The report highlights and celebrates the many achievements of which we are rightly proud, but it does not shy away from those areas where challenges persist and where we still need to improve and focus more attention.

I am proud of our performance this year but, more importantly, I am excited for what lies ahead.

I encourage you to read this document and see for yourself how the Wirral Plan is improving our borough for every resident.



Cllr Pat Hackett

Leader of Wirral Council and
Chair of the Wirral Partnership

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



20,000

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
WITH ADULT SOCIAL CARE



70%

CHILDREN REACHING **GOOD**
LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT



350

PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED
TO **FOSTER**



74%

HIGHEST EVER
EMPLOYMENT RATE



4045
JOBS CREATED



250,000

VISITORS TO IMAGINE
WIRRAL EVENTS



1252

EMPTY PROPERTIES
BACK IN USE



32

NATIONAL
AWARDS
FOR PARKS



98%

LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT
QUALITY



"Wirral is a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, every child gets a good start in life and older residents are respected and valued. Ensuring the most vulnerable among us are safe, and feel safe, is perhaps our most important responsibility. We will work across Council and agency boundaries to promptly identify and tackle problems before they develop."



PEOPLE PLEDGES



20,000
PEOPLE SUPPORTED
WITH ADULT SOCIAL CARE



70%
CHILDREN REACHING **GOOD**
LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT



350
PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED
TO FOSTER

People want services tailored to meet their individual needs. They expect services which help them in their individual circumstances, and which have an impact in improving their lives.

This is exactly what we are delivering. Every organisation in the Wirral Partnership is working together to improve the lives of children, families and older people in the borough. We are seeing an impact in many areas already.

Older People live well

Older people in Wirral now receive joined up, seamless support from multi-disciplinary social care and health teams. The services are easier for people to access and understand, and more public resource is spent where it matters most – the front line.

Another new development to highlight is the Good Neighbour Scheme, which is designed to reignite community spirit, so people feel valued and safe in their neighbourhoods encouraging them to look out for each other and feel part of a friendly, thriving and vibrant neighbourhood. Our extremely successful 'door knock' scheme has also continued apace. More than 2,000 residents have been spoken to and supported, to help them avoid social isolation and loneliness, and signpost them to the services they need.

Children are ready for school

70% of young children are now reaching a 'good' level of development by age 5: this is the highest ever level in Wirral, higher than the regional average and significantly higher than the start of the Wirral Plan (62%). It is testament to the work of every public agency in the borough, but there is still more to do.

Our focus is on continuing to improve what support parents and young children can receive. We will particularly focus on making sure children from disadvantaged backgrounds access the services available to them, and on making sure as many women as possible access professional maternity services at the right times.

Young People are ready for work and adulthood

We are focussing work now on making sure vulnerable young people, particularly those in care, are given intensive, tailored support to ensure they get the most out of their education. Every looked after child now receives a Personal Education Plan (PEP), and we are working with each child individually to make sure their attendance and school performance is as good as it can be.

Significant work has been undertaken to improve the quality of the PEPs. There has been a relentless focus on ensuring looked after children's education targets are aspirational but realistic. Most recent school Ofsted inspections have commented very favourably on the PEPs. The Virtual Headteacher is consulting with headteachers regarding the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding in improving outcomes for looked after children.

Vulnerable children reach their full potential

This pledge is about making sure vulnerable children and young people are safe, which needs to be assured before children can make best use of services to reach their potential. Numbers of looked after children are now stable and beginning to reduce, after more than two years of intensive improvement work.

Three indicators demonstrating the level of demand for children's social care services number of children looked after, numbers of children in need and numbers of children subject to a child protection plan are all showing that numbers are stable and beginning to reduce. Significant work has been undertaken in the last 12 months to establish a new range of services which are focused on preventing the need for children to require a social care intervention. Ofsted are extremely supportive of the work which is being delivered and at our next full inspection we expect an improved judgement.

Reduce child and Family Poverty

Representatives from every agency in the Wirral Partnership are working together to develop new solutions to support families in need throughout the borough.

There is clear evidence that reducing worklessness and improving the skills and

opportunities for parents and young people is critical in linking economic growth and poverty reduction, and it is in this area where our work will continue to focus.

