

CABINET

Thursday, 23 June 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	Finance and Best Value
	Councillors	P Davies AER Jones B Kenny A McArdle AR McLachlan C Meaden J Stapleton	Regeneration and Planning Strategy Corporate Resources Environment Social Care and Inclusion Children's Services & Lifelong Learning Culture, Tourism and Leisure Community and Customer Engagement
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	G Davies H Smith	Housing and Community Safety Streetscene and Transport Services

23 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

24 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 June 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

25 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 7 of the last meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 June 2011 when the Director of Finance had presented the Council's projected budget for 2012-15. There had been concerns raised about the impact that possible changes in local government financing could have on the Borough and the Cabinet had resolved to ask the Chief Executive to seek an urgent meeting with Government Ministers to make the Council's concerns clear. Councillor S Foulkes reported that arrangements were in hand, with the help of Alison McGovern MP, for the Leaders of the three Political Groups to meet, as soon as possible, with Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

26 FINANCIAL OUT-TURN 2010/11

A full review of the financial accounts for 2010/11 had now been completed and a report by the Director of Finance provided a comparison of the out-turn against the estimate for 2010/11 and an analysis of the major variations together with details of the amounts held in reserves and provisions at 31 March 2011.

Councillor S Foulkes informed that he had serious concerns over the lateness of this report which had meant that Members had very little time to consider and analyse its

content but had agreed that it could be discussed at this meeting and decisions would be made so that the Council's 2010/11 accounts could be closed. Councillor Foulkes also told the Cabinet that it was a worrying report that set out a £5.3m overspend that had been lost in the system and had not known at the time the 2011/12 budget had been set but had now come to light. He was disappointed that predictable pressures were being reported long after the budgetary process had ended and he told the Cabinet that this was just not acceptable.

The Cabinet noted that the main headlines in respect of the General Fund were as follows:

- (a) for 2010/11 there was an overspend of £5.3 million that arose in the areas of Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Technical Services. This was largely offset by 'one-off' savings within the areas of Treasury Management and Housing Benefit. Net this was a £0.3 million overspend;
- (b) the level of balances at 31 March 2011 increased by £1 million. The release of a further £5.7 million from reserves being used to meet the requirement to include £4.4 million of Early Voluntary Retirement/Voluntary Severance Scheme to be spent in 2011/12 in the 2010/11 accounts and to meet the net overspend; and
- (c) the Council's provisions and reserves at 31 March 2011 were £15 million higher than a year earlier. This was due to the requirement to provide for the £8.7 million of Early Voluntary Retirement/Voluntary Severance payments due in 2011/12, the Community Fund grant of £4.4 million required for future years and a £3 million increase in schools balances.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revenue out-turn for 2010/11 be agreed;**
- (2) the provisions and reserves be agreed;**
- (3) Cabinet expresses its dismay at the Council's reported £5.3m overspend in Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Technical Services;**
- (4) in view of the looming reduction in Council resources, the Cabinet believes that substantial corrective action should have been taken at an earlier stage in order to avoid placing more pressure on the following year's budget, and that the pressures creating the overspends were well known within the year;**
- (5) Cabinet notes that these overspends have been covered by one off savings from Treasury Management and Housing Benefit;**
- (6) Cabinet points out that as resources get scarcer, these one off sums cannot be relied on to bail out overspending areas, and that, where they are available, they should be used to reduce the pressures on the following year's budget; and**

- (7) **Cabinet also expresses its concern that these figures may hide ongoing commitments which could lead to built in overspends in future years if they are not tackled, and asks Chief Officers to address these matters urgently.**

27 CAPITAL OUT-TURN AND FINANCING 2010/11

A report by the Director of Finance informed the Cabinet of the capital out-turn for 2010/11 and the resources used to fund the programme as required under Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the capital out-turn and financing, including the variations and slippage from 2010/11 to 2011/12, be agreed; and**
- (2) **the financing of the programme and formal Capital Determinations be agreed.**

28 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

A report by the Director of Finance included a review of Treasury Management activities during 2010/11 and confirmed compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators. The Annual Report had been prepared in accordance with the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the revised Prudential Code.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2010/11 be agreed;**
- (2) **the transfer of additional investment income of £1 million and the saving of £2 million from capital financing activities in 2010/11 to the General Fund balance be agreed; and**
- (3) **the Treasury Management Team, responsible for achieving this level of income for the Council, be congratulated.**

29 INSURANCE FUND ANNUAL REPORT

A report by the Director of Finance provided a review of the Risk and Insurance activity during 2010/11 and plans for 2011/12. It also detailed the current status of the liability, fire and motor claims Insurance Fund and the impact of measures taken to improve the management of risk.

