

Delivering for Wirral  
Annual Report  
2008/09



# Contents

Foreword from Council Leader	4
Delivering on our objectives Chief Executive	6
• Creating more jobs, achieving a prosperous economy and regenerating Wirral	6
• Creating a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment	8
• Improving health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society	9
• Raising the aspirations of young people	11
• Creating an excellent Council	11
Financial Review 2008/09 Director of Finance	14
Corporate Objectives	19



## Foreword from Council Leader



### Overview

Last year, we set out our vision for a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential.

As you will see from these pages - and against a background of unprecedented global economic challenges - we are making clear progress towards achieving that vision.

A strong and diverse economy is critical if we are to provide prosperity, jobs and training opportunities for all local people. That is why we, through Working Wirral, have invested in new and innovative ways to support local firms, promote enterprise and tackle worklessness.

An attractive environment and good facilities are also needed for people and businesses to prosper. So after several years of preparation, it was wonderful to see the new Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre opening and signalling an important milestone in the major regeneration plans for New Brighton.

And while there are many other exciting developments on the horizon that will help us achieve our vision, not least the transformational



“

...We set out our vision for a more prosperous and equal Wirral, enabling all communities and people to thrive and achieve their full potential...

”

Wirral Waters proposals for Birkenhead docklands, they will all need the continued hard work and commitment of the Council and its partners.

We have taken important and sometimes difficult decisions during the year, all of which are vital to achieving our vision for Wirral.

One such decision was to implement the Strategic Asset Review in an effort to modernise how we deliver services and ensure that they meet people's expectations long into the future, without putting an unacceptable financial burden on Council Tax payers. As part of this, we are reviewing all of our buildings, including office accommodation, and ensuring sustainable uses for valued buildings, such as Birkenhead Town Hall, which are set to transfer from Council ownership.

Change is often difficult and uncomfortable, but it is also sometimes necessary. Although we still face a number of challenges, the many positive changes we have, and are continuing to make, have been recognised by the Audit Commission, who referred to us as a Council which is improving well and demonstrating a 3 star overall performance.

Perhaps more importantly, a major national

survey undertaken in 2008 showed that Wirral residents are amongst the most positive about where they live and the services they receive.

I believe that this research, which found that 82 per cent of residents are satisfied with Wirral as a place to live, demonstrates that local people also recognise improvements in terms of personal safety, environmental quality and community cohesion.

However, I am not complacent. Challenges remain in some areas and I will continue to work, with the tremendous support of our Councillors, staff, partners and the community, to make sure that people can see and feel that their priorities are being tackled.

I look forward to building further on the progress we have made and continuing to share evidence of how we are getting closer to achieving our vision for Wirral and its people.

Councillor Steve Foulkes  
Leader of Wirral Council



## Chief Executive Delivering on our objectives



While continuing to deliver on a wide range of services for residents, focus was placed during the year 2008 – 2009 on our five key corporate objectives. The next section details our progress against these priorities.

### **‘Creating more jobs, achieving a prosperous economy and regenerating Wirral’**

A successful economy is fundamental to the borough’s future prosperity and to giving everyone a chance to reach their full potential. We have been working hard to deliver our Investment Strategy, which strives to create a vibrant local economy with high levels of employment.

We are fully committed to supporting local companies to flourish and encouraging new business opportunities wherever possible. In the last year alone, we have helped 80 companies to create over 400 jobs, safeguarded over 500 local jobs and secured over £17million of private sector investment.

Our dedicated business support team, Invest Wirral, works with Council partners such as Business Link, The Federation of Small Businesses



“

...In the last year, we have helped 80 companies to create over 400 jobs, safeguarded over 500 local jobs and secured over £17m of private sector investment...

”

and Wirral Chamber of Commerce to help local companies to access finance, training and commercial property assistance. The Wirral Business Forum was launched to provide companies with a range of up to the date information, news, events, exhibitions, and networking opportunities. We have also created a free online business network, [Businesswirral.com](http://Businesswirral.com), which now has over 450 companies signed up, who are actively doing business with each other.

In response to the worsening economy, we held a 'Boost your Business' event at the Floral Pavilion, which provided information on business grants, efficient working, effective invoicing, access to finance and training support. Feedback was extremely positive with one company reporting a saving of over £6000 in business rates as a direct result of advice they received at the event.

