

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tony Jones
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Regeneration and Growth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Delivery of the Growth Plan continues to progress well with a full schedule of planned activities to support growth. Highlights in the first quarter of this financial year include a continued strong employment rate following last year's continuous improvement trend, with Wirral outperforming the North West average by 2.4 percentage points, and, for the first time, the England average by 0.6 percentage points.

Key activity highlights include:

EMPLOYMENT:

The European funded Wirral Ways to Work Programme continues to perform ahead of target and has supported 5,875 participants since it started in April 2016. Two key employment support projects have been re-tendered this quarter namely the Worklessness Support Project and the Community Connectors Project, which will support continuation of these successful services beyond 2020.

WORKFORCE SKILLS:

Wirral Council has successfully secured Pre-Development Funding from the Combined Authority to resource a 3-month commission for specialist expertise to inform the design of a commercial 'port city accelerator programme' model for the region to be co-located within the proposed Maritime Knowledge Hub/Port City Innovation Hub facility. The aim of the accelerator will be to maximise the benefits of co-locating new and high growth businesses in the port cluster with skills and research expertise on site, increasing the pace of innovation and the opportunity for 'experimentation' in the application of new technology in the maritime sector.

INVESTMENT:

A number of schemes are now coming forward at Wirral Waters which together are driving the regeneration of this area and creating a new community supported by employment and education opportunities. Wirral Council has secured £6m Housing Infrastructure Funding from Homes England to unlock residential development on brownfield land at Wirral Waters. Wirral Waters One will provide 500 apartments with 20% of them being designated affordable homes and this scheme is being taken forward by Peel Holdings and Wirral Council. The Belong development will provide high quality dementia care and accommodation within an extra care facility. Urban Splash, the innovative and renowned regeneration company, and Peel have submitted a planning application for the first phase of their waterfront development which will see some 350 houses being built. In addition, an office development at Tower Road South, Wirral Waters, has received planning permission and will provide much needed Grade A office in the area. These developments are supported by infrastructure schemes such as improved pedestrian walkways and cycle paths which will increase the accessibility of the area and strengthen links to Birkenhead Town Centre.

BUSINESS:

Following submission of Expressions of Interest to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Future High Streets Fund, New Ferry and Birkenhead bids have both been successfully

shortlisted for progression to the next detailed business planning phase. This represents a significant result, with Government receiving over 300 applications and shortlisting just 40 town centre areas, in this first round, for approval to progress. In addition, Government has recently announced that Birkenhead will receive funding from the national Town Fund which, together with the proposals being taken forward by the Wirral Growth Company, will enable a range of improvements to be made to Birkenhead Town Centre. Liscard and New Ferry have also been awarded funding from the LCR Metro Mayor Town Centre Fund and action plans are now being developed.