

# Wirral Working Together

A Council Plan for 2023-2027

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# Preface

**Wirral Council began its improvement journey in 2019 with a new Chief Executive and Council Plan, alongside an ambition to transform the Borough's economic position through bold plans for investment and regeneration.**

Like all Councils, this was majorly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, delaying the implementation of these plans and leading to further pressures for the organisation, including exacerbating the Council's financial challenges through increased demand, loss of income and delays in delivering required savings.

After years of focussing on protecting our residents from increasing financial pressures by trying to keep all our services going, the Council has now reached a point where we need to focus on delivering the most important services within budget, so that we can serve

our residents and protect our most vulnerable. The need for financial support from the Government to balance our books in 2021 and 2022, further highlighted the urgent need to stabilise our financial position and bring forward a programme of improvement, to enable the delivery of the ambitions we have for Wirral.

We have already started to make pivotal steps to become a Council that is in a better position to best serve our residents by developing a programme to bring about transformational change and setting a budget that removes our budget deficit, establishing a strong foundation for achieving financial stability.

For many thousands of our residents, what is most important to them is what they see when they open their front door. They want to see

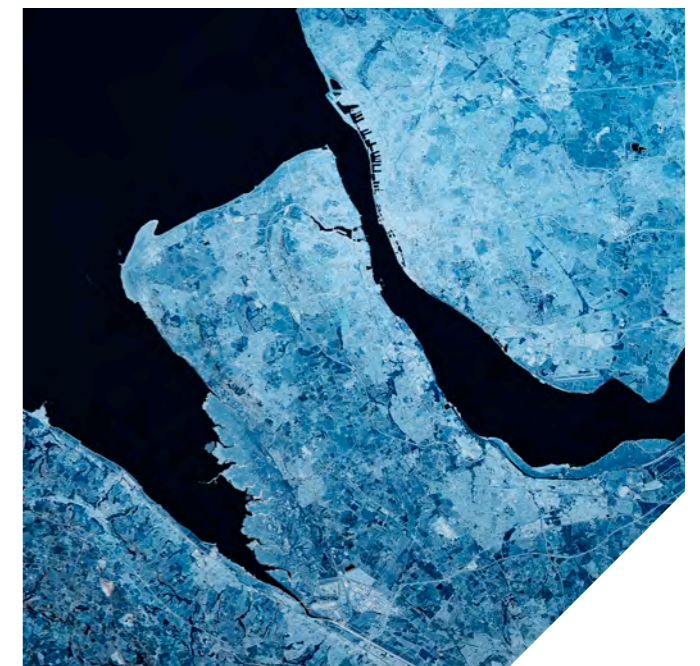
clean streets, parks and beaches which are well maintained and attractive. They want to live in a place which is free of anti-social behaviour and crime, and to be able to take an active role in making their community a better place to live. Our job is to help make this happen.

This Council Plan sets out how we will continue to navigate the challenges we are facing, but to also seize the opportunities for the future for Wirral.

The Council Plan translates our vision **Working together to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities** into deliverable organisational actions, providing clarity on what will be delivered and when. In simple terms, it highlights the practical steps that we as an organisation will take to turn our ambitions into reality.

Wirral now stands at a pivotal moment, presented with difficult decisions, but also an opportunity to define an exciting and ambitious future. It is imperative that political groups, irrespective of party work together under the new political arrangements that are in place to make tough decisions and drive forward improvements for our residents. Through the collective will and effort of our political leaders, management team and staff we are committed to delivering the vision that we have set for our borough in this Council Plan.

“Wirral stands at a pivotal moment, presented with difficult decisions, but also an opportunity to define an exciting and ambitious future”





# Purpose of the Plan

This Plan is the Council's key plan, and it sets out our main priorities for the Council between 2023-27.

It includes some important actions and services that the Council, alongside all local authorities must deliver.

We want to make sure that these services are the best they can be, reflecting the improvement journey that we have been on over the past few years in response to:

- The External Assurance Review commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) in Summer 2021 incorporating:
  - The Ada Burns External Assurance Review
  - Governance (September 2021)
  - The CIPFA Local Government Finance Review (November 2021).
- The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge (March 2022).
- The need for the Council to set a clear vision for the organisation we need to become to best serve our local communities.

