



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024

Report Title:	REGENERATION DELIVERY RESOURCING
Report of:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to fund additional resourcing requirements that have been identified following a comprehensive review of regeneration projects and processes. The requirements are for a mix of internal fixed-term roles and externally procured disciplines over a period of 2 years. Funding has been identified from Wirral Growth Company profits and where possible, capitalisation of costs.

The Regeneration Programme is a core part of the Council Plan supporting Brownfield First and the Local Plan. The Council has been successful in securing over £150 million of funding for the regeneration of the borough. As a result, there is a need to prioritise delivery of numerous projects by March 2026 which requires additional skills and capacity.

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework details a comprehensive regeneration vision that will deliver 21,000 new homes and 6,000 new jobs in Birkenhead over the next 20 years and will transform Birkenhead and parts of Wallasey and New Ferry, building on Government funding support secured over the past 3 years to support infrastructure improvements and town centre intervention, creating new neighbourhoods, and driving economic growth.

A Framework of this scale and the emerging Masterplans requires a joined-up approach to a number of regeneration-based activities. As the Council moves into delivery it is imperative to have the appropriate resources in place to deliver this programme of work to March 2026, and beyond. By shifting to an Intelligent Client model (which refers to the capability and capacity to translate policy to outcomes), existing teams need to be strengthened and technical design teams, need to be procured where appropriate, to support the Council's vision and delivery programme.

The Council Plan 2023-2027 has been developed and the recommendations within this report support the delivery of the following themes: People focused regeneration.

The recommendations in this report focus on the Birkenhead 2040 Framework. This means that this matter more immediately affects Birkenhead and Birkenhead & Tranmere, Bidston & St James, Seacombe and Liscard Wards, but in the longer term may potentially impact on other wards in the Borough.

This is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Director of Finance to allocate Council reserves arising from Wirral Growth Company profits and/or Capitalisation totalling £2.7m for the use of additional Regeneration Delivery resources to March 2026.
2. Note that, if agreed, use and impact of the newly allocated additional resources (up to £2.7m) will be overseen by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has received profits from Wirral Growth Company of £8.455m in 2022/2023 and expected profits of c£3m in 2023/2024. It is proposed that a proportion of these profits, up to £2.7m, will be used to fund a multi-disciplinary team to drive delivery of priority regeneration projects up to March 2026.
- 1.2 In recent years, the Council has been successful in securing over £150 million of funding for the regeneration of the borough. This includes £70 million of DLUHC Simplification Pathfinder Pilot funding which is time limited to March 2026. This will support the Council by enabling access to significant funding to support the regeneration of Birkenhead including that of private sector investment.
- 1.3 To deliver on this programme of work, and in accordance with the Council's strategies, it is prudent to look at different ways of resourcing to ensure relevant skills are wrapped around projects and existing staff.
- 1.4 This proposed resourcing model aligns to the Council's regeneration project prioritisation in shifting the way that the Council works as an Intelligent Client by setting a vision to the use of its supply chain and investing in a skilled and agile in-house workforce.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Other options have been considered and have been discounted. Specifically, if the Council adopts a "do nothing" approach, then the risks are that the Council may not;
 - a) be able to deploy grant funding within the spend profile timetable, risking potential clawback;
 - b) be able to deliver proposals across the priority project areas;
 - c) deliver on future projects past March 2026 that are currently in pipeline; and
 - d) have the right skills to deliver confidence to key stakeholders.
- 2.2 The mitigation for the above risks will likely result in key strategic and pipeline projects being paused or indefinitely postponed whilst staff are re-allocated to priority projects. This could risk delivery on projects post March 2026.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council's ambitious plans for regenerating Birkenhead and the wider borough have progressed over the past 12 months from visioning the programme through to moving into delivery phase. Alongside this shift to

delivery, officers within Regeneration and Place directorate have undertaken a detailed review of the Regeneration Programme to accelerate delivery. This piece of work includes forming a revised structure, prioritisation of work, resource planning, and review on governance and standardisation. Below is a summary of the work to date.