In 2008/09, the number of Wirral people claiming Job Seekers Allowance increased by 1.7%, which is below the national average. However, the number of local residents claiming Incapacity Benefit fell twice as much as the national average, which is a real achievement under such difficult

economic conditions. We continue to work with Jobcentre Plus and the Learning and Skills Council to provide redundancy support through the Wirral Economic Development and Skills Partnership, which helps to improve the skills and employment prospects of local people. We have developed a Wirral Apprenticeship Programme to fund the salaries of 100 apprenticeship places so that employers can afford to take on new staff. The programme targets Wirral's most 'hard to reach' residents and will encourage businesses who have never taken on an apprentice before. We have also committed almost £1million to help residents from disadvantaged backgrounds access job and training opportunities in the construction industry.

There was a standing ovation for New Brighton's Floral Pavilion Theatre and Conference Centre when that opened its doors to the public for the first time after a multi-million pound redevelopment last December. Since Ken Dodd took the stage in the new theatre – having also been the last act to tread the boards in the old 'shed' – audience figures have far surpassed estimates and the reviews for the new facilities have been almost

universally positive. The project has recently achieved a best practice award, with the judging panel describing it as “transformational project that is helping to change the image of New Brighton and kick start further regeneration.”

Tourism in the borough continues to go from strength to strength. In July 2008, over 120,000 people watched the Tall Ships Parade of Sail from the Wirral side of the River Mersey, bringing £750,000 into the local economy. The Council works with over 250 stakeholders that form the Wirral Business Tourism Network and is currently applying for European funds to help them through the national economic downturn. The bid will support a “Play, Eat and Stay in Wirral” marketing campaign, each spring for three years, as well as a new Wirral Golf Classic tournament and Christmas Gourmet Fair in Port Sunlight. Also, a new Wirral visitors’ website ([www.visitwirral.co.uk](http://www.visitwirral.co.uk)) has been launched and the number of people logging on to the site has risen dramatically, with particular interest in local activities, restaurants and downloadable walk and cycle trails.

Peel Holdings are promoting a proposed £4.5 billion development, which will breathe new life into Wirral’s docklands. We are currently working with them and Liverpool City Council on a bid to provide new homes and an improved environment in some of the most deprived areas of Wirral.



Following national trends, housing need has grown significantly across the Borough. We have changed our response to dealing with this critical issue by investing more resources into preventing homelessness, improving access to accommodation for the most vulnerable sections of our communities and helping more people into affordable good quality housing.

Wirral continues to work with home owners, tenants and landlords to improve housing through the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. This has seen the transformation of housing in Tranmere and Rock Ferry over the last few years. The careful investment of Central Government and Wirral Council resources has brought about the improvement of previously poor quality accommodation and the removal of less popular or unfit housing. Working with residents and local builder Lovells, we have seen the creation of Sevenoaks, a neighbourhood of brand new housing in Rock Ferry, built to high standards, allowing a long established community to remain together in the area that they grew up in.

Work is now starting in Birkenhead to tackle similar problems of market failure and poor housing conditions. In consultation with local residents; the first phase of poor quality housing is being demolished. These houses had previously stood empty for many years, were in poor repair or the source of anti-social behaviour for local communities. Taking this action will create sites for redevelopment to provide accommodation that more closely meets local needs, help local communities stay together and producing the first steps towards a new dawn for Birkenhead

### **‘Creating a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment’**

Creating and sustaining a clean, pleasant and safe environment is important to our residents, businesses and future investors and we have continued to make good progress.

In 2007/08, Wirral Council was recognised by DEFRA for becoming the second most improved Council for Recycling and Composting performance in England. In 2008/09, we continued to build upon this achievement and exceeded our local recycling target of 34% after Wirral residents recycled 36.33 % of their household waste.

We finalised plans to provide recycling facilities for flats and communal properties and work is now underway to roll out a collection service across the borough. We are continuing to work with primary and secondary schools to educate people on the importance of reducing waste and 96% of schools are now taking advantage of our recycling collection service.



“

...Strong partnerships with our partners have been built upon and a number of projects are now having a real impact...

”

In 2008/09 we presented 25 local businesses with the Tidy Business Award, in recognition of their efforts to minimise waste, reuse and recycle, improve the environment and store waste responsibly. We are continuing to work with companies to help them meet their statutory obligations by providing practical advice on managing trade waste.