The Council Plan is the next phase of Wirral's Improvement Plan, which was developed in 2022 in response to, and incorporated the recommendations of, the External Assurance Review Reports and the LGA Peer Challenge. The Plan is supported by and aligns with our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).



“We want to make sure that these services are the best they can be”





# Ensuring a balanced and sustainable MTFS

**The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) brings together all known factors affecting the Council's financial position and its financial sustainability into one place.**

The MTFS is a five-year strategy (2022–27) and one of the key strategies of the Council, which sets out the Council's commitment to provide services that meet the needs of people locally and that represent good value for money.

The strategic context for the Medium-Term Financial Strategy is set out within the Council Plan. Wirral's Council Plan can only be delivered through a sound understanding of the Council's medium and longer-term financial sustainability, which enables decisions to be made that balance the resource implications of the Council's policies against financial constraints, while delivering best value for Council Taxpayers.

A key part of the MTFS is to highlight the budget challenges that will need to be addressed by the Council over the coming financial years.

This is achieved by forecasting the level of available resources from all sources and budget pressures relating to both capital and revenue spending.

It assesses what reserves and provisions need to be held for past and unknown events which may impact on the Council's resources. The associated Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is a summary document of the revenue budget incorporating the deliverables of the strategies by Directorate, the amount of funding available; including financial pressures and savings.





# Council Plan priorities

- To deliver **high quality efficient universal** services to all residents
- To **prioritise** those with the greatest needs
- To deliver council services within the means of the council **budget**
- To be prepared to **innovate** and face the future
- To play our part in addressing the **climate emergency** and protecting our environment
- To work across communities with community, voluntary and faith organisations and partners to improve all residents' **life chances**
- To deliver our ambitious **regeneration programme** through increased investment, jobs and new businesses throughout the borough



# Our vision

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**Working together** to promote fairness and opportunity for people and communities



## Delivery themes

Early help for children and families

Promoting independence and healthier lives

People focused regeneration

Protect our environment

Safe, resilient and engaged communities

Enabling theme:  
**Efficient, effective and accessible council**





**THEME 1**

**working together**  
to create a more efficient,  
effective and accessible council

This theme builds on the Council's Improvement Plan (published June 2022) to ensure there is a continuous programme of improvement and service transformation. Back-office services from across the Council will be redesigned into centralised models to ensure these services are as efficient as possible. All Directorates will be reviewed and restructured to support the outcomes of the Council Plan. The Council will accelerate its digital transformation to improve automation of processes and improved customer accessibility. The Council's properties and assets will be rationalised to reduce unnecessary overheads and support the Council net zero commitments.

**Outcomes**

- Council finances stabilised
- Services are cost-effective and deliver value for money
- Council services are efficient, accessible and inclusive
- Assets and property support our vision and priorities

**What we will do**

- Council delivers within budget
- Reserves replenished
- Council secures and enhances its revenue where possible
- All back-office services reviewed and centralised

- Council transformation programme delivered
- Identify and appoint a digital transformation partner
- Universal services will be delivered to the best possible standard
- Implement People Strategy
- Implement Customer Experience Strategy
- Review of customer access channels
- Corporate landlord model implemented.
- Review and enhance Corporate Equality & Inclusion including the Armed Forces Covenant
- Implement Assets Strategy including programme of disposals for surplus buildings

**How it will be measured**

- Annual Budget and performance
- Reserves at 5% of Council budget by 2027
- Savings delivery targets achieved
- Services bench marked with comparator authorities and/or externally recognised for good practice
- Improved street and environment cleanliness
- Improved waste and recycling performance
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Call centre response times
- Qualitative feedback for face-to-face services
- Reduction in the Council's office estate
- Capital receipts delivered to schedule
- Overall service efficiencies delivered
- Improved customer service performance





**THEME 2**

# working together to improve early help for children and families

Keeping children safe is one of the most important roles the Council fulfils. We are continuously looking to improve our early help, social care, and education services.

Our progress has recently been validated recently through a Joint Targeted Area Inspection and Local Government Association Peer Review. Our Early Help offer includes projects such as Family Toolbox which gives tips and tools to support families, and Cradle to Career which has recently received national recognition. This theme seeks to continue this work focusing on supporting children and families in need as early as possible to improve outcomes and reduce the

likelihood of higher costs intervention further down the line. In summary this theme seeks to improve outcomes for children, reduce educational attainment inequalities and raise the aspirations for all our children and young people. An important part of this is SEND (this stands for Special Educational Needs and Disability).