Governance

- 3.2 A series of programme boards are in place to steer projects that feed into the Regeneration Portfolio Board. The Regeneration Portfolio Board meets monthly to provide direction and accountability for the delivery of the Regeneration Programme, including development of strategy and pipeline. The Board is chaired by the Director of Regeneration and Place and the Board and its members shall use the pre-existing Governance structures of Wirral Borough Council.
- 3.3 On 21st November 2023, Policy and Resources Committee agreed to establish a successor to the Town Deal Board to reflect the wider role of the Simplification Pathfinder Pilot and to build upon the positive role of the Town Deal Board to date. The Board brings together private, public, and voluntary sectors to provide the strategic leadership required to deliver the Investment Fund objectives ensuring progress is being made on delivery of the projects.
- 3.4 Additionally, on 13th December 2023, Policy and Resources Committee gave approval to establish a Wirral Regeneration Partnership to steer, support and coordinate the Council's priority projects. The Partnership will specifically assist in accelerating the delivery of significant housing and commercial development and is used to raise the profile of the Regeneration Programme for stakeholders and external audience. This Board will meet quarterly from March 2024.

Grant Funding

- 3.5 The Regeneration Programme has grown due to success in attracting government funding and external investment. On 13 September 2023, Policy and Resources Committee resolved to accept an invitation to participate in the DLUHC Simplification Pilot. This pilot has streamlined the delivery of 3 growth funds, namely Town Deal, Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) and the Council's Levelling Up Round 1 (LUF1) allocation which currently deliver various regeneration programmes in Wirral up to a value of £72,443,405. The pilot allows the council to amalgamate these funds into one large regeneration fund within a single claim process. It also revises the spend deadlines for all funds to 31 March 2026.
- 3.6 In November 2023, it was announced that Liscard would receive £10.7 million in Levelling Up Fund Round 3 (LUF3). These ambitious plans are a key part of the council's wider regeneration ambitions across the Left Bank of the borough, stretching from Bromborough and New Ferry through Birkenhead and Wirral Waters to Liscard and New Brighton.

- 3.7 Work has begun on the demolition of the North and South Annexes next to Wallasey Town Hall. The demolition of the unused annexe buildings is an early step in the ambitious regeneration proposals for the Seacombe area. The project has been funded via the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF2).

Prioritisation

- 3.8 A prioritisation matrix has been applied against projects based on investment confidence, legal commitment, strategic value, and delivery confidence. This exercise will enable the Council to maximise impact with its funding and resources and has given clear direction on project delivery. To support the Council's delivery aspirations, the Council's resource requirements have been reviewed to drive delivery of projects up to and beyond March 2026.
- 3.9 The Intelligent Client model focuses on value for money, whole-life asset management and sustainable procurement. This model puts the Council firmly at the centre of efficient, productive, value-for-money relationships with the sponsor and supply chain. Intelligent Client responsibilities can involve a chain of command through contracts, commissioning, or procurement responsibilities. The Intelligent Client role includes ensuring optimum value is obtained. Resourcing of the Intelligent Client role therefore requires adequate capacity to be provided.
- 3.10 This approach would support and grow the Council's multi-disciplinary teams whilst using its procurement frameworks to acquire technical skills when required across the whole programme.

Procurement

- 3.11 The Council has access to a number of appropriate procurement frameworks consisting of a list of pre-approved suppliers which have been evaluated and selected to provide a pre-defined set of products and services with agreed terms and conditions and legal protections. These include the NHS SBS framework and Homes England technical and professional frameworks.

Roles

- 3.12 Roles have been identified based on current gaps within the delivery teams that could risk slippage to the prioritised Regeneration Programme. This largely includes technical skills and design team staff to deliver the programme to the timescales required. As part of the Intelligent Client model, these skills would plug in alongside the Council's existing project managers within the delivery team, bridging any technical skills gaps and assessing current projects as well as those coming forward in pipeline.