People with disabilities live independently

More people with disabilities in Wirral are now employed than ever before, which is testament to the work delivered by all agencies involved and particular organisations such as Wirral Metropolitan College, whose supported intern scheme goes from strength to strength.

Over the course of this year, the number of people in receipt of personal budgets – and therefore able to direct and commission their own personal care and support – has more than doubled. Wirral residents also now benefit from an integrated, all age disability service – meaning that disabled people in Wirral can access seamless, joined up care from Wirral Council and NHS bodies.

Zero tolerance to domestic violence

All public services are working together to target this area, with new services in place to rehabilitate offenders, support victims, and help children to understand and come to terms with the effects of domestic abuse. The charity 'Tomorrows Women Wirral' provides a safe environment for women to address their issues to help lead happier, healthier more fulfilled lives.

A newly developed initiative called #GotTheTeeShirt is based on victims gaining support from domestic abuse survivors who have 'been there and come out the other side'. The focus is about the client rediscovering who they were prior to the relationship and helping them move safely back into the community.



CASE STUDY 1 Community Matters Partnership

Wirral Council's Early Help and Prevention Service is working with community organisations to deliver early help to families across Wirral who need it most - forming the 'Community Matters Partnership'.

Community Matters will see a new and innovative way of working, with the main goal of helping families and children get the services they need, when they need them. Seven providers will now work together alongside existing council teams, using a joined-up approach to give families the help they need to improve their daily lives.

Partners on this project include HomeStart, Wired, North Birkenhead Development Trust, WEB Merseyside, Caritas, Fender Community School and Capacity: The Public Services Lab.

This new way of working will make it easier for families to access the services if needed and get straight forward and effective support from one place. The partnership will create a stronger link between council teams and voluntary community groups to deliver effective support.

CASE STUDY 2 Supporting DA Victims

Wirral Council is believed to be the first in the UK to provide up to 10 days' paid special leave, specifically for employees who are victims of domestic abuse. The leave is available to survivors who may need to relocate or access various legal or support services relating to their experience of domestic abuse.

The announcement came as women's groups the world over celebrated International Women's Day and call for gender equality with this year's theme, #BalanceforBetter. It is hoped the new policy will go some way to redressing the imbalance for survivors of abuse.

In the run up to the one year anniversary of the alliance's #ItsNeverOk campaign to end domestic abuse, the policy is another example of Wirral's real-world efforts to support survivors.

The existing domestic abuse policy, which has supported survivors since 2006, now offers up to 10 days paid time off to employees (survivors) to attend court, solicitors, counselling, support agencies, refuges, arrange rehousing or change childcare arrangements. The support will be available to all council employees who are experiencing domestic abuse, regardless of gender.



CASE STUDY 3 **Foster Care Awards**

Foster carers who between them have devoted 370 years to helping young people were honoured at Wallasey town hall. The Big Heart awards were held to recognise the contributions of those who have played such an important part in fostering young people – and to welcome new foster carers.

The event, compered by director of children's services, Paul Boyce, saw Brenda and George Killip, Wirral's longest serving carers among those honoured after almost 30 years of helping children in the borough. The couple have looked after children on a long- and short-term basis and have cared for more than 60 children, including those with disabilities – and although they moved to Wales, they have continued to foster for Wirral.

Other winners included Julie Preston who won the Foster Carers' Choice which was voted for by other foster carers, and Sue Johnston who scooped the Professionals' Choice Award which was voted for by members of staff from the children's and young people's department (CYPD).

BUSINESS



“Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive. We must seize the opportunities before us, and work hard to create new ones to transform Wirral’s economy for this generation and the next. We will focus on Wirral’s priority growth sectors to promote and grow jobs in the visitor economy, advanced manufacturing, maritime and renewable energy sectors. We will work with our partners to deliver these ambitions for Wirral and ensure our plans are both economically and environmentally sustainable.”



BUSINESS



4045
JOBS CREATED



250,000
VISITORS TO IMAGINE
WIRRAL EVENTS



74%
HIGHEST EVER
EMPLOYMENT RATE

Wirral is thriving. We are a key element of a vibrant, energetic City Region which is driving huge economic growth, prosperity and opportunity for all residents.