**Outcomes**

- Children and young people have their needs met early
- Children and young people stay safe and are protected from harm
- Children and young people achieve their potential and are prepared for adulthood

**What we will do**

- Continue to deliver Family Toolbox offer, Family Hubs, building community and neighbourhood capacity
- Deliver the Breaking the Cycle programme
- Deliver Transforming Care Programme
- Continue to develop Multi-agency child protection teams
- Delivering the Youth Justice Annual Plan
- Delivering the Safer Adolescence Strategy
- Develop and deliver the children, young people and family strand of Wirral Drugs Strategy & Remodel the Domestic Abuse Service
- Remodel Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Services and launch a new SEND Strategy

- Deliver the #EveryDayCounts campaign & review Wirral Attendance Service
- Embed the Graduated Response. This helps to support children and young people to meet their learning needs

**How it will be measured**

- Reduced need for social care interventions
- A wider cost-effective range of care provisions
- Multiagency team delivering effectively
- Delivering well against new youth justice KPIs
- Better identification of risk and risk management criminal exploitation
- Reduced repeat domestic abuse referrals
- Better value delivered in SEND Programme
- Improved educational attainment



**THEME 3**

# working together to promote independence and healthier lives



Wirral is one of nine places in the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership. As a place we work together to make service improvements across our communities. The main priority for our partnership is to keep our residents well and tackle the significant health inequalities that exist across Wirral.

We work across local public and voluntary sector partners together to improve access to health services and treatment for all residents whilst reducing health inequalities. Wirral provides strategic leadership over the borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. This strategy sets out the agreed priorities and activities which, through joined up effort,

will create the best conditions for health and wellbeing for Wirral residents and communities.

**Outcomes**

- People live independently for longer
- People get the right care at the right time
- Quality improvements are made within the care sector
- Inequalities in health are reduced

**What we will do**

- Increase housing options for older people
- Provide services as close to home as possible

- All Age Disability Review – new models/ ways of working to be explored
- Provide health and social care services where people need them
- Implementation of the on-line assessment tool to support quality improvement of providers and services that require CQC inspection
- Deliver our Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Deliver Wirral's Combatting Drugs Strategy, Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Programme
- Develop a Local Tobacco Control Plan and Local Gambling Harm Strategy

**How it will be measured**

- Number of Extra care housing units delivered
- Increased use of technology in the home
- Reduced cost of care
- Quality and range of care
- CQC Inspection
- Measurable improvements in health across our population and reduced health inequalities
- Decrease in the number of drug-related deaths
- Reduction in the number of people smoking
- Number of adults and young people accessing substance misuse treatment services





The Council is leading Wirral's place shaping agenda – creating a strong economy based on brownfield first regeneration and delivering social, people-focused regeneration that benefits Wirral as a whole.

Generating inward investment, new employment opportunities for our most deprived neighbourhoods and helping to address the economic and health disparities within the Borough. Leading and influencing Wirral's place role in the wider City Region and Region.

**Outcomes**

- More investment secured and created to deliver regeneration in Wirral
- More jobs created and more people in good quality, sustainable work
- More quality, environmentally sustainable and affordable homes
- More businesses (including community/ social enterprise) established and survive

**What we will do**

- Attract new investment (grants and private sector) to support regeneration
- Drive Brownfield Local Plan including neighbourhood masterplans

- Progress neighbourhood master plans
- Deliver local employment and skills activity
- Coordinate worklessness initiatives in our most deprived areas
- Deliver new, attractive environmentally sustainable housing (including affordable)
- Tackle Homelessness
- Support local businesses
- Enable local community wealth building and asset transfers

**How it will be measured**

- Value of new investments
- Grant funding secured
- Private sector investment secured
- Brownfield land remediated
- Number of jobs created and safeguarded
- More people in well paid jobs
- Apprenticeships
- Increase in housing units and affordable homes
- Reduction in those living in temporary accommodation
- Business count (including social enterprise) increase
- Social Value secured





**THEME 5**

**working together  
to protect our  
environment**

Wirral is a peninsula with miles of beautiful coastline, beaches, parks and open spaces which we are all proud to look after, protect and keep clean. The Council has demonstrated commitment to playing our role in tackling the climate emergency. Working with partners to deliver the Cool2 Strategy we will continue to work with our partners and listen to our communities, providing the support they need to bring about positive changes to our local community on many of the issues that matter to people such as cleaner air, greener spaces, warmer homes, healthier travel and a thriving local economy. We will continue to extend tree cover and protect habitats and soils. The old, the young and those with existing health problems are most vulnerable to more hostile environmental conditions. Acting to stop the situation deteriorating really matters to our families and our communities now.

