



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE**

This is Wirral

Leisure and Culture

**Wirral Intelligence Service
(December 2019)**

This is Wirral

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Background to This is Wirral

This is Wirral is a collected set of evidence about Wirral.

It includes information about the Wirral population including their current and future health and wellbeing needs and the borough including information about the economy, housing, environment and transport.

The insight is collected into a number of sections to allow ease of access for the reader. Each section contains detailed content including the key messages from the analysis and insight on main issues and is underpinned by detailed information.

The information forms our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) providing a detailed picture of the borough.

It is used to enable effective strategic planning to determine what actions local authorities and other partners need to take to meet resident needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing.

How can you help?

If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics then please email us at wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk or go to <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/>

Version Number	Date	Authors
1.0	December 2019	Rachel Howey and Simon Bellamy for Wirral Council

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to the content contained in this document:

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This is Wirral: Leisure and Culture

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Culture

- **Economic Impact** - The creative sector is recognised as the fastest growing sector in the Liverpool City Region with Wirral's 2018 cultural events programme resulting in £5m of economic impact. The Imagine Wirral programme resulted in over 250,000 visitors at arts, culture and heritage events in 2018.
- **Social Value** - generated from cultural activities will be measured through procurement with emphasis on generating 'local' wealth in addition to this, Make Hamilton Square CIC, is estimated to bring in a social impact of £1.6m. The impact will be generated through the creation of both direct and indirect employment opportunities for local people.
- **Partner working** - Wirral is the 2019 Liverpool City Region host Borough of Culture. The delivery of this initiative is overseen by the LCR Cultural Partnership and locally through the Wirral Cultural Partnership. Additional creative partnerships have been established locally including Think Tank Groups to network and share ideas.
- **Volunteering** - Over 100 volunteers to-date, equating to over 300 volunteering hours have been secured for the Borough of Culture programme. Working with Community Action Wirral, Wirral Met College, Floral Ambassador programme and City Stars to disseminate volunteering opportunities.
- **Satisfaction levels** - All events as part of the Borough of Culture programme have been rated above 90%, for visitors rating their experience as either 'good' or 'very good'. This is an increase of 5% based on last year's Imagine Wirral programme (over 85%).
- **Funding** - A funding strategy has been developed to support applications for regional, national and international funding as well as developing commercial/ sponsorship opportunities, in-kind support Liverpool City Region opportunities to maximise support from the Single Investment Fund (SIF). Significant funding has already been secured including the largest ever Arts Council England (ACE) grant of £130k to support the Borough of Culture year.
- **Education** - Wirral Met College announced the launch of two Degree programmes in celebration of Wirral's Borough of Culture year. Working in partnership with the University of Chester; Wirral Met will be offering a Fine Art degree and Cultural Studies degree programme starting in September 2019.
- **Post 2019**
 - Maximise the potential of Wirral's creative enterprise sector as a driver for economic regeneration and community wealth building.
 - Deliver an ambitious, high quality and inclusive culture events programme which impacts positively on civic pride and outcomes for residents as well as attracts visitors.
 - Promote Wirral regionally, nationally and internationally as a world-class visitor destination which is rich in assets and experiences.

Leisure

- **Users** - Wirral Leisure Services currently employ around 400 staff, with over 3 million visits a year to its facilities and 15,000 Invigor8 members accounting for over £4m of income. From 2016 to 2018, leisure centre usage increased by 14%. A commercial programme of income generating activities has been created with a designated Business and Commercial Development Officers assigned to bring these to fruition.
- **Marketing programmes** - The website and Mobile App developments together with 'Join at Home' product (introduced April 2019) need monitoring to measure progress and inform future developments, with industry figures suggesting a potential increase in uptake of around 20%. The App has had on average 126,000 users per month since its inception in 2018 and the website www.wirralleisure.com has had 1.1 million hits in its first year.
- **Key investment programmes** - will assist in delivering £0.5m of savings; initiatives include the £1.4m redevelopment of West Kirby Marine Lake, the new ATP pitch development at Leasowe Leisure Centre, refurbishment of the two reception areas at West Kirby Concourse and Guinea Gap and facility refurbishment at the Bidston Tennis Centre.
- **Additional funding** - Birkenhead Park received £20,900 funding from Public Health to continue delivering its Forest School programme into 2019-20.

LEISURE & CULTURE



£5m

**ECONOMIC IMPACT
OF CREATIVE SECTOR**
(2018)



**WIRRAL
LEISURE CENTRES**

3m **15k**
VISITS PER YEAR INVIGOR8
MEMBERS



32

**NATIONAL
AWARDS**
FOR WIRRAL'S PARKS,
COAST AND COUNTRYSIDE



2/3rds

**OF WIRRAL ADULTS
ARE ACTIVE**
UP TO 150 MINUTES EVERY WEEK
(2019)



400,000+ VISITORS

ATTEND BOROUGH OF CULTURE 2019 PROGRAMME



100+ VOLUNTEERS
300 VOLUNTEERING HOURS

FOR BOROUGH OF CULTURE EVENTS

Introduction

Culture

In April 2019, an Arts Council England report highlighted the positive contributions that the Arts and Culture sector could generate for the UK economy. It identified that the sector has grown by £390million in a year and now contributes £10.8billion a year to the UK economy, with 363,700 jobs within the sector. Productivity in the sector between 2009 and 2016 was greater than that of the economy as a whole, with gross value added per worker at £62,000 for arts and culture, compared to £46,800 for the wider UK economy. The creative sector is also recognised as the fast-growing sector in the Liverpool City Region.

The details of the report highlight the significance the industry plays in economic development. In Wirral, a comprehensive programme of arts, culture and heritage is in continual development. Imagine Wirral created unforgettable events throughout 2018 which attracted more than 250,000 people to the borough, resulting in an economic impact of over £5million. Highlights from the year included the Three Festivals: Tall Ships Regatta, New Brighton Revisited, Lost Castles, the Giant Spectacular and River of Light. A total of £150,000 was secured across the year from external funders, as well as through sponsorship and commercial opportunities, including the largest (at that moment in time) Arts Council England grant of £77,000 to support the delivery of the Tall Ships Regatta event.

Imagine Wirral is now the name behind delivering world-class cultural events to the residents of Wirral and beyond. This year the borough is building on the success of its 2018 programme with another extraordinary line-up of events and creative projects as the host Borough of Culture for Liverpool City Region, awarded by the Combined Authority.

The 2019 programme has been inspired by the themes: Discovery, Exploration and the Great Outdoors and includes a combination of specially commissioned activities involving outdoor events, visual arts and heritage exhibitions, music events, family and community projects. The programme benefitted from a £200k Liverpool City Region Combined Authority contribution as part of the Metro-Mayor's '1% for Art', which includes funding for the Borough of Culture initiative. An Arts Council England bid was also submitted and resulted in a successful grant award of £130k to enhance and support the delivery of the Borough of Culture programme. Further detail on the events which comprise the Borough of Culture year can be found via the Imagine Wirral website: <https://www.imaginewirral.com/wirral-2019>

The Culture and Visitor Economy team are working closely with partners on the Liverpool City Region Cultural Partnership who are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Borough of Culture initiative, which emerged as one of the key deliverables of the Liverpool City Region Culture and Creativity Strategy; a long-term 30-year strategy, with a short-term action plan.

As the Borough of Culture for 2019, Wirral will host the first LCR Cultural Awards at the end of the year to celebrate fantastic arts and cultural projects across the region.

Locally, the Culture and Visitor Economy team have been working with the Wirral Cultural Partnership to deliver the Wirral Culture Strategy action plan and the Borough of Culture programme. The team have also worked with public health colleagues to inform the development of this year's Public Health Annual Report (PHAR), which proposes recommendations linked to the positive impact that arts and culture can have on people's health and wellbeing.

Wider engagement has also taken place with local businesses and through think tank events to generate new ideas and to help foster new partnerships among local creative individuals and organisations, communities and volunteers.

Over 100 volunteers have actively supported, or assisted during events so far, providing invaluable support to the team and attendees. A Cultural Ambassador Programme is also currently in development with a number of high-profile Wirral Ambassadors secured, including Simon Rimmer, Pete Price, Andy McCluskey, Christian Furr and Jenny Johnston, who are promoting arts, culture and creativity in the borough through their established networks and personal profiles.

In conjunction with the Council's ambitions for regeneration, particularly in relation to vision for Birkenhead, the Culture and Visitor Economy Team have been working with creative individuals and businesses to bring cultural attractions and projects to the borough. This has included bringing the first cultural meanwhile use project (5-year lease) to Hamilton Square, in the form of 'Make Hamilton Square Ltd'; a creative hub for makers, artists and doers which will be situated in the Treasury Building. Building on this, a 'Creative and Digital Demand Study' has been commissioned to understand future demand requirements for creative industries in the borough and to guide future investment in the sector.

Leisure

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) strategy 'Sporting Future' and subsequent Sport England strategy – 'Towards an Active Nation', focus on the benefits sport and physical activity can bring to people and to society and mirrors the principles identified in Wirral's Leisure Strategy issued as part of the 2020 Vision.

The current leisure facilities and programme offers opportunities for all Wirral residents, as well as those who work in or visit the area, to take part in sport and physical activity in a safe and quality controlled environment. Wirral Leisure Services currently employ about 400 staff and with over 3 million visits a year to its facilities and 15,000 Invigor8 members, the service provides programmes and activities that contribute enormously to the social, educational and economic life of the community and to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of local people.

The service is becoming more commercial in its thinking, trying to attract more people, more often to the facilities, whilst at the same time preserving the traditional social values of the Council. A marketing strategy is under development which will help target particular groups and areas of Wirral identified in the Wirral Leisure Strategy. Pricing of products and services will continue to be in line with neighbouring and peer group Local Authorities.

Wirral received the Best Performer Award for Parks, Open Spaces and Horticulture at the 2018 National APSE Awards with the total number of national quality awards now up to 32, 3 more than the start of the year and 10 more than the start of the plan.

The Parks, Coasts and Countryside Team work to create 12, virtual 'measured mile routes' in 12 parks, coast and countryside sites across Wirral has now been completed. The interactive trails can be found on the councils website: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events/parks-and-open-spaces/walking-miles-wirral>

Birkenhead Park received £20,900 funding from Public Health to continue delivering its Forest School programme into 2019-20. A total of £1,700 was also raised through the Police Commissioning Group (PCG) for the Pathfinders Project at 3 schools during Q4.

The National Citizens Service Contract for Summer 2019 Delivery team have engaged with 10 schools plus held a 'keep warm' event in Weatherhead where 56 young people attended.

200 Young people have been assigned to the Wirral programme for Summer 2019 and the process has started to recruit 39 staff.

All practices involved in the physical activity pilot have been introduced to Community Action Wirral and the local leisure service offer. The pilot, as it currently stands, will not continue and a process evaluation will be provided by Public Health. There are opportunities with place-based care to scale up personalised care across neighbourhoods with a focus on population groups who are living with long term conditions. Linking health and care into our communities is integral to this work and leisure should be known to all neighbourhoods.

Leisure and Culture indicators and supporting measures

Increase the number of people who regularly use the boroughs parks and open spaces

51 events were held in Wirral's Parks, Beaches and Open Spaces in Q4 2018-19, which is 5 more than during the same quarter last year. The cumulative total this year is 378, which is 15 more than the previous year.

Increase the number of events in Wirral's parks, beaches and open spaces

The percentage of Wirral Residents who say they use the boroughs parks and green spaces at least once a month decreased by 67% to 66% reported in the previous survey in 2016 but not enough to be deemed as statistically significant.

Percentage of physically active adults

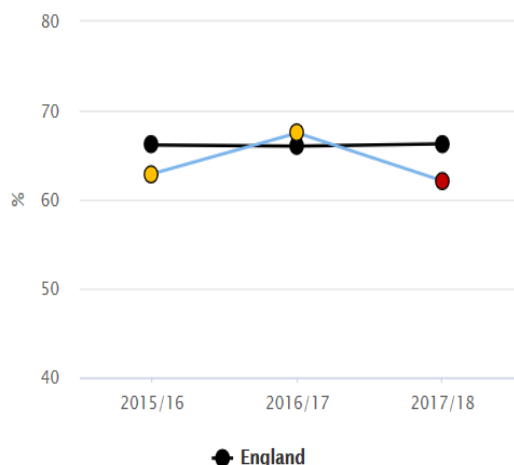
The below **table 1** shows the results of the survey for Sports England for those doing at least 150 moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) minutes physical activity per week*. At 62.1%, Wirral is slightly below the North West average of 64.7% and England at 66.3%.

Table 1: Percentage of physically active adults in Wirral, North West and England, 2017/18

Percentage of physically active adults Wirral

Proportion - %

 Export chart as image [Show confidence intervals](#)  Export table as CSV file



Period	Count	Wirral			North West region	England
		Value	Lower CI	Upper CI		
2015/16	-	62.9%	58.7%	66.9%	64.6%	66.1%
2016/17	-	67.5%	63.3%	71.4%	65.1%	66.0%
2017/18	-	62.1%	57.7%	66.3%	64.7%	66.3%

Source: Public Health England (based on the Active Lives Adult Survey, Sport England)

Source: [Public Health Outcomes Framework](#) 2019

Note: [Definition](#) - *The number of respondents aged 19 and over, with valid responses to questions on physical activity, doing at least 150 moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) minutes physical activity per week in bouts of 10 minutes or more in the previous 28 days expressed as a percentage of the total number of respondents aged 19 and over.

Increase the number of national quality awards for Wirral's parks, coastal sites and open spaces: Green Flags

Wirral has now received 32 national quality awards, 3 more than the start of the year and 10 more than the start of the plan.

Increase the number of residents who say they regularly volunteer / support community groups in Wirral

The percentage of Wirral Residents who say they volunteer at least once a month has decreased from 26% reported in the previous survey in 2016. The volunteering includes having given unpaid help either by taking part in or supporting any group, club or organisation (e.g. helping to run an activity/event, coaching, counselling, raising money, admin help).

Leisure Strategy

Wirral's Parks, Coast and Countryside for Leisure Activities

World Heritage

Pursuing World Heritage Site Status for Birkenhead Park. Project Officer in post and a two year project plan has been produced.

Measured Miles

Downloadable Measured Mile Park Routes of approximately one mile in length to encourage residents to utilise the routes for running, walking, cycling. The routes are designed as flexible way to be active as well as encourage usage of parks all year round.

Commercial Projects

A programme of income generating activities has been created with a designated Business and Commercial Development Officers assigned to bring these to fruition.

Engage education authorities to encourage employment within the sector

Wirral Metropolitan College provides an extensive curriculum focused on the needs of the sector with clear progression routes and a range of additional activities, including projects and mentoring programmes for its students.

Promotion through awards and heritage status as well as marketing plan

Wirral has now received 32 national quality awards, which includes 27 Green Flag Awards and Country Park Accreditation for Wirral Country Park, Open Spaces and Horticulture at the 2018 National APSE Awards.

Maximise opportunities to attract funding to encourage people to use Wirral's parks, coast and countryside.

Birkenhead Park received £20,000 funding from Public Health to deliver its Forest School programme during 2019-20

Participation in sports, leisure, social and physical activities

Leisure Services Review

A leisure review is ongoing to work through a number of options for Leisure and Cultural services. This is a complex process with options being considered by elected members prior to formal decision making. The review is necessary in order to ensure that the options put forward provide the services with the strongest possible foundation for future delivery and meets the needs of Wirral's residents and visitors.

Increase young people's involvement in leisure to improve mental health

The Local Youth board set up by the NCS programme have linked with CAMHS and received training as peer mentors to deliver mental health workshops to other young people during the 2019 Summer NCS delivery.

19 young people on the Positive Futures programmes have reported a reduction in their use of drugs & alcohol. There are strong links between the use of alcohol & drug misuse and mental health with young people.

New development opportunities for AstroTurf and grass pitches in Wirral

Cheshire Football Association and the Football Foundation reviewing timescales and implementation approach. A project group has been established to consider priority sites within Wirral's Local Football Facility Plan and to consider viable bids for funding. A playing pitch strategy has been written and adopted by the Council which has identified the need of additional 3G pitches in Wirral.

Modernise Wirral's Leisure offer to improve accessibility and increase participation.

Approval has been granted by Cabinet for the development of a number of capital projects to modernise and improve accessibility in 2019-20 including:

- Reception areas at West Kirby and Guinea Gap Leisure Centres.
- Refurbishment of the Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre.
- Development of an Artificial Turf Pitch and associated changing accommodation at Leasowe Leisure Centre.
- Soft Play area to be developed at one of the Leisure Centres.
- Re-development of the swimming pool changing rooms and associated areas at the Oval Leisure Centre.
- Purchase of replacement gym equipment at Leasowe, Guinea Gap and West Kirby Concourse has taken place to include e-gym software and access to RFID readers to track customer programmes.

The original invigor8 product was implemented in 2015 at which point there were over 9000 members paying monthly. As a result of capital improvements, this number has grown to 15,000. From the period 2016 to 2018, leisure centre usage has increased by 14%. Away from physical/capital improvements, the Invigor8 product was revised (Jan 2019) to reflect customer suggestions and new and improved membership categories, including a single site option at some locations; a review & evaluation is due to be finalised.

Access to social media continues to grow exponentially. The website and App developments together with 'Join at Home' product (introduced April 2019) need monitoring to measure progress and inform future developments within these areas. The App has on average 126,000 users per month since its inception in 2018. The website wirralleisure.com has had 1.1 million hits in its first year. Social media platforms continue to grow with active Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Increase pride in Wirral's communities and encourage more residents to volunteer

Increase number of places on National Citizens Service programme available to Wirral's young people aged 16 to 17

The Cabinet Lead with Assistant Director for Culture has signed the 2019 contract. The team have been into 10 schools plus a 'keep warm' event in Weatherhead for 56 young people. Roadshows were held at universities across Liverpool. 200 Young people have been assigned to the Wirral programme for Summer 2019. Local Youth Board are working towards National Social Action day and the process has started to recruit 39 staff.

The Summer of 2019 saw the first cohort of 90 young people plus staff leave for the outward-bound centre at Kingswood, Doncaster. A total of 268 16 - 17-year olds will take part in Wirral council's NCS programme between by August 2019.

NCS Trust through their regional development partner (RDP), INGEUS will be contracting Wirral Sports Development to deliver an Autumn NCS Programme for approximately 102 young people.

Volunteering programmes to support Wirral's parks and conservation activity.

A website has been developed to promote volunteer opportunities in Wirral's Parks and Countryside sites. <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events/parks-and-open-spaces/volunteer-with-us>

Pathfinders

The Pathfinder project provides local children, aged 13 years upwards, with a week of activities designed to show them the rewards of making positive choices in their lives. It is hoped the result will be a reduction in offending in the areas the young people are from. Funding is allocated by the Police & Crime Commissioner Fund. 100 children participated in 2018. This figure may rise to 125 in 2019. A mini-pathfinder project is also gaining ground in 2019 targeting primary schools.

Culture Strategy

Develop creative partnerships and a cultural events programme to promote arts, culture and heritage in Wirral

Demonstrate Social Value Added for creative businesses in Wirral through the delivery of Wirral's Borough of Culture programme and other activities

As part of the Borough of Culture evaluation process, the Culture and Visitor Economy Team will be working in partnership with Wirral Intelligence Service and the Commercial Management Team to calculate the social value generated as a result of the Borough of Culture programme.

For all procurement exercises a weighting has been placed within the tender exercises to ensure that local suppliers have enhanced opportunities. In addition, the concession choices at events are also weighted to ensure that companies from Wirral have maximum opportunities to take part. We have also compiled a list of local charities, artists and performers to ensure that we can offer artistic opportunities to local businesses and residents.

Social value will also be added through the introduction of creative meanwhile use projects, such as Make Hamilton Square CIC, which is estimated to bring in a social impact of £1.6m. The impact will be generated through the creation of both direct and indirect employment opportunities for local people, a percentage of the tenants becoming self-employed entrepreneurs or starting their own businesses, as well as through the delivery of community and school engagement sessions.

Implement and promote a programme of networking events for Wirral Culture Tank 2017 – 2020.

Think Tank groups have been formed to develop creative partnerships, share ideas for existing and new events / collaborations, whilst also providing an opportunity for networking. These groups will underpin the delivery of Wirral's Borough of Culture programme. These take place at different times and locations across Wirral to ensure wider engagement focused on creative individuals and organisations, communities and volunteering, heritage and cross-sector collaboration.

Work with the local creative community to develop and promote Wirral's 2019 Borough of Culture programme

The Culture and Visitor Economy team have continued to develop relationships and work with the local creative community. Several smaller-scale auxiliary events have been supported and

promoted through Wirral's Borough of Culture year, including a Family Fun Workshop at the Floral Pavilion and a Make Music Day event with Summer Solstice Strum at Marine Point.

A Borough of Culture information stand has also been set-up at Birkenhead Market, to promote and provide passers-by with Borough of Culture materials and details about the programme. Birkenhead Market has also seen the opening of a new gallery, supported by the Culture and Visitor Economy Team. The gallery represents local artists and community groups and offers the opportunity to sell artwork. The Culture and Visitor Economy team continues to share cultural and community events and opportunities through [@imaginewirral](https://twitter.com/imaginewirral) twitter account, and through various social media platforms. Many local cultural events and opportunities are also shared monthly through the Creative Bulletin.

Increase resident and visitor participation in Wirral's arts, culture and heritage offer to promote its educational, social and wellbeing benefits

Implement a communications plan to celebrate and promote arts, culture and heritage events through the 2019 Borough of Culture Programme.

Marketing and communications plans linked to the Imagine Wirral programme resulted in over 250,000 visitors at arts, culture and heritage events in 2018.

The Borough of Culture events programme has attracted over 200,000 visitors to events to-date. This has included events such as Animated Square, Radio Local (plus 70,000 listeners on BBC Merseyside), The Witching Hour, OVO Energy Tour Series and Wirral Food and Drink Festival, as well as smaller-scale community events.

Imagine Wirral followers on Twitter are now over 3,000 and Borough of Culture content on the Imagine Wirral Twitter channel and Wirral Council social media channels continue to produce good levels of engagement from the local community and visitors.

Further develop Wirral's volunteering ambassadors programme to promote culture and creativity across the borough and support the 2019 Borough of Culture programme.

The development of a Wirral Ambassador Programme is underway. We have already successfully secured some high-profile Ambassadors including Simon Rimmer, who was presented with his Borough of Culture Ambassador award by Chef Paul Askew during Channel 4's Sunday Brunch, providing us with significant PR and social media reach.

We have also secured Wirral Met College alumnus and internationally renowned artist Christian Furr. We are currently exploring opportunities to exhibit Christian's work as part of the Borough of Culture programme.

Other ambassador awards have included recognising key stakeholders and partners who have championed the Borough of Culture initiative, including The Little Collector, Jenny Johnston (Mezzo-Soprano) and collectively the young women who developed the Women of Iron photography exhibition.

Conversations are taking place with other local icons and celebrities and we will continue to build on this programme and identify even more local icons across arts, culture and creative industries who can raise our profile and be champions for our borough.

The Borough of Culture programme has also benefitted from the support of over 100 volunteers to-date, which has equated to over 300 volunteering hours.

The Culture and Visitor Economy Team have been working with Community Action Wirral, Floral Ambassador programme and City Stars to disseminate volunteering opportunities beyond our own networks, to maximise involvement from the local community. Wirral Met College have also been circulating volunteering opportunities linked to the Borough of Culture programme to their students, with several young people aged 16-18 volunteering to-date to build their confidence, skills and work experience.

Volunteers who have already participated in the Borough of Culture programme have provided feedback stating how much they enjoyed volunteering at events. Volunteering opportunities will continue to be promoted throughout the year with our partners and alternative mechanisms for engaging with volunteers and expanding the network will be explored to continue to improve our volunteering offer.

Promote Wirral on an international stage as part of the Liverpool City Region to attract world class arts, heritage and culture events and exhibitions

Implement the Liverpool City Region Culture and Creativity Strategy through participation on the Liverpool City Region Cultural Partnership

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Culture and Creativity Strategy was adopted by the Combined Authority on 9th March 2018 and is overseen by the LCR Cultural Partnership. Wirral is an active member on this partnership and is working with other key stakeholders across the city region to progress the implementation of the 3 key deliverables over the next 3 years:

1. Borough of Culture
2. Liverpool City Region Cultural Awards
3. Region Wide Events

A draft evaluation framework for the Borough of Culture initiative has been developed in partnership with Wirral's Culture and Visitor Economy Team, Wirral Intelligence Service and the Institute of Cultural Capital (ICC)/Liverpool John Moores University. The methodology has been shaped around the agreed Borough of Culture principles and will enable outcomes aligned to these principles to be measured across the whole initiative.

A 'Creative & Cultural Awards Co-ordinator' has been appointed by the Liverpool City Region to project manage and co-ordinate the delivery of the LCR Cultural Awards. The first awards ceremony will be hosted by Wirral in November 2019, as part of the Borough of Culture year. Award categories and criteria have been considered by the LCR Cultural Partnership and will recognise and celebrate excellence and innovation in art, culture and creativity across the region.

Ongoing work with LCR boroughs is also progressing around this year's joint city-region cultural project 'Constellations', which will be linked to the moon and stars.

Develop and deliver Wirral's Borough of Culture programme and maximise related opportunities to promote the borough on an international stage.

Wirral is the 2019 Liverpool City Region host Borough of Culture. Themes of discovery, exploration and the great outdoors underpinned programme development and creative content.

Emphasis will be on Wirral's open spaces and coastline, incorporating artistic content. An overview of the programme has been provided below:

- Reimagining of the Animated Square Illuminos production
- A co-commission with Heart of Glass which brought Hunt and Darton's Radio Local production to Wirral

- Made of Iron exhibition interpreting Wirral's shipbuilding and maritime story
- The Witching Hour collaboration with Hull's Absolutely Cultured which brought a magical outdoor performance to Birkenhead Park.
- Co-curation of the Mersey River Festival with Culture Liverpool
- Collaboration with communities & Open Eye to present a summer season of art outdoors
- The first annual Future Yard new music festival
- Wirral Food and Drink Festival, including Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Lightning Seeds, The Christians and China Crisis performances.
- Cycling Tour of Britain Stage and Series
- 2019 LOOK International Photo Biennial exhibition at the Williamson.
- Constellations, a region-wide cultural initiative in partnership with the Liverpool City Region which will include creative activities and happenings such as the Museum of the Moon and Moon Camps for young people highlighting Wirral's relationship with the skies and marking the 50th anniversary of the lunar landings.
- The year will close with the River of Light and the LCR Cultural Awards.

The Borough of Culture programme has now passed its midway point, with over 200,000 visitors attracted to events to-date, with over 500,000 anticipated by the end of the year due to major events of scale still to come.

Satisfaction levels for all events as part of the Borough of Culture programme so far have been above 90%, for visitors rating their experience as either 'good' or 'very good'. This is an increase of 5% based on last year's Imagine Wirral programme (over 85%). A record 100% of visitors rated their experience of Radio Local as 'good' or 'very good' and 98% for The Witching Hour.

Develop a funding strategy to drive our approach to applying for regional, national and international funding to promote and showcase Wirral

Building on the success of funding attracted from external sources for Imagine Wirral 2018. A funding strategy for Culture and Visitor Economy for 2019 and beyond will be developed in align with local, regional and national drivers.

An initial proposal outlining the key aspects of the funding strategy has been developed and will drive forward our approach to applying for regional, national and international funding both from external funders, as well as through exploring other funding avenues such as commercial/ sponsorship opportunities, in-kind support and identifying opportunities at a Liverpool City Region level to maximise support from the Single Investment Fund (SIF).

A significant amount of funding has already been brought in to support the Borough of Culture programme, including the largest ever Arts Council England (ACE) grant of £130k to enhance the creative content and support the delivery of the programme. Income has also been generated through match contributions and sponsorship/ commercial.

SIF bids aligned to supporting the visitor economy and destination marketing are also progressing at a city region level.

Regional and national awards which recognise Wirral's culture and heritage offer

Liverpool City Region culture project Lost Castles won the 'Community Event of the Year' award at the 2018 Echo Awards, recognising the success of the event both for individual boroughs and for the City Region as a whole.

Building on the success of last year, two award entries were submitted to this year's Echo Awards for the 'Community Event of the Year' category, resulting in 'The Witching Hour' event being shortlisted.

A list of regional and national awards has been formulated to identify potential awards the Culture and Visitor Economy Team may wish to submit an entry to, in order to recognise and celebrate achievements in Wirral's culture and heritage sector.

Wirral will also host the first annual Liverpool City Region Cultural Awards in November 2019 to showcase and celebrate projects from across the region and to draw to a close Wirral's Borough of Culture year.

Maximise the contribution of the arts, heritage and culture to the local economy

Create innovative spaces for use by cultural and creative organisations

A Creative Project Group has been established and regular meetings have been scheduled to progress the creation of innovative spaces for use by cultural and creative organisations.

One of these projects is 'Make Hamilton Square Ltd'; a meanwhile use project that will transform the high-profile site on the corner of Hamilton Square (Treasury Building) into a creative hub, bringing it back to life as managed workspace that will attract creatives, makers, dreamers and doers to the area. The project also includes the development of a community café and outside plateau area, which will enable 'Make' to revive the millennium garden, bringing it back to life, so that people of all ages can reconnect with nature in an urban environment.

Further opportunities linked to both meanwhile and longer-term creative projects are currently being considered and a 'Creative and Digital Market Demand Study' has been commissioned. The commission involves a 3-month research study (ending December 2019), which will provide an evidence base and determine opportunities for future investment and ideal locations/spaces for creative and digital industries in the borough.

Complete review of Wirral Council's leisure and culture assets

The review is working through a number of options for Leisure and Cultural services. This is a complex process with options being considered, it is necessary in order to ensure that the options put forward provide the services with the strongest possible foundation for future delivery and meet the needs of Wirral's residents and visitors.

Ensure the training offer for the arts, culture, heritage and tourism sector supports the priorities for business growth and development

Wirral Met College announced the launch of two Degree programmes in celebration of Wirral's Borough of Culture year. Working in partnership with the University of Chester; Wirral Met will be offering a Fine Art degree and Cultural Studies degree programme starting in September 2019. Students will be actively involved in understanding how plans for the regeneration of Wirral will embrace the heritage and culture of our community. They will also play an active role in shaping these plans through studies of the cultural landscape and how they can contribute to the development of public artwork in Wirral.

What are we doing and why?

Capital Investment

Leisure Services have a number of existing capital projects at different stages of development which will support £0.5m of savings:

- £1.4m redevelopment of West Kirby Marine Lake has commenced
- New ATP pitch development at Leasowe Leisure Centre.
- Refurbishment of the two reception areas at West Kirby Concourse and Guinea Gap
- Facility refurbishment at the Bidston Tennis Centre

Other bids will assist in maintaining current stock and provide replacement equipment essential for retaining and developing facilities for the enjoyment of customers.

Expansion of Invigor8 product

The Invigor8 product is an extremely successful product for the service and accounts for over £4m worth of income. New online 'Join at Home' facility has been launched with industry figures suggesting an increase in uptake of up to 20% as a result of these developments.

Arrowe Park and the Warren Municipal Golf Course

The Council is currently (January 2019) seeking an alternative golf operator to manage and operate Arrowe Park and The Warren Municipal Golf Courses. It is hoped that this will attract an experienced current service provider and some much-needed capital investment in the infrastructure and in terms of golf course maintenance.

Culture beyond 2020

This year, Wirral is the host Borough of Culture for the Liverpool City Region and is building on the success of 2018. This year's programme features another extraordinary line-up of events and creative projects which will showcase Wirral, its local talent and creative output, placing the borough on an international platform like never before and attracting thousands to the region in the process.

There is an ambition to continue this trajectory beyond 2019, building on the legacy of Wirral's Borough of Culture; creating even more unmissable moments for both our residents and visitors, as well as exploring both meanwhile and longer-term cultural attractions to maximise the borough's year-round visitor offer.

The future ambition for Culture and Visitor Economy in the borough is currently being developed in align with local, regional and national drivers and with future programmes featuring some returning favourites. A funding strategy for future years is also being developed to identify opportunities to maximise budgets through external funding, match, in-kind support etc.

Building on what has been achieved to-date, Culture and Visitor Economy aspirations beyond 2020 have also been incorporated into the development of the new Council Plan:

- Finalise work to understand the needs of the creative enterprise sector and use this evidence to develop an action plan focused on enabling sector growth.
- Launch Wirral's Borough of Culture legacy plan and 2020 events programme.
- Deliver a Destination Marketing work programme and campaign strategy focused on increasing visitor numbers.

Leisure contribution to Strategic Plans

People	Leisure Services	Business	Leisure Services
Older people live well	Golf, Marine Lake and Leisure Centre activities 50+ groups.	Workforce skills match business needs	Training and volunteering, gaining sports specific skills and Streetgames.
Young people are ready for adulthood	NCS, Positive Futures, Streetgames and Leisure Centres.	Vibrant tourism economy	Golf, Marine Lake, The Oval and Thurstaston Campsite.
Vulnerable children reach their full potential	Marine Lake, NCS, Streetgames and Leisure Centres.	Assets and buildings are fit for purpose	Marine Lake, Playing Pitch Strategy, Leisure Centre fitness suites, 3G pitches and Thurstaston Campsite.
Reduce child and family poverty	NCS, Positive Futures and Leisure Centres, Fit 'n Fed.	Greater opportunities in Wirral	Training and volunteering, Marine Lake and new instructors.
People with disabilities live independently	Marine Lake DDA, Disability Programmes and Leisure Centre offer including IFI.	Increase inward investment	Sportivate, Satellite Clubs, Positive Futures, <u>Parklives</u> , Streetgames, Marine Lake, NCS- all funded, MacMillan.
Environment	Leisure Services		
Leisure and cultural opportunities for all	Invigor8, cycling, running, sailing, golf, Marine Lake and Leisure Centres.		
Wirral residents live healthier lives	Cycling, running, sailing, golf, Marine Lake GP Referral and Leisure Centres.		
Community services are joined up and are accessible	NCS, Community Development, Coastal Communities and Leisure Centres.		
Attractive local environment	Golf, Marine Lake, Thurstaston, The Oval and Leisure Centres.		



Key elements how Leisure contribute to Strategic Plans

Accessible, modern and well-maintained facilities catering for all communities

- Work with a development partner to develop and shape facilities that communities and customers want and that they will be inspired to visit and promote
- Consolidate our estate and still provide modern, affordable and state of the art facilities for the people of Wirral and those that compliment other leisure and amenities in the area
- Develop the use of IT within the service to assist customers and make it easier for users to access and pay for our facilities.

Achieve & maintain financial targets

- Committed to working with individual customers and different user groups in ensuring charging policy is in line with peer and neighbouring Local Authorities fees and charges
- Continue to work with groups and organisations in providing opportunities to enable continued participation in sport and physical activities – especially for young and disadvantaged customers
- Continue to explore different sources of funding to fund new initiatives and business expansion

Provide a quality customer experience

- Provide facilities and services that exceed the growing needs and expectations of customers and attract non-users which are traditionally seen as hard to reach groups
- Working with a development partner in finding out what particular communities want in their area and in doing so trying to understand the barriers to participation
- Develop customer forum groups and customer survey to enhance insight on customer experience to inform practices.

Develop staff to be the best and the employer of choice

- Support vocational training in collaboration with partners Wirral Met College, building on existing apprenticeship programmes, investing in the future of the business and providing career opportunities and an environment to grow
- Provide forums and structures for communication throughout the business so that employees and customers at all levels are properly informed and can effectively contribute to the business and future plans
- Work with in providing new opportunities for career development, helping staff work with new freedom and flexibility and in a culture that rewards innovation and creativity
- Point around supporting the Councils apprenticeship and intern schemes

Change Lives through healthy innovation

- Work with colleagues in Public Health and the CCG in developing a GP referral scheme which will target specific diseases /conditions and promote the use of facilities. Aim to make the scheme as simple as possible, ensuring appropriately qualified and welcoming staff are on site, to guide the patient/customer through their carefully developed exercise programme.

- Wirral Leisure are currently hosting a 2-year MacMillan project for people living with and beyond cancer.

This £350k project has the aim of engaging with cancer patients through the medium of sport and physical activity, to reduce the risk of the cancer reappearing and building the patients self confidence in facing the challenges of everyday life. The target was to engage with 500 in two years, after year one, 900 have been engaged with and signposted to relevant services.

Culture contribution to Strategic Plans

People	Culture
Older people live well	Volunteering opportunities, Concession rates for older people and carers at ticketed events, Tackling social isolation through encouraging older people out of their homes and into the community to enjoy cultural events and activities.
Young people are ready for adulthood	Volunteering opportunities for college students, as well as opportunities for young people to perform at some Borough of Culture events.
Vulnerable children reach their full potential	Looked after children and their families received free ticket places offered for Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.
Reduce child and family poverty	Predominately free, family-friendly Borough of Culture events to encourage those from areas of deprivation to attend.
People with disabilities live independently	Accessibility platforms and access provided at all Borough of Culture events, including free attendance for carers. Sign-language choirs and groups with learning disabilities have also engaged in the cultural programme.

Environment	Culture
Leisure and cultural opportunities for all	Inclusive, accessible events programme for all members of communities regardless of age, background, or ability.
Wirral residents live healthier lives	Supporting Public Health colleagues to develop the Public Health Annual Report highlighting the positive impacts that arts and culture have on people's health and wellbeing.
Community services are joined up and accessible	Bring community services together for events, working in partnership with police, ambulance service, health colleagues etc.
Attractive local environment	Increasing perceptions of place and residents reporting that they feel safer where they live as a result of the Borough of Culture programme.

Business	Culture
Workforce skills match business needs	Opportunities for people to develop their soft skills through volunteering e.g. confidence, communication etc.
Vibrant tourism economy	Major events of international and national scale, New tourism attractions e.g. Wake Park, Eureka!, Cultural Ambassadors
Thriving small businesses	Concession opportunities to promote local businesses e.g. Wirral Food and Drink Festival, engagement pre, during and post events with local businesses, including increased opening hours by some businesses during events to maximise income generation opportunities.
Assets and buildings are fit for purpose	Meanwhile Use Projects, Demonstrating how Wirral's assets can be used differently and to host events e.g. Birkenhead Priory, Town Halls, Birkenhead Park etc.
Greater job opportunities in Wirral	Volunteering opportunities, employment opportunities linked to meanwhile use projects and longer-term cultural infrastructure projects
Increase inward investment	Marine Lake – Wake Park, Creative and Digital Demand Study

The Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture initiative is underpinned by the following five principles that will be measured and delivered upon across the year:

Key elements how CultureLeisure contribute to Strategic Plans

Children and Young People

- Wirral's Borough of Culture programme is family-friendly, with most events being free to encourage parents, grandparents, carers etc. to bring their children to experience and enjoy Wirral's Borough of Culture year.
- Educational, as well as fun creative workshops and camps designed for children and young people to enable them to learn about their local history and heritage, as well as a range of other topical issues in an exciting and dynamic creative environment.
- Hosting events in key areas of deprivation to ensure families, children and young people affected by inequality have access to the programme where they live.
- Interactive artists and performers at Borough of Culture events to engage and provide memorable cultural experiences for children and young people during events.
- Work with local schools to support them in developing their own artwork linked to the Borough of Culture programme.
- Engage with local colleges and universities to offer opportunities for young people to participate, or volunteer at Borough of Culture events, enabling them to develop their professional and social skills.
- Work experience offered on the Culture and Visitor Economy Team for young people who want to develop their knowledge of event management/production, cultural infrastructure projects, partnership/community working etc.
- Work in partnership with Wirral Met College to promote and develop creative qualifications/ degrees, which will enhance the provision of these types of qualifications, increasing take-up and improving talent pathways into creative industries.
- Work with young people from across the borough to design future events and activities e.g. focus on culture as part of the 2019 Youth Parliament
- Development of a Cultural Ambassador Programme to raise the aspirations of children and young people and highlight what can be achieved through following career pathways into the creative sector.

Communities

- Community and stakeholder engagement sessions to be hosted to inform the local community of the Borough of Culture programme and to provide them with opportunities to shape and participate in the programme.
- Work with members of the community to encourage, facilitate and help them to promote their own arts, cultural and heritage events.
- Resident letter drops to be conducted around key event locations to encourage greater participation in the programme from the local community.
- Engagement with local businesses prior and post-Borough of Culture events to provide them with opportunities to get involved

- Wirral's Borough of Culture programme will have a commitment to equality and diversity, ensuring accessibility at all events. Special provisions will be implemented where required to ensure all members of the community can access, experience and enjoy events.
- The Borough of Culture programme will be predominately free to encourage wider participation and engagement from all members of the community. Key events as part of the programme will also be hosted in areas of deprivation to ensure those affected by inequality have access to outstanding cultural events where they live.
- Volunteers at each Borough of Culture event to provide a friendly welcome to residents and visitors, and to engage with members of the community to gather their feedback and improve their visitor experience.
- Imagine Wirral website and Borough of Culture twitter page continuously updated throughout the Borough of Culture year to promote the programme to our communities and to ensure all relevant information on the programme is accessible to encourage wider participation.

Positive Outcomes

- Educational workshops developed and delivered at key cultural events.
- Wirral's Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) 2019 has been developed to focus on the benefits of arts and culture on people's health and wellbeing. Evidence gathered will feed into Wirral's Borough of Culture evaluation process and will act as legacy beyond 2019.
- Working in partnership with the Wirral Partnership Delivery Group, as well as local businesses to ensure positive outcomes can be delivered across the borough.

Distinctiveness of Place

- Develop Wirral's visitor offer, USP and place-branding to celebrate Wirral's distinctiveness of place (e.g. encouraging residents and visitors to explore Wirral's great outdoors and miles of coast and countryside)
- Broaden the current cultural offer in Wirral for residents and visitors by bringing new events that celebrate areas of excellence in Wirral (e.g. Wirral Food and Drink Festival)
- Bring a diverse range of cultural events to Wirral's unique outdoor spaces to appeal to new audiences (e.g. Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Birkenhead Park)
- Raise the profile of Wirral's world-famous museums, cultural assets and historic locations by hosting events and developing transformational projects in these areas (e.g. Make Hamilton Square Ltd)
- Celebrate Wirral's unique history through Heritage Open Days and exhibitions (e.g. Made of Iron)
- Promote Wirral's cultural offer through various communication channels e.g. Twitter, Creative Bulletin for local artists/creatives, as well as local, regional and national press etc.
- Further develop the distinctiveness of Wirral as a place through introducing new art installations in public spaces (e.g. Art Outdoors)
- Develop strong relationships with key local and regional media who are supportive of Wirral's Borough of Culture programme.

- Work collaboratively with cultural and community partners throughout the year, in order to maximise shared marketing opportunities, including partnerships with NPOs Culture Liverpool, Open Eye, RLPO and Heart of Glass; reaching existing cultural attendees and harder-to-reach audiences through their established channels and networks.
- Work across the LCR Cultural Partnership to define the distinctiveness of each borough and maximise the wider LCR cultural offer.
- Encourage overnight stays so that visitors spend more time in Wirral and can experience the wider cultural offer.
- Align Borough of Culture activity with the new Destination Marketing Strategy, to promote Wirral's creative and cultural offer to those outside the borough.

Infrastructure

- Enhancing Wirral's cultural infrastructure through introducing public art and installations across the borough's great outdoor spaces
- Identify and apply for further external funding and grant opportunities to invest in cultural infrastructure projects now and as part of Wirral's Borough of Culture legacy.
- Increasing the sustainability of Wirral's cultural offer and infrastructure through supporting others (community groups, local creative organisations etc.) to develop and host their own events and activities.
- Development of a meanwhile use offer for the borough to bring temporary art installations, exhibitions and projects to the borough.
- Introduce longer-term growth/creative projects to act as legacy for Wirral's Borough of Culture year.
- Commission a 'Creative and Digital Market Demand Study' to gather intelligence that will inform future investment and cultural development.
- Continue to develop local, regional and national partnerships to ensure the necessary infrastructure and capacity in the sector is available to deliver even more diverse and outstanding moments in the years following 2019.
- Maximise on regional and national drivers and opportunities – DCMS, British Council etc.

Local View

Imagine Wirral 2018 – Overview of key achievements

- Over 250,000 visitors attracted to Wirral to experience the array of amazing events across the year.
- Over £5m was generated for the local economy as a result of the Imagine Wirral programme.
- Over £200k of external funding secured through grant and commercial opportunities.
- Secured the largest ever Arts Council England bid achieved by the Council (£77k).

- Over 85% of people who engaged with the programme rated their experience at events as either 'good' or 'very good'.
- Local schools were engaged with and over 700 schoolchildren participated in the programme.
- Hundreds of volunteers supported the delivery of the events.
- Brought the largest ever one-day event to Wirral in the form of the Giant Spectacular event which attracted over 80,000 visitors to New Brighton.
- Social media presence greatly increased with over 1,000 new Twitter followers secured in the first 6 months.
- National/global media reach achieved - Wirral's Lost Castle was featured in The Times and on BBC One 'The One Show', and further afield, New Brighton Revisited attracted media coverage from the likes of Vogue Italia, while the Giant Spectacular in New Brighton made international news, including NBC News in America.

Underpinning and supporting evidence

[Visit Wirral Intelligence Service website for more details that inform this document.](#)

Contact details

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