We are seeing huge momentum at Wirral Waters, with commercial, residential and care complexes coming forward and, through Wirral Growth Company, this Council has launched the biggest public sector led regeneration programme in the UK. It is a truly exciting time for our borough, and we have seen huge successes this past year.

Greater job opportunities in Wirral

Wirral's employment rate is at an all time high, more than 74% at the end of 2018/19, an increase of almost 8% since the start of the Wirral Plan.

Through working with partners such as Wirral Chamber of Commerce, we have seen unprecedented success in safeguarding and creating jobs. More than 4,000 have been created since the start of the Wirral Plan and, with initiatives like Wirral Growth Company moving on at pace, we are set to see even better results in future years.

Increase inward investment

Investment in Wirral is thriving. More than £140 million has been invested into projects and businesses in Wirral since the start of the Wirral Plan, not including the investments taking place

right now through new proposals at Wirral Waters and the huge developments forthcoming from Wirral Growth Company.

Wirral Waters is set to deliver more than 1000 new residential units over the next twelve months, alongside a new dementia care village – finally bringing long-awaited regeneration and prosperity to the Birkenhead docks area.

Thriving small business

Our target at the start of the Wirral Plan was to support 250 new businesses to open their doors in the borough. Since 2015, this target has been 'smashed', with 1,100 new businesses starting trading since the 20 Pledges were launched.

Wirral Council has also taken an active hand in supporting these businesses, through re-acquiring the leasehold of Birkenhead market ahead of planned regeneration of the town centre. Small businesses in the borough are also helped by the multi award-winning Wirral Chamber of Commerce, who are providing a tailored business support service.

Workforce skills match business need

The Skills for Growth programme in the LCR is up and running, providing employers with advice and support to help upskill their current and potential workforce. We are focusing on working with our partners to realise new major skills infrastructure projects, including the Maritime Knowledge Hub and the Manufacturing Technology Catapult Centre.

We continue to work with local partners such as ReachOut and the Spider Project to help Wirral residents get the skills they need to get back to work and achieve their aspirations.

Vibrant tourism economy

More than 250,000 people attended our incredible 'Imagine Wirral' events last year. The Giant Spectacular, River of Light, Cardboard Castles and New Brighton Revisited captured the imagination of people across the world.

The success of these events led to Wirral being named 'Borough of Culture' in the Liverpool City region, and this year we are continuing in the same style – the Witching Hour, River Festival and Animated Square have already provided families with memories which will last forever, and given local businesses a major financial boost.

Technology and infrastructure

More than £6 million is being invested in improving our highways – resurfacing roads, fixing potholes and making sure Wirral residents can travel safely and efficiently. We are in the process of replacing every streetlight with energy-efficient LED bulbs, which are set to provide better light, for less money and less cost to the environment.

This year, we will redouble our efforts to tackle climate change, through investing in green energies and introducing measures designed to reduce our energy consumption, such as sustainable transport policies and electric car charging points.

Assets and buildings are fit for purpose

Our ambition remains to create 'one public estate', where public services from all agencies are available, as much as possible, from the same buildings, co-locating to make sure residents receive the best, most joined up service.

Good progress is being made. There are now fewer buildings, running costs have been reduced, and many more public services are now co-locating and providing integrated services. 25 council buildings now have solar panels installed, helping to power our services in an environmentally efficient way. In the coming year, much more will be done with services throughout the public sector working closer together, sharing office space and ensuring a more efficient use of land, buildings and public assets.



WIRRAL
GROWTH
COMPANY

CASE STUDY 1 **LCR Tourism Awards**

The Liverpool City Region's best tourism events, attractions and venues were celebrated at Liverpool Cathedral when it played host to the Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards 2019.

Television presenter, 'Great British Menu' judge and cook, Andi Oliver, presented the event which recognises the region's top eateries, exhibitions, hotels, event spaces and tourism attractions. Wirral enjoyed a fantastic night, with awards going to Mere Brook House, Cafe Cream and Port Sunlight Village Trust, with Wirral Chamber of Commerce sponsoring the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year Award.