**Outcomes**

- An environmentally friendly and sustainable borough
- Net zero targets achieved
- Improved transport infrastructure

**What we will do**

- Review the Council's Tree, Hedgerow & Woodland Strategy
- Implement Pollinators Policy
- Sustainable maintenance of parks, open spaces, beaches and coastline
- Improve waste and recycling performance and street cleanliness
- Support activities on waste prevention, re-use, recycling and composting
- Implement the Biodiversity & Net Gain Strategy
- Deliver the Cool2 Climate Change Strategy

- Manage the Council's carbon budget to measure carbon emission reduction
- Improve Wirral's air quality and implement Air Quality Strategy
- Reduce emissions from our homes and buildings eg by retrofitting and reducing energy usage
- Introduce clear highways and infrastructure and network management strategy and policy including parking and Active Travel
- Review current street light Electric Vehicle Charging Provision (EVCP) strategy
- Implement Road Safety Plan

**How it will be measured**

- Increase in the number of trees planted and established each year
- Improvement in local recycling and waste reduction

- Baselining biodiversity and habitats
- The Council will achieve 'silver' carbon literate organisation status
- Continue working towards net zero target by 2030
- Increase in Active Travel (cycling and walking) networks (subject to rigorous equality impact assessments) and increased EVCP provision
- Reduction in Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) data and road traffic collisions
- Transport and pavement network condition
- Improved road safety





**THEME 6**

**working together**  
to create safe, resilient and engaged communities

Wirral is undergoing significant change, with large-scale regeneration programmes planned across the borough. Aligned to this, Wirral Council and partners have been developing infrastructure projects to ensure Wirral continues to be safe. We will continue to work with colleagues from the National Probation Service and Merseyside Police to support their Integrated Offender Management refresh strategy. Linked with change is ambition to provide opportunities that help our residents to live happy, healthy, independent, and active lifestyles. We will continue to work with a wide range of providers, including commercial, voluntary and community groups as well as other public sector organisations to collectively

re-imagine how we can make active and healthy opportunities a part of everyone's life choices.

**Outcomes**

- People and communities feel safer where they live, work, and socialise
- More residents lead active and healthy lives

**What we will do**

- Deliver our Community Safety Strategy
- Install new CCTV cameras in consultation with Merseyside Police
- Install new alleygates
- Secure agreed Streetscene improvements
- Installation of more emergency Help Points

- Work with partners including Merseyside Police to improve community safety
- Review Sport & Physical Activity Services and transformation programme
- Develop opportunities for Community / Commercial Transfer of any assets
- Review playing pitch offer and implement Playing Pitch Strategy
- Develop and launch Sport England funded Performance monitor for Wirral
- Expand Community Partner Library offer
- Development of Moreton Library and combined Youth Hub alongside Moreton regeneration work
- Increase digitisation and accessibility to the written word eg Wirral Archives, libraries

**How it will be measured**

- Number of new alleygates installed
- Improved street care and cleanliness
- Incidents in anti-social behaviour
- Perception of anti-social behaviour
- Improved coverage and monitoring of CCTV
- Meet Playing Pitch Strategy targets
- Increase in the number of Community Partner Libraries
- Increased digitisation of services
- Increase in whole population physical activity levels



A set of guiding principles have been established that shape how we will develop the Council as an organisation and implement this plan.





# Delivering the Plan



# Organisational values

Strong, values-led leadership is central to achieving our Council ambitions as set out in the Council Plan and helping us to navigate the complex challenges and opportunities ahead.

To achieve our vision we need strong, empathetic leaders and staff at all levels who listen, engage, inspire, trust and empower us as an organisation to move forward.