The level of reported volume crime in Wirral is reducing faster than almost any other area of England and Wales. In 2008, Wirral reported the third greatest reduction in crimes, such as burglary, vehicle crime, violence and criminal damage. Wirral's Joint Community Safety Team has met the Government's target for reducing crime and was recently acknowledged by the Home Office. Over the last three years, Wirral's Joint Community Safety Team, which brings together staff from Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, probation and NHS Wirral, has exceeded its targets by 20%.

The 'Together' Partnership, which includes Wirral Council's Streetscene team, Wirral's Anti Social Behaviour team and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, has removed over 8000 square metres of graffiti since the service started in 2008.

Their work has received national recognition from the environmental charity, ENCAMS.

Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Wirral's roads continues to be one of our main priorities and further progress has been made. During 08/09 we worked with 13 primary schools to produce school travel plans and rolled out several initiatives in partnership with Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. These included vehicle-activated signs at collision sites where conventional signage has failed to curb motorists' speeds and further sign posting to remind drivers to take extra care on high risk routes.

Our community speed initiative 'Bring Accidents Down 2 Zero' was hailed a success. The initiative encourages drivers to slow down to 20mph in locations with high collision rates, without the need for expensive traffic calming measures such as speed bumps or chicanes. Feedback from residents and drivers showed that 74% of drivers preferred the voluntary 20mph speed limit to physical speed reducing measures and 89% of drivers said that the scheme should be rolled out to other areas. As a result, the scheme is now being extended.

We are continuing to work towards the CRed target of 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025 and continue to improve energy efficiency through energy saving schemes to replace inefficient equipment, improving the control of Council-owned buildings and working with schools to increase energy awareness. The schemes included a new heat and ventilation system for the Oval Leisure Centre, which is reducing heat loss by a





massive 70% as well as energy management systems that reduced waste by 15%. As well as contributing to our climate change targets, these reductions are having a real effect on our budget.

**‘Improving health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society’**

Opportunities for residents to get involved in sport and leisure activities have been boosted further this year with the reopening of the Oval in Bebington. An extensive programme of refurbishments has led to a complete overhaul of the pool and changing area resulting in a bright, multi-purpose and accessible facility, which is already proving extremely popular with residents. Eight floodlit, five-a-side football pitches and a remodelled reception area are some of the other highlights within the complex.

For some years now, Wirral has led the way in providing swimming absolutely free of charge to residents over the age of 60 in Council pools. This initiative, which promotes a more fit and active lifestyle, has now been opened up to all young people under the age of 16, who can swim for free all year-round.

Since its extensive restoration, which was completed two years ago, Birkenhead Park has worked tirelessly to attract visitors from both the local area and from further afield. One of the most successful initiatives in the past year has been the introduction of a wide-range of walks, which not

only highlight the natural beauty of the park, but also provide a valuable form of exercise for those who take part. There are walks suitable for everyone; from babies enjoying the scenery from the comfort of their buggies (aided by mum or dad, of course!) to short health walks for people new or returning to exercise and longer tours for the more energetic.

Wirral Council has been at the heart of efforts to encourage residents to think healthily when it comes to eating. As well as supporting a Food Standards Agency campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of saturated fats, our own Trading Standards team surveyed a range of local takeaway outlets to gauge the level of dangerous and often hidden fats contained in their meals. The findings were reported to the proprietors – and their customers - and as a result many have now changed their menus to reflect a healthier choice.

Healthy eating on a budget was the theme behind a culinary-themed community event, which was organised by Woodchurch group PRIDE - Parents, Resources, Information, Drop-in, Enjoyment. Sainsbury’s supermarket and Heinz supported the initiative and demonstrated to Woodchurch residents how easy it was to prepare simple healthy meals on a budget. The drive to promote healthy eating wasn’t just aimed at mums and dads. 37 local schools took part in a Creative Cookery Club, developed by NHS Wirral in partnership with Wirral Council, and designed to increase knowledge, skills and understanding of food amongst staff, pupils, young people and their families.

Adult Social Services in Wirral are undergoing radical changes, which will transform how services are provided. At the heart of this is the personalisation agenda, which will ensure residents have greater choice and control over the type of support they receive. A key aspect of this is the 'Personal Budget', with which people can choose the services they want. This could include alternative therapies or domestic help, as well as more traditional services like meals on wheels, home care and day care.

Strong partnerships with our partners have been built upon and a number of projects are now having a real impact. We have been working with NHS Wirral, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, the Alzheimer's Society and Older People's Parliament, to improve care for patients with dementia. This includes better 'care pathways' for those suffering from this debilitating condition – meaning that patients get the support they need, when they need it and in an appropriate way.