The awards ceremony was organised by the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

CASE STUDY 2 **Wirral Growth Company**

Plans to regenerate Birkenhead and other areas of Wirral are taking shape through community consultation, as Wirral Growth Company has been formally incorporated.

The council selected Muse as its preferred development partner for the 50:50 joint venture scheme, after a major competition, in March 2018 last year for a 10-year partnership.

Alongside Birkenhead, the company also plans to bring forward schemes in areas of Moreton and Bromborough.

Consultation will take place throughout the year to make sure every resident has the chance to shape proposals which will create jobs, homes and opportunities for thousands of local people. For more information visit wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk



CASE STUDY 3 **Borough of Culture**

An extraordinary line-up of cultural events is being delivered in Wirral in 2019 as part of our celebrations after being named Borough of Culture for the Liverpool City Region. Throughout the year, major cultural events in unexpected locations are being held, with a programme based around the themes of discovery, exploration and great outdoors – designed to showcase Wirral to the world.

Wirral's programme in 2019 will provide opportunities throughout the year for artists and creatives to shape the events calendar and offer a platform to shine a light on the existing assets including the borough's galleries and museums, performance spaces and its regular line-up of festivals and community events including Wirral Festival of Firsts, the Spider Project, Wirral Change, Wirral Arts Festival, the Wirral Society of Arts, and the Hillbark Players.

The unprecedented line-up of events and activities builds on the success of last year's Imagine Wirral initiative, which has seen over 250,000 people attend and be part of incredible cultural events. Highlights from 2018 have included

the Tall Ships Three Festivals Regatta celebrations, New Brighton Revisited, Lost Castles, the Giant Spectacular and River of Light.

ENVIRONMENT



“We know how important our local environment is to local people. Living in a safe, clean, well looked after community leads to a better quality of life. We will never compromise on our determination to protect Wirral and continue to make our borough a fantastic place to live and visit.

This past year has seen many successes, with incredibly successful events, thousands of houses being built or improved, areas cleaned, and new, innovative services launched to keep residents safer.”



ENVIRONMENT



1252

EMPTY PROPERTIES
BACK IN USE



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NATIONAL AWARDS
FOR PARKS



98%

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT
QUALITY

We know how important our local environment is to local people. Living in a safe, clean, well looked after community leads to a better quality of life. We will never compromise on our determination to protect Wirral and continue to make our borough a fantastic place to live and visit.

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Leisure and culture opportunities for all

The hard work of our staff and the army of volunteers, community organisations and friends' groups who support our parks has once again recognised, with Wirral consistently receiving more Green Flag awards than anywhere else in our region.

This year, after winning the Best Performer award at the national APSE Awards, Wirral proudly displays 32 quality awards in our parks and beaches. More people than ever are enjoying them, too – with 378 events taking place in our parks last year, more than one a day.

Wirral residents live healthier lives

This year we have many commissioned many new and improved services to help people live healthier

lives, through innovative community funding to working with businesses and linking better with partners.

We know where we must focus our activity in the coming year: continuing our drive to encourage people to give up smoking, to get more active and reduce drug and alcohol use in areas of the borough where this remains a problem.

Community services are joined up and accessible

We have launched Wirral Together, which is a new way of public agencies and local people working in partnership to make things better in communities. It's about engagement, and co-production, and making the Council more responsive, more customer-focussed and more able to respond to customer need.

This year we will take steps to increase the opportunities for local people to get involved in decision-making. We will encourage, enable and empower Wirral residents to take an active role in the decisions made in the Town Hall.

Good quality housing

Our focus on securing affordable homes has resulted in 370 units completed at the end of last year. We have also seen more than 1200 empty homes brought back into use, and improved more than 2000 privately rented homes. We will continue to work every day to ensure Wirral residents have a good choice of excellent quality housing. We are determined to support residents who are living in the private rented sector and have expanded our Selective Licensing scheme to require landlords to provide good quality homes.

Many services and intensive support are also in place to support residents who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. Redesigned, more targeted support is now in place to help people and a range of organisations across the borough are providing support.

Attractive local environment

We have continued to maintain high standards of street cleansing across the borough, with a record high 98.1% 'Local Environment Quality' rating. We successfully delivered another grot spot action plan, cleaning up more than 20 locations in private or unknown ownership.