Our organisational values are at the heart of member development and our people strategy to enable great leadership at Wirral. Our values act as the compass that guides the way we approach our work and 'how we do things around here'. They represent who we are, what we stand for and our organisational DNA. These values are: **Ambitious, Professional, Resident Focused and Accountable.**

Delivery of the Council Plan focuses on the Council being well-led with good collaboration and cooperation between Political Group Leaders and Chief Officers. This will ensure there is collective responsibility for taking the right decisions for the long-term financial stability of the Council with improved accountability for members and officers implementing those decisions.

The Council Plan is reliant on elected members being empowered, confident decision makers and all staff having the understanding and skills to help deliver it. Our Member Learning & Development Strategy and our People Strategy will support this.



“Our values act as the compass that guides the way we approach our work”



# Equality, diversity and inclusion

**A key part of our Plan sets out our ambition to create an inclusive borough where nobody is left behind.**

We want Wirral to be a place in which everyone's hopes and aspirations can be made real. But we know there are some economic, social and health inequalities in Wirral and we are committed to addressing these. We want to ensure people are not held back by poverty and that our success is shared.

Our communities are our greatest strengths with people of many different backgrounds and life experiences living side by side. Supporting all our communities to thrive is a core strand running through all the priorities in our Council Plan and fundamental to how we work as a council.

The measures we want to take can make life better for everyone. Our Plan sets out how we will deliver these ambitions. It demonstrates commitment to build an inclusive culture within our workforce and a positive impact on the residents we serve. It shows how we will shape our services, grow our economy and deliver regeneration to actively address inequality and exclusion.

This Plan also sets out how we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity by meeting our statutory requirements and legal duties.

We want Wirral Council to be a fair and inclusive employer and to lead a Borough where diversity is celebrated, people have

equal opportunities and where inequality is actively tackled. We are committed to the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity. The Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic/ those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We do this in several ways including:

**Publishing workforce profiles and pay gap information.**

This is to help us as employers to understand the reasons for any gap and to consider whether we need to develop action plans to tackle the causes of any such gap. We aim to be an inclusive employer and will work to ensure our workforce is diverse and reflective of our community at all levels of the organisation. We will create a workplace where people feel valued, and everyone works together harmoniously and with respect for each other.

**Publishing information relating to people affected by our policies and decisions.**

We do this in several ways, including Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). We also collect information about how satisfied our

customers are with our services and use this to review our service delivery and help us to make our services accessible in a range of different ways for people. We aim to meet our responsibilities to treat people fairly, promote equalities, address inequality, challenge discrimination, and make reasonable adjustments where needed.

We will publish our equalities reports and impact assessments in an easily accessible manner and will embed equalities into decisions the council and partners make, and into our Council Plan.

**Publish equality objectives for how we will further any of the aims of the general equality duty.**

Our Council Plan aims to promote equity, and to secure the best possible future for all our residents, communities, and businesses. The Plan has thematic priorities that focus on improving outcomes for whole population groups.

We will support communities to get on well together and develop a shared understanding of each other's needs. We value the voluntary and community and faith sector, encouraging organisations to work together and residents to become more involved in their local communities.



“We want Wirral to be a place in which everyone's aspirations can be made real”



# Delivering the Plan

**The whole organisation will be brought together by - and committed to - making sure the actions in this Plan are carried out.**

The Council Plan is underpinned by clearly defined Strategies; Policy Committee Work Programmes; Directorate Business Plans right through to individual staff appraisals and ‘check-ins’ to ensure that everyone clearly knows their role in helping to deliver the Plan. To help us achieve our vision and aims, there are some important cross-cutting strategies underpin how we deliver the Council Plan – not least the Local Plan 2027 which is the long-term statutory document for Wirral and an important planning document that shows what can be built, where, how and why.

The Council Plan is underpinned by a strong and robust Performance Monitoring Framework and reporting process to ensure we can monitor and communicate how we are doing.

We will publish information to show whether the Council is achieving its priorities and delivering the outcomes we expect – how much we are doing; how well we are doing; and what difference we are making. The Council recognises the concerns of residents and remains determined to get the basics right.

To achieve our future vision for Wirral it is imperative that political leaders, the senior management team and staff at all levels work together as part of a powerful coalition for change. This will enable Wirral to continue its trajectory of improvement and modernisation, transforming the Council into an organisation that has a clear long-term strategy for moving forward. The delivery of sustainable change and outcomes will be paramount in creating the Wirral we want to become and will be key drivers in helping us to deliver our vision.

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