A focused action plan aimed at reducing the number of teenage pregnancies is demonstrating excellent results. Latest available figures show that the pregnancy rate for under-18s in the borough fell by nearly 7% in 2007. This reduction contradicts the national trend and proves that Wirral's performance is improving. An additional £5.7m has been allocated over five years to implement new interventions.

We are also working with NHS Wirral to address the major causes of the gap in life expectancy, with substantial additional funding of around £75million allocated over the next four years. The most deprived areas of Wirral have been designated as Health Action Areas and five teams have been established to set up a programme of community activities that support healthy living.

### **'Raising the aspirations of young people'**

The Council recognises that there is a gap between the achievements of young people in our more affluent and those who live in our deprived areas. We are working hard to address this whilst maintaining and enhancing Wirral's excellent educational offer.

Overall attainment levels in primary schools are above the national average, and around 70% of Wirral pupils attained five or more A\*-C GCSE

grades. In 2008, 1456 students took A-levels in Wirral. On average, 800 points were achieved per student, marking an increase of 16.8 pts per student compared to last year.

Detailed planning will ensure Wirral's Schools will meet future needs. The Academies Programme has the potential to address the disparity in educational outcomes for young people in Birkenhead. Two multi-million pound Academy secondary schools have been proposed in addition to Birkenhead High School for Girls, which will become an Academy from September 2009.

All Wirral's special schools for Complex Learning Disabilities (CLD) are considered by Ofsted to be either excellent or good with outstanding features. However, a review of special school provision was requested following earlier consultations with parents, head teachers, governors and staff, who felt that provision could be improved



if it was offered in more modern and appropriately designed premises. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) monies, combined with funds from the Learning and Skills Council, will enable new 21st century schools to be built, which are genuinely fit for the future, and meet the needs of some of the most vulnerable pupils.

Promoting reading among local people of all ages was once again an important aspiration. Following on from last year's successful Bookfest, Wirral's libraries have continued to host hundreds of activities. More than 7000 local schoolchildren took part in last year's Summer Reading Challenge, with the number of children's books lent over the course of the summer exceeding 100,000. Even younger children were the focus of activities across our libraries during Bookstart Day, which aims to promote pre-school reading.

Wirral hosted the prestigious NEEC (North of England Education Conference) in January 2009 with the theme 'Growing People – Growing Minds'. Two years of preparation went into this event, which was hailed as a huge success by the vast majority of those who attended. The Conference President was Baroness Estelle Morris and the final keynote speech was delivered by Minister Ed Balls. The conference, organised in partnership with the University of Chester, saw hundreds of important decision makers descend on Weatherhead Media Arts College in Wallasey and Chester Racecourse for two days of keynote speakers, master classes and entertainment



“

...In 2008, Wirral residents had a unique opportunity to decide how the Council should spend money in local areas in a new initiative called You Decide...

”

### **'Creating an excellent Council'**

We are committed to delivering first class services, which are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of local people.

In 2007/08, we made many improvements to how our services are delivered. Earlier this year, we were recognised by the Audit Commission as a three-star Council that is improving well. Another external inspection concluded that Wirral Council provides good access to services and has promising prospects for improvement. No other top-tier local authority has received a higher score in this assessment.

Despite an increase of 2,500 cases, our Benefits service was rated as 'excellent' by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) and the Audit Commission. Although the standards have become more and more challenging to meet, Wirral Council was awarded a top score of 4.

In 2008, Wirral residents had a unique opportunity to decide how the Council should spend money in local areas in a new initiative called You Decide. £260,000 was allocated to the project, which enabled each Area Forum to 'buy' Council services based on their own assessment of

local needs and priorities from a wide choice of options including community safety, environmental improvements, road safety and evening sports activities young people.

We also provided £20,000 to Wirral's Youth Parliament and £20,000 to the Older People's Parliament. The Council received over 2000 suggestion forms and as a result of its popularity, the initiative is being rolled out for a second time.

We listened carefully to residents' views on the future of our buildings. As a result, we agreed to invest £20 million in new and improved facilities. We have also started to transfer community centres to Community Development Trusts so that local people can run their own facilities.

Last year saw the official opening of Wirral's new, cutting edge records facility, which aims to make sure that people of all ages and backgrounds can easily access their local heritage. Our new premises at the Cheshire Lines building on Canning Street, Birkenhead, feature a spacious search room, with microfilm and microfiche readers and state of the art computers to support research into the borough's history.

We are continuing to use customer feedback to identify areas for improvement. For example, we have linked Geographical Information Software to our One-Stop-Shops, which is allowing customer advisors to easily access relevant geographic data and respond quickly to customers' enquiries. The system has also enabled the call centre to reduce the number of back office enquiries.

To continue this progress, we must ensure that our resources are invested in the best way possible. Now, more than ever, it is important for the Council to have a sustainable budget. We have worked hard to deliver our services more efficiently and as a result saved more than £17 million in the last financial year alone, which takes the savings achieved over the past three years to more than £37 million.

There are many great examples of how these savings were made; we won a national award for managing our investments after exceeding our planned investment income by almost £2 million; we saved over £500,000 by virtually eliminating temporary borrowing, and nearly £40,000 was saved on administration costs thanks to the 4000 extra residents that signed up to pay their Council Tax by direct debit.



In addition to this, over 1200 people have registered for the Council's E-Citizen service, which enables Wirral residents to access their Council Tax and Housing Benefits accounts online and check balances, bills and other notifications. In 2008/09, 85% of all insurance claims and 90% of highways claims were defended successfully, releasing £5 million from the Council's insurance fund.

All of these savings have freed important funds, which are being invested in delivering better local services.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Maddox'.

Steve Maddox  
Chief Executive, Wirral Council



## Director of Finance Financial Review 2008/09

The Council's Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Code of Practice. This document provides a brief review of the financial performance for the year.

### **Income and Expenditure Account**

The Council spent £0.2m more on revenue than budgeted for in 2008/09. The services experiencing the greatest pressures were care services for both adults and children, where demand exceeded resources. Careful management of the Council's cash flow and capital funding helped to mitigate the impact of overspendings on specific services.

### **Capital Spending**

This is money spent on purchasing, upgrading or improving assets such as buildings and roads. The distinction from revenue is that the Council receives the benefit from capital expenditure over a longer period of time. The Council spent £70m on capital schemes in 2008/09, which included New Heartlands regeneration, improvements to schools and roads, housing assistance, the Floral Pavilion and the Oval Sports Centre.



“

...The Council spent £70m on capital schemes in 2008/09, which included improvements to schools and roads, housing assistance, the Oval and the Floral Pavilion...

”

### Balances

At the end of the year the Council had general fund balances of £8.3million. Of these £2.4million was used in setting the 2009/10 budget.

The Council retains a prudent level of balances to meet any unforeseen events and faces future challenges in keeping Council Tax affordable, whilst continuing to support the quality and improvement of local services.

External auditors are required to give an opinion on the financial statements and this opinion should be 'unqualified'. The auditors gave this opinion of the accounts for 2008/09.

Further details of the Council's finances are set out in its audited statement of accounts available on our website. Go to [www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk), click on A-Z and select Annual Accounts.

### Cost of Council services

The Revenue Account below shows the cost of running Council Services for the year ending 31 March 2009.

Net Income and Expenditure	£000
Central Services to the Public	4,258
Court & Probation Services	443
Cultural, Environmental, Regulatory & Planning	71,985
Children's and Educational Services	85,909
Highways & Transport Services	35,670
Other Housing Services	7,691
Adult Social Care	101,620
Corporate & Democratic Core	4,573
Non Distributed Costs	1,177
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>313,326</b>
<b>Less Interest, Pension and Capital Items</b>	<b>4,054</b>
<b>Amount to be met from Government Grants &amp; Council Tax</b>	<b>309,272</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>	
Council Tax	123,217
Council Tax Deficit from previous year	(509)
General Government Grants	54,318
Non-Domestic Rate Pool	129,413
	<b>306,439</b>
General Fund balance brought forward	11,115
Less use of General Fund Balances in the year	2,833
Surplus on General Fund carried forward	<b>8,282</b>

### Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows what the Council owns and is owed. It presents an overall view of the financial position at 31 March 2009.