The Cabinet noted, in particular, that as a consequence of their involvement in the Lord Justice Jackson Review during 2010, a Finance officer had been invited by the Ministry of Justice to meet with the Justice Minister to represent the views of local authorities in connection with the consultation process on proposed reforms to civil litigation funding and costs. Issues under consideration had the potential for a negative impact on the performance of the liability element of the Insurance Fund. The Council maintained a prominent role throughout the consultation process with

further meetings and discussions taking place and, with the consultation process now closed, the outcome was awaited from the Ministry of Justice.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the transfer of £946,654 from the Insurance Fund to General Fund balances at 31 March 2011 be agreed; and**
- (2) the Insurance Team be congratulated on their hard work.**

30 **DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS 2011/12**

A report by the Director of Finance provided details of the departmental revenue budgets following the setting of the 2011/12 Budget.

Councillor S Foulkes again made reference to Financial Out - Turn 2010/11 Report and the £5.3m overspend (Minute No. 26 above refers). He understood that this would have effects on front line services and that services may not be provided in the same way in future. Consequently, the Cabinet would work to mitigate the circumstances it found itself in and intended to be open and honest with the public.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revised departmental budgets which take account of the decisions of the Council at its meeting held on 1 March 2011 be agreed;**
- (2) Chief Officers along with the Director of Finance be requested to monitor their budgets and report to Cabinet, as part of the quarterly Performance Report;**
- (3) the monthly Financial Monitoring Statement be sent to all Members;**
- (4) Cabinet notes the very late delivery of the Departmental Budgets, which in the past have formed part of the Budget Blue Book in February;**
- (5) Cabinet recognises that substantial changes have been made to Departmental Budgets in order to achieve the very high level of savings required in 2011/12;**
- (6) Cabinet also notes that, in order to set a legal budget, all Chief Officers have agreed that the savings in their departments are deliverable;**
- (7) in the light of the overspends reported elsewhere on the agenda (Minute No. 26 above refers), the Cabinet, therefore, takes this opportunity to remind Chief Officers that they have a Constitutional responsibility, as outlined in the report:**

“to ensure that spending remains within the services overall cash limit and that individual budget heads are not overspent, by monitoring the budget and taking appropriate corrective action where significant variations from the approved budget are forecast.”

31 **COLLECTION SUMMARY 2010/11**

A report by the Director of Finance detailed the collection of Council Tax, Business Rates, Sundry Debtors and Housing Act Advances. It highlighted key collection indicators and trends with regard to irrecoverable sums and the sums written off under delegation.

Councillor S Foulkes raised concerns over the possibility of new legislation coming into force that may only allow the Council to keep locally collected business rates and the devastation such action would cause the Council and the knock on effect it would have on precepting authorities e.g. Police and Fire and Rescue. He informed that he would be raising this matter at the meeting to take place between the three Political Group Leaders and Eric Pickles MP (Minute No. 25 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

32 **AUTHORISATION OF OFFICERS FOR RECOVERY AND APPEALS**

A report by the Director of Finance sought authority for named staff to initiate and conduct the recovery of local revenues and business rates through the Magistrates' Court and represent the Council at Valuation Tribunal Hearings and Housing Benefits Tribunal Hearings.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) in accordance with the provisions of Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972, the following Officers of the Council be authorised to institute and conduct proceedings on behalf of the Council in the Magistrates' Court for the recovery of unpaid Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates and the enforcement of associated regulations:

Mrs S Hutchison	Assistant Council Tax Manager
Mrs. K. Chan	Assistant Council Tax Manager
Mrs. J. Farrell	Council Tax Team Leader
Mr. J. Fisher	Rating Officer
Ms. J. Monks	Appeals Officer
Mr. B. Nulty	Council Tax Team Leader
Mr. N. Powell	Revenues Manager
Mr. I. Williams	Senior Rating Officer
Mr. P Macfarlane	Appeals Officer
Mrs. L. Roddan	Court Officer

- (2) in accordance with the provisions of Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972, the following Officers of the Council be authorised to attend Valuation Tribunals and represent the Authority in appeals relating to Council Tax and Community Charge:

Mrs. K. Chan	Assistant Council Tax Manager
Mrs S Hutchison	Assistant Council Tax Manager
Ms. J. Monks	Appeals Officer
Mr. N. Powell	Revenues Manager
Mr. P Macfarlane	Appeals Officer
Mrs. L. Roddan	Court Officer