The Love Where You Live campaign has become well supported by a range of volunteer groups and individuals who are giving up their time to improve their local environment. Later this year we will be talking to residents about a new approach to tackling environmental crime. Recycling levels continue to be a challenge, and this year we will do more to educate and engage people on the importance of recycling. 'Cool Wirral', the council's climate change strategy, is already helping to reduce the carbon footprint of local services. We have plans in place to do more to combat the growing climate emergency.

Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe

Since the launch of the Safer Wirral service, there has been a 30% reduction in Wirral residents reporting anti-social behaviour (ASB). Wirral has maintained the 4th lowest crime rate throughout the year, when compared to the 15 similar areas defined by the Home Office.

Wirral shares the lowest crime rate in Merseyside with Sefton at 79 crimes per thousand population over the last year. A large degree of credit should go to Wirral communities, who have rolled up their sleeves and volunteered help on various initiatives, such as the Good Neighbour scheme, which now has 6,228 members.



CASE STUDY 1 LCR Year of the Environment

Wirral is proud to be part of the Year of the Environment, which will showcase the city region's natural assets and celebrate the valuable work done by so many in the city region to maintain the local environment and show appreciation of the Liverpool City Region's natural environment.

The initiative is the city region's response to the government's national Year of Green Action and brings together the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, its six constituent local authorities – which includes Wirral, Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens - the Environment Agency and Nature Connected.

Year of the Environment will also help raise awareness of issues and areas that demand action and attention, including air quality, waste levels, and the need to shift towards more sustainable use of energy. Many of these areas are influenced by the Combined Authority's policy and funding responsibilities.

For more information on Year of the Environment visit: yoe2019lcr.org.uk/

CASE STUDY 2 Environment Awards

Wirral's very own environmental heroes have been recognised at the Liverpool Echo Environment Awards with many going on to be crowned winners on the night. The awards ceremony held at the Isla Gladstone Pavilion, in Stanley Park is held to recognise, thank and celebrate those playing a part in making a difference to our environment. Winners from Wirral picked up an impressive 6 out of the 9 awards on the night, as well as having 3 more projects shortlisted, showcasing the hard work and dedication of the groups and individuals.

Winners this year included: Elizabeth Gadson (The Little Collector Wirral) – Young Environmental Champion, Heswall Primary School – Green School of the Year, New Ferry Butterfly Park – Community Impact Award, Green Air Schools Project – Healthy Living Award, Wirral Metropolitan College – Carbon Champion Award, Emily Gleaves (Waste Not Want Not) - Environmental Champion.



CASE STUDY 3

£6m boost for Wirral's roads

More than £6 million is being invested in improving Wirral's roads, bridges and streetlights this year.

Extra funding for the work has been secured from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Department for Transport – as well as its own contributions from the Council's capital fund.

The funding will be allocated for both highway maintenance works and integrated transport as the Council seeks to deliver its pledge to provide a transport infrastructure that is fit for the future.

An allocation of £2.625 million from the combined authority from the Highway Maintenance budget, will be supplemented in 2019-20 by a further £315,000 from its Key Route Networks fund, plus extra funding from the Department of

Transport of £1.465 million and a contribution from the Council's own Capital fund of £500,000.

CONCLUSION

We are all proud of Wirral. It is a great place to live, to work and to grow up. It brings together beautiful rural countryside with cutting edge technology and it has a cultural and economic history which is second to none.

The Wirral Plan, and the 20 Pledges we have committed to, are about its future. They are about delivering on the promises which have been made to Wirral residents.

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

- We will put Wirral residents first – always
- We will improve and modernise our services, finding ways to continually deliver more with less, and meet our residents' changing needs
- We will work together, regardless of organisational boundaries, to make sure every penny of public money is invested well, and on securing better lives for local people
- We will do everything possible to encourage local people to take an active role in decision-making
- We will focus on increasing community wealth, social value and affordable homes

I commit to ensuring these points are delivered in the coming year.

I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and remain excited about the future of Wirral.



Cllr Pat Hackett

Leader of Wirral Council and
Chair of the Wirral Partnership

To find out more:



search: Wirral Council



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THE WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP