



## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**13 DECEMBER 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>REGENERATION – PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A WIRRAL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks approval to establish a Wirral Regeneration Partnership to steer, support and coordinate the Council’s priority projects including the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Masterplans.

The Birkenhead 2040 Framework details a comprehensive regeneration vision that will deliver 21,000 new homes and 6000 new jobs in Birkenhead over the next 20 years and will transform Birkenhead and parts of Wallasey 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, with a delivery plan led strategy that prioritises projects in a logical way on a business case by business case basis.

Establishing the Wirral Regeneration Partnership would:

- address cross cutting themes of travel, health, education, amongst other matters, across all areas across the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Masterplans;
- provide a joined up approach to support the delivery of significant housing and commercial development;
- provide distinct branding to raise the profile of the regeneration programme, attract investment and ensure that the skills and resources are in place to drive a programme of this scale;
- Aid attraction of external investment;
- Meet with Government and funding party expectations to engage with a strategic cohesive body;
- Serve to attract and promote investor confidence to invest in Wirral’s regeneration;
- Oversee/monitor both the quality and trajectory of delivery; and
- Secure third-party expertise and input from funding bodies such as Homes England and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the private sector to help inform and develop delivery solutions to the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and the emerging Masterplans.

The Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026 has been developed and the focus covers the following five themes:

- Safe & Pleasant Communities;
- Brighter Futures;
- Active and Healthy Lives;
- Sustainable Environment; and
- Inclusive Economy

The recommendations within this report support the delivery of all above themes.

It is envisaged that the Wirral Regeneration Partnership will work for the whole of the Borough. Initially the Partnership will focus on the Birkenhead 2040 Framework due to its advanced state and funding. 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**

The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to approve:

1. the establishment of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership and associated hierarchy comprising membership and terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 to this report; and
2. that the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to proceed with the necessary memorandum of understanding to establish appropriate legal and governance structures for the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Both the Birkenhead 2040 Framework vision and the emerging Masterplans are of significant scale and complexity. It is considered that a Wirral Regeneration Partnership is required to enable the key partners involved in delivering regeneration to be able to have a forum which enables Wirral to speak with one voice. This model replicates best practice elsewhere in the Country and meets with Government and external funding agency expectations. Key partners include here, Homes England, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and Government. If established the Partnership would initially focus on supporting the priority projects and specifically:
- a) assist in accelerating the delivery of significant housing and commercial development;
  - b) address programme interdependencies and sequencing;
  - c) contribute to the delivery of social outcomes across the programme through long term community wealth building and stewardship;
  - d) raise the profile of the regeneration programme for stakeholders and external audience;
  - e) attract investment from public and private sector partners on a project-by-project basis by enabling the stakeholders within it to speak with one voice;
  - f) ensure that the skills and resources are in place to drive a programme of this scale;
  - g) lead on place making and meanwhile use strategy; and
  - h) prioritise and deliver on a site by site basis, appropriate development in partnership with public sector support and private sector investment.
- 1.2 The Wirral Regeneration Partnership would be an unincorporated association. An unincorporated association is not a legal entity. People who are members of the entity, agree, usually in a written constitution/memorandum of understanding etc, to co-operate in furthering a common purpose. The Council would be the accountable body with responsibility for arranging meetings of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.
- 1.3 The Council or the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority would be responsible for making any applications for grant funding given that public grants are in general only available to incorporated bodies. Whichever route was used for grant applications, the Council would remain the accountable body. As accountable body, the Council would have the choice whether to act on any recommendations the Wirral Regeneration Partnership Board might make.
- 1.4 Minutes of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership would be referred as required to either the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee, or Policy and Resources Committee for a decision as appropriate (with reference to the Council according to

the circumstances and in accordance with the constitution). The Wirral Regeneration Partnership hierarchy is depicted as set out in the diagram set out as Appendix 2 to this report.

## **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

2.1 There are a variety of legal entities that the Council could seek to set up or collaborate in ranging from Urban Development Corporation or similar (of various kinds), wholly owned or influenced local authority companies or a joint venture with a development partner. These require a considerable amount of due diligence, business case assembling and planning even to reach a feasibility study stage. Options in this regard may be considered in due course building on the work of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 Working with Homes England and the LCRCA to provide greater clarity of priorities and programme, delivery plan will be prepared to inform business planning for the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.

3.2 If the establishment of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership is approved with membership of a board as set out on Appendix 2 of this report:

- it would consider a Business/Delivery Plan which would set out the priorities and objectives for each project.
- each project will have its own outline business case which will be reviewed by the board in accordance with the terms of reference and operational structure.
- each project will have its own focus, priority and objectives and each project will be brought to the board for recommendations to be made to proceed on a business case by business case basis to ensure areas of interdependency and sequencing are managed and addressed.
- the board would oversee Asset Management and Regeneration delivery within each project. This would facilitate cross cutting initiatives including health, education, social and affordable housing and other social value outcomes.

3.3 On 21 November 2023 this Committee approved the establishment of the Birkenhead Wallasey and New Ferry Simplification Pathfinder Pilot Board. The work of that Board would feed into the work of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.

## **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. There are no additional financial implications of adopting the recommendations within this report.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are a variety of potential delivery vehicle models which include in house delivery (with enhanced partnership approach with other agencies), various company

structures (including Teckel companies), Urban Development Corporations, Mayoral Development Corporations or New Town Development Corporations or Locally Led Urban Development Corporation. Such options are not in scope but in view of the fact that the Council has considerable landholdings including the Grange and Pyramids shopping centre, options in this regard can be considered in due course taking into account the developing work and scope of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are no significant impacts in terms of staffing, ICT or assets arising directly from this report.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The proposals within this report mitigate against the risk of the Council's regeneration ambitions not being aligned to those of other stakeholders. Specifically, the establishment of the Wirral Regeneration Partnership would mitigate the following risks:

- a) of not deploying grant funding from multiple sources within the spend profile timetable;
- b) of delivering competing or conflicting proposals across the priority project areas;
- c) of not securing future private sector investment for future projects through a coordinated approach to procurement and marketing strategy; and
- d) of not delivering a coordinated approach to cross cutting themes of transport, health and education.

7.2 The proposals within the report would also enable better management of financial delivery to reduce risk of cost overrun. They would also enable better oversight of procurement and project management to reduce risk of programme slippage.

7.3 A risk register will be maintained and will be scrutinised by the Board.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 The proposals within this report outline a clear mechanism for consulting with key stakeholders in terms of the Council's overarching Regeneration programmes and in terms of its Investment Plan pursuant to the Pathfinder Simplification Pilot. Members will be aware that the Pathfinder Simplification Pilot is being considered elsewhere on the Agenda at this meeting.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2. 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.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Any proposals resulting from this report would be progressed in line with the Council's Environment and Climate Change Action Plan and Cool 2 Climate change Strategy and would contribute to the aim of Birkenhead becoming a net zero climate resilient town.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING**

11.1 The aim of this report is to secure the best possible outcome for the future of Birkenhead Town Centre, Wirral and its residents and the community. This represents a vital step in the delivery of a sustainable regeneration within Wirral for the benefit of the wider community.

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Director of Regeneration and Place

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Terms of Reference of Wirral Regeneration Partnership  
Appendix 2- Organisational chart for Wirral Regeneration Partnership and associated hierarchy

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Wirral Plan 2021 - 26**  
**Birkenhead 2040 Framework**  
[Birkenhead 2040 Framework | www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)  
[Wirral Local Plan](#)

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Policy and Resources Committee</b>	<b>21 November 2023</b>