- (3) in accordance with the provisions of Section 223 of the Local Government Act 1972, the following Officers of the Council be authorised to attend the Benefits Appeals Tribunals and represent the Authority in such appeals:

Mr. M. Bailey	Appeals and Debt Recovery Team Leader
Mr. J. Cowan	Housing Benefits Team Leader
Ms. N. Dixon	Benefits Manager
Mrs. D. Eusoof	Benefits Operational Manager
Ms. I. Hughes	Housing Benefits Team Leader
Mrs. P. Hughes	Benefits Operational Manager
Mrs. S. Jones	Housing Benefits Team Leader
Mrs. W. Neil	Housing Benefits Team Leader
Mrs. K. Woods	Benefits Operational Manager
Mrs. V. O’Leary	Benefits Operational Manager
Mrs. H. Rostron	Housing Benefits Team Leader
Mr. S. Rostron	Benefits Intervention Manager Leader
Mr I. Abbinnett	Appeals Officer

33 ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A report by the Director of Finance informed Members of the conclusions and recommendations contained within the review of Documentum, the Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS), carried out by the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM). The report primarily concluded that the system was fit for purpose as a corporate EDRMS solution and that it was key to the success of the Council’s office rationalisation and agile working programmes and would contribute to savings realised from these, and subsequent, projects.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the continued use of Documentum as the corporate EDRMS system wherever practicable, be endorsed;
- (2) the list of potential projects, attached as an Appendix to the report be rolled out to departments; and
- (3) the alignment of retention policies for paper and electronic documents, be approved and be carried out by the Information Management Team, the Business Architecture Team and IT Services.

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A report by the Director of Finance informed Members of the conclusions and recommendations contained within the review of the Customer Relationship Management System (Oracle CRM), carried out by the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM). It primarily concluded that the system was fit for purpose as a corporate CRM solution; it could significantly assist the Council in understanding citizen service requirements. It was key to managing the relationship between the Council and service users; and could assist in reducing service costs by driving automatic processes that assisted staff in delivering those services or enabling self service via the Internet.

Members noted that to be effective the System must manage service delivery across all delivery channels (One Stop Shops, Call Centre and the internet). The report proposed that, where possible, the system be extended from its current position to manage all service delivery and to maintain a holistic view of services delivered to individuals, which further assisted in the understanding of service users needs. The report concluded that replacement would be difficult, expensive and would severely impact on services being delivered by current users.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the existing practice of developing the CRM system to encompass additional areas of service delivery, where a business case has identified that either service improvements or cost saving can be made be supported and the system be extended across as many service areas as practicable;**
- (2) the enhancement of the system to provide a holistic view of the facilities provided to each citizen be endorsed;**
- (3) the migration to Oracle Release 12 be approved if an investigation into, the application functionality and business benefits, shows that the advantages outlined in the SOCITM report can be delivered; and**
- (4) the cost of the upgrade (£100,000) be met from the Efficiency Investment Fund.**

MUSEUM LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES REVIEW OF WIRRAL LIBRARY SERVICE

A report by the Director of Finance summarised the findings from the Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA) Council consultancy report on the stakeholder review of the Wirral Library Service. It discussed Libraries, as a service and a place, and detailed a number of actions for the Council to consider that could be used in the development of the Library Strategy and also in the development of co-located Libraries and One Stop Shops, which the MLA report had acknowledged as a positive way forward.

Councillor C Meaden welcomed the report informing that joining with One Stop Shops would protect Libraries and take them into the 21st Century.

Councillor S Foulkes told the Cabinet that Libraries could be better protected if the Council could attract more Government funding. A lesson had been learnt and he wished to convey to the public that the Cabinet was aware of how important Libraries were but they would need to change their working practices to bring about necessary improvement. There would be consultation and negotiation with staff with a view to providing a better cost effective service.

RESOLVED:

That the MLA report be noted along with the progress being made in the adoption of the report findings in linking Libraries and One Stop Shops together.

36 RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION OF LIBRARY BOOKS

A report by the Director of Finance detailed the current position regarding the installation and use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for Library books and how it would help improve the service by automating the issue and discharge of books. This was currently being installed at New Ferry Library with proposals for use at other sites, where a business case for efficiency could be made. The report detailed the timescales and the likely savings and efficiencies that would be realised by these changes.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet notes that the contract has been awarded to Intellident (Specialist Computer Centre) and the commitment to install the RFID system in New Ferry Library be also noted;**
- (2) RFID be installed in all Libraries where a business case for efficiency can be made; and**
- (3) the total cost of installation, which could be up to £1m, be funded from reserves.**

37 REVISION OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULE 16

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management invited the Cabinet to recommend to Council that it approve an additional Contract Procedure Rule 16A as follows:

16A Variations to Prices/Rates – Term Contracts

16A.1 Term Contracts (e.g. those in place for waste collection and highway maintenance) are awarded on the basis of a fixed period of time ('term'); utilising approved rates or prices to deliver services through approved budgets rather than an approved contract total.