Funding Allocation

- 3.13 Wirral Growth Company profits will be used to fund the resourcing with costs that can be charged to capital being capitalised. Spend will be required to March 2026 with estimated gross costs amounting to £2.7 million across the two years.

3.14 The figures provided are indicative based on current equivalent internal roles and market figures. Officers will continue to work closely with colleagues in HR who can provide final approval on roles.

Programme Areas supported:	Disciplines identified to enable delivery of priority projects to March 2026:
Birkenhead Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-disciplinary team with mixed technical skills and background to support the project management, comms, and grants management of the Regeneration Programme. Procured disciplines to bolt on to in-house team to provide technical skills in development appraisals, cost estimates for early-stage development projects, contract managing a wide range of asset contracts, ensuring they are managed against agreed performance targets and undertaking site surveys & inspections to monitor the performance of contracts & quality of works completed. As part of the Intelligent Client model, these skills would plug in alongside existing project managers within the delivery team, bridging any technical skills gaps and assessing current projects as well as those coming forward in pipeline.
Birkenhead Waterfront	
Hind Street	
Central Birkenhead	
Strategic Transport	
Wirral Waters	
Dock Branch Neighbourhood	
Northside	
Liscard	
New Ferry	
New Brighton	
Gross costs for 24/25	
Gross costs for 25/26	£1,265,375.36

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals within this report are designed to deliver operational efficiencies and mitigate the risk of clawback or withheld funds with regards to the challenging delivery timetables of the Council's regeneration ambitions.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council is under a duty to secure best value from any procurement and has a fiduciary duty to Council Taxpayers to use its resources prudently and efficiently.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 A key justification for this report is the potential strain on current resources within the Regeneration service areas should additional resources not be recruited to deliver our prioritised projects to March 2026.
- 6.2 Detailed governance structures are in place across the Regeneration Delivery programmes and regular reporting as appropriate for all projects is in place.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The proposals within this report will help to mitigate a number of risks to the Council's regeneration ambitions not being achieved by March 2026 by enabling better oversight of procurement and project management to reduce risk of programme slippage.
- 7.2 Specifically, the release of funds from Wirral Growth Company profits to support the Regeneration Programme would mitigate the following risks:
- a) Not deploying grant funding from multiple sources within the spend profile timetable;
 - b) Not delivering proposals across the priority project areas;
 - c) Not delivering on future projects past March 2026 that are currently in pipeline by freeing up existing staff; and
 - d) Not having the right skills for confidence to deliver with key stakeholders;
 - e) Failing to support the delivery of housing and wider social and economic benefits identified within the Local Plan.
- 7.3 Recruitment and retention of staff is very challenging and there is a risk that internal roles may not be filled. Given this, the Council needs flexibility on how we recruit supply chain and resource.
- 7.4 These risks will be managed and mitigated through the Regeneration Project Management Office.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Engagement with colleagues across Regeneration and Place regarding requirements has resulted in a robust prioritisation and resource plan to drive delivery of priority regeneration projects up to March 2026.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Whilst there are no direct equality implications arising from this report, the associated actions arising from the delivery will need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge. Should any equality implications emerge, they will be assessed at the earliest possible stage.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Any proposals resulting from this report would be progressed in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy and would contribute to the aim of Wirral becoming net zero and climate resilient.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Community Wealth Building reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities. Striving for a prosperous and inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations, the Council aims to create an economy that benefits all our residents and one which keeps money within Wirral. The Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is a key part of how this is achieved and makes a major contribution to improving the economic, social and health outcomes of the borough.

11.2 This report details potential future employment opportunities which will support Community Wealth through the creation of local employment. If approved, upwards of 6 FTE fixed term roles could be created up to March 2026.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Plan 2023-2027

Birkenhead 2040 Framework [Birkenhead 2040 Framework | www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in accordance with section (b) of its Terms of Reference.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee – DLUHC Simplification Pilot	13 th September 2023
Policy and Resources Committee – Birkenhead, Wallasey & New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board	21 st November 2023

**Policy and Resources Committee - Regenerations
Partnerships for Wirral**

13th December 2023