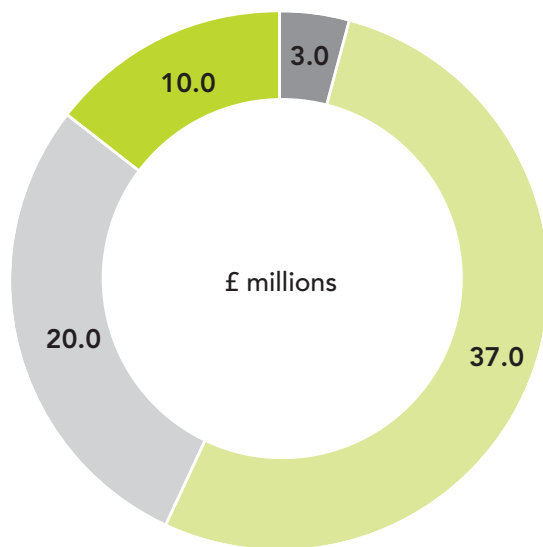
	£000
<b>Assets</b>	
Buildings, Land & Other Assets	724,826
Investments	85,728
Cash and Bank	5,360
Money owed to the Council	146,554
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>962,468</b>
<b>Liabilities and Financing:</b>	
Money owed by the Council	77,376
Borrowing	296,194
Government Grants (Deferred)	201,594
Distributable Reserves *	110,748
Non Distributable Reserves	276,556
<b>Total Liabilities and Financing</b>	<b>962,468</b>
* Distributable Reserves comprise of:	
Capital Receipts Reserve	9,472
Reserves – General	82,310
Provisions – General	11,022
Balances	7,944
	<b>110,748</b>





At the end of the year the Council had borrowing of £296m at an average rate of 5.9% over an average life of 18 years.



### Capital Spending

Capital Spending generally represents money spent by the Council on purchasing, upgrading and improving assets such as roads and buildings. The chart below outlines where the £70m capital investment was made during the year 2008/09.



-  Regeneration
-  Childrens and Educational Services
-  Technical Services
-  Other Services

The main sources of funding are Government Grants. They provided £45m towards the total spend of £70m. The balance was met from a combination of borrowing and the use of capital receipts generated from the sale of surplus assets.

### A Glossary of Terms

#### *Capital Assets*

Land, buildings and other property that yields a benefit to the Council that is greater than one year

#### *Capital Spending*

Money spent on capital assets

#### *Capital Receipts*

Income from the sale of capital assets

#### *Council Tax*

Council Tax is charged on all domestic properties in the Council's area and varies according to which band the property has been placed in.

#### *Government Grants*

The amount paid by the Government to support the Council's annual budget. Made up of revenue support grant, area based grant and a share of business rates.

#### *General Fund*

The fund to which all the Council's revenue expenditure is charged. Expenditure on the general fund is met from the Council Tax and Government grants.

#### *Reserves*

These are balances in hand which have accumulated over previous years and are held for defined purposes. The level and purpose of reserves is regularly reviewed.

#### *Revenue*

Income and Expenditure relating to the day-to day running costs of the Council.

#### **Did you know?**

The Council's assets include:

- 101 schools & nurseries
- 41 residential homes and day centres
- 37,600 street lights
- 1,180 km of roads

## Planning for the Future

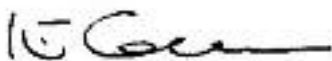
### Longer Term Plans

The Vision and Corporate Plan for Wirral seeks to achieve a more prosperous and equal Wirral which is founded on a strong, vibrant local economy with high levels of employment. The plan identifies the area's priorities, reflecting the needs and desires of local people, and the Council's objectives for the next three years. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy forms a key element of the Corporate Plan by indicating the key resources and principles that will shape the Council's budget for 2010 to 2012.

The Council is committed to allocating resources to local priorities and keeping Council Tax increases to a minimum. To this end, we have invested in an ambitious change programme to improve access to our services and make efficiencies through the use of information technology.

Council Tax levels for 2009/10 increased by 4.46% and as a result the average Band D Council Tax rose to £1,440. For some time, Wirral's Council Tax increase has been below the rate of inflation, but residents told us that they were prepared to pay a little more to retain some valued services, particularly swimming and leisure facilities. However, no pensioner households over the age of 75 had to pay any increase in Council Tax.

The Council has undertaken actions to meet the climate change and sustainability agenda. These include the development of the Environmental Streetscene contract with enhancements around recycling, waste collection and disposal. The Council has been successful in reducing energy consumption in recent years and continues to develop plans to reduce this further.



Ian Coleman BSc, CPFA  
Director of Finance

### Budget 2010/11

The Council faces a difficult financial situation due to the level of support it receives from Central Government and the increasing demands on our services. The budget process for 2010/11 is already underway.

Departments are examining their services to identify ways of improving value for money and efficiency and this will continue through the coming months. In December 2009, the government will confirm how much government grant the Council will receive in 2010/11 and the Council will finalise its budget proposals. Cabinet and full Council will consider the proposals in February and March 2010.



<b>Building a more prosperous and equal Wirral</b>		
<b>Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>Aims for 2008 - 2013</b>	<b>Priorities for Improvement 2009/10</b>
<b>To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase investment and encourage new developments</li> <li>Improve rate of business start ups and support local businesses to grow</li> <li>Increase GVA by increasing employment opportunities and matching skills to employers' demands</li> <li>Reduce worklessness</li> <li>Ensure the sustainability of our cultural, leisure and tourism assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce worklessness</li> <li>Increase enterprise</li> </ul>
<b>To create a clean, pleasant, safe &amp; sustainable environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase levels of recycling</li> <li>Reduce our carbon footprint.</li> <li>Create exemplary levels of street cleanliness</li> <li>Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.</li> <li>Deliver HMRI programme &amp; achieve housing decency standards</li> <li>Reduce alcohol related crime</li> <li>Reduce levels of anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>Conserve the borough's natural and built heritage and increase civic pride and public participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain levels of recycling</li> <li>Reduce the council's carbon footprint</li> <li>Reduce number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents.</li> </ul>
<b>To improve health and well being for all, ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Narrow the mortality gap on Wirral.</li> <li>Promote greater independence and choice</li> <li>Reduce the number of falls for elderly people</li> <li>Encourage healthy lifestyles and participation in fulfilling activities</li> <li>Improve support for those with mental health problems.</li> <li>Tackle domestic violence</li> <li>Tackle all forms of alcohol and drug induced harm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote greater independence and choice</li> </ul>
<b>To raise the aspirations of young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people</li> <li>Reduce numbers not in employment, education or training</li> <li>Safely reduce the number of looked after children</li> <li>Reduce childhood obesity</li> <li>Increase numbers going to university, especially from disadvantaged communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people.</li> <li>Safely reduce the number of looked after children</li> </ul>
<b>Create an excellent council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the use of the Council's land and assets</li> <li>Create a sustainable and stable budget providing value for money</li> <li>Improve the council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities</li> <li>Improve accountability, accessibility and openness and involve those who use our services in their design and delivery</li> <li>Improve partnership working with the public, private &amp; voluntary sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the use of the Council's land and assets.</li> <li>Maintain a sustainable and stable budget, providing value for money</li> <li>Improve the Council's budgeting process to fully reflect its priorities.</li> </ul>

If you require this leaflet in another language or format, please ring the number below:  
**0151 606 2020**

وإذا اردت نسخة من هذا الكتيب في لغة أخرى أو في شكل آخر  
اتصلوا بتلفون رقم الموفر بإتاحة

এই পত্রিকার অনুলিপি ভিন্ন কোন ভাষায় অথবা অন্য কোন আকারে প্রয়োজন  
হলে, অনুগ্রহ করে সরবরাহকৃত টেলিফোন নম্বরে যোগাযোগ করুন

如果你需要這份小冊子在另一種語言或不同的格式，請聯  
繫提供的電話號碼

"अथवा आपका हमें प्रस्तावित की प्रतिलिपि अन्य भाषा में अथवा भिन्न प्रारूप में चाहिए  
तो कृपया उपरोक्त टेलिफोन नंबर पर संपर्क करें"

Jeśli potrzebujesz ta ulotkę w innym języku lub w innej formie proszę zadzwonić na  
zalecany numer.

"ମି କୁମ୍ଭଟି ହିସ୍ ଉପକା ଛଡ଼ି ଓଏ ଇସକା ବିସା ନାଁ ବିସି ଓଏ ଦୁଏ ବିସା ବ୍ୟାପିଟା ବିସା ବିସା ଓଏ ବିସିଟା ଓଏ  
ଫିନା ବିସା ଓଏ"

"Haddaad rahtid naqul ee warqadaha oo laqad kale ku qorno ama qaab kale,  
fadlan la xiriir lambarka taleefon lagu siyo.

اگر آپ کو اس کتابچے کا ترجمہ کسی اور زبان میں یا کتابچہ کسی اور طرز  
میں درکار ہے تو فرام گزده تلفون نمبر پر رجوع کریں۔

To find out more about Council services:

- Visit [www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk), or
- Call in to a One Stop Shop