16A.2 The Chief Officer responsible for every term contract shall record in writing every change in the works or service information which results in a variation to the prices or rates (including the deletion or provision of

new rates), immediately it is raised; recording the estimated financial impact of the variation over the life of the contract (the 'whole cost') based, where appropriate, on the latest complete year's quantities to assess future year's quantities. If the whole cost of the variation exceeds £50,000 or 10% of the estimated value of the contract over its term (whichever is the lesser); the Chief Officer must immediately inform the Director of Finance. This rule applies to all contracts as defined in Contract Procedure Rule 4.1, including those based on an 'Agreed Maximum Price'.

- 16A.3 *If the Supervising Officer considers in their professional opinion that it is necessary for the works or services information in a term contract to be varied for technical reasons to ensure the successful delivery of the contract (for example, unforeseen sub-surface or drainage conditions, or an omission or ambiguity in the contract), the officer shall be authorised to consent in writing to the necessary variations to the contract. He shall subsequently submit a written report to the next meeting of the Cabinet, or relevant regulatory committee, in order to explain the reasons for the action taken if the whole cost of the variation is likely to exceed £50,000 or 10% of the estimated value of the contract over its term (whichever is the lesser).*
- 16A.4 *Any other variations to a term contract which are not technically necessary for the successful delivery of that contract (for example, variations which increase or enhance the approved scope of the contract (such as improved gritting routes, a modified park management plan or a change in the number of car parks)) shall be in writing and shall require the prior approval of the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder, or regulatory Committee, after consideration of a written report; but only if the Supervising Officer estimates that the whole cost of the variation is likely to exceed £50,000 or 10% of the estimated value of the contract over its term (whichever is the lesser).*
- 16A.5 *This Rule 16A and Rule 16 shall not apply in relation to variations to works or prices or rates (including the deletion or provision of new rates) for the provision of goods or services to schools where the variation is requested in writing by a school; but the Chief Officer responsible for every term contract relating to schools shall keep a written record of all such variations requested by schools.*

This would ensure that significant variations to term contracts which may result in reduced value for money or diminished outcomes for local people being reported to Members.

Councillor S Foulkes informed that the Cabinet would give consideration first and foremost to in-house bids when changing/modernising services before looking to outsource them.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be recommended to revise the Council's Contract Procedure Rules by the inclusion of an additional Rule 16A in the form set out above.

38 **WIRRAL WAR MEMORIALS**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management informed the Cabinet of the proposals to install war memorial plaques at the Cenotaph in Hamilton Square, Birkenhead and sought approval for a single tender action.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (2) the proposals contained in the report be endorsed; and**
- (3) the award of contracts for memorial masonry works to Birkenhead Monumental, pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 5.1.1, be approved.**

39 **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION APPRENTICESHIPS STRATEGY**

A report by the Interim Director of Children's Services recommended the adoption of The Liverpool City Region (LCR) Apprenticeship Strategy by the Council and sought permission for its officers to work with Liverpool City Region colleagues to develop the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy Implementation Plan.

Councillor A McLachlan informed that Wirral had a successful apprenticeship scheme and this Strategy would not undermine it but would allow information to be shared across the Merseyside region.

It was noted that the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy would support the Council's objective 'to create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral'. The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill (ASCL) 2009 provided a statutory framework for apprenticeships and created a right to an apprenticeship for suitably qualified 16-18 year olds. Under the Bill the Council had responsibility for planning and commissioning education and training for all 16-19 year olds.

The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy and Action Plan were detailed at Appendix 1 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council adopts The Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy; and**
- (2) the Council authorises its officers to continue to work with Liverpool City Region colleagues to develop the Liverpool City Region Apprenticeship Strategy Implementation plan.**

40 **PLAYING FOR SUCCESS UPDATE**

A report by the Interim Director of Children's Services set out the current position in respect of the Playing for Success initiative, based at Tranmere Rovers Football Club and managed by the Children and Young People's Department. The initiative had started in 2004 and funding ended in March 2011. At the Cabinet meeting held on 23

September 2010 it was agreed to fund the initiative from the centrally managed SEN/behaviour budget until 31 August 2011 (Minute No. 141 refers). The report provided an update on the present situation and set out options for the future of the initiative.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the funding of the facility and staffing be approved for a period of one year, at a cost of £45,000, to give the Centre time to move nearer to self finance for the September 2012 – August 2013 period; and**
- (2) the Centre provide a further report for consideration at a meeting in June 2012 to update the Cabinet on progress made.**

41 **TRANSFER OF INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT AND TENDER EXERCISE FOR THE PROVISION OF ADULT TRANSPORT SERVICES**

A report by the Interim Director of Children's Services outlined the transfer of the Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) from the Department of Adult Social Services (DASS) to Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) and the Transfer of Technical Services (TS) Transport Team to CYPD to form an Integrated Transport Unit.

The report also informed the Cabinet of the results of the tendering exercise for private provider transport for vulnerable adults and requested the approval of the award of the individual contracts to the recommended tenderers. These contracts would follow the temporary contracts, awarded in March 2011 and operating from April to July 2011 and ensure continuation of service. The new contracts were proposed to operate from 1 August 2011 to July 2012, with a one year optional extension. The contract had been scrutinised and all detail, including the proposed awarding of contracts, had been agreed by the Corporate Procurement Unit.

The Cabinet noted that the transfer of Council Transport functions required budgets of £2.8m from Technical Services and £5.7m from DASS to be transferred to CYPD. The new transport contracts would cost £563,113 per annum. The reduction in fleet operating costs was estimated to be £223,000. It was noted that there was a net additional revenue cost of £340,000 which was not provided within the revenue budget and would need to be met from balances, with a provision for growth in future years. Comparing this contract (£563,113 per annum) with the current temporary arrangement (£554,753 per annum) there was an increase in cost of £8,360. This increase was related to a current provider not submitting a tender for one route which was priced substantially higher by those tendering.

The overall position regarding transport would be the subject of further reports to future Cabinet meetings.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the transfer of DASS and TS Transport functions to CYPD creating an Integrated Transport Unit be noted.**
- (2) the transfer of gross budgets of £2.8m from Technical Services and £5.7m from DASS to CYPD be noted;**

- (3) approval be given for the recommended tenders set out in Appendix 1 to the report to come into effect on the 1 August 2011;
- (4) the additional re-provision cost of £340,000 as set out above be funded from balances in the current year and provision be made for growth in future years;
- (5) Cabinet notes the continued failure to achieve real savings on an integrated transport policy within the Council, despite repeated urgings to Chief Officers to address this issue, and savings agreed within previous budgets;
- (6) Cabinet recognises the complexity of the issues concerned, and the vulnerability of some of the clients who receive transport from the Council, and therefore agrees to the growth sum of £340,000;
- (7) Cabinet points out, however, that this Council is still facing a budget gap for 2012/13 of £21m and that any such growth will have to be counterbalanced by savings elsewhere as we seek to reduce this gap; and
- (8) Cabinet recognises that responsibility for Transport has just been moved into the Children and Young People's Department and urges the Interim Director to do everything possible to contain additional pressures within this budget and take measures to make the provision of Transport more efficient and cost effective.

42 EXTENSION OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS

A report by the Chief Executive requested the Cabinet's approval to extend a number of existing voluntary sector grant arrangements (set out in table 1 below) for the rest of the current financial year. These contracts were currently extended to the end of June 2011 as agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 9 December 2010 (Minute No. 248 refers).

Service procured	Organisation	Cost for 2011/12
The provision of an infrastructure support service to promote and develop the effectiveness of voluntary and community action in Wirral	Voluntary and Community Action Wirral (VCAW)	£103,000
The provision of a Community Legal Advice service including casework where appropriate	Wirral Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)	£260,000
The provision of shopmobility services for the Birkenhead and Liscard shopping areas	Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Diversity (WIRED)	£20,000

Councillor J Stapleton informed that it was essential that these organisations were supported throughout the review. The aim was to ensure value for money.

RESOLVED:

That the extension of the grant arrangements for these services from 1 July 2011 to 31 March 2012 be agreed to ensure continuity of service whilst a wider review of commissioning and grant arrangements with the voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector is undertaken.

43 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS AND AREA FORUM FUNDING

A report by the Chief Executive set out the proposed approach for the development of a 'Neighbourhood Plan' for each Forum area. The report included a proposed consultation programme to involve local residents in the development of these plans.

The report also set out an approach for distributing Forum funding in consultation with the Council's Area Forums, together with proposals for developing the Council's approach to participatory budgeting. The report went on to outline proposals for the branding and positioning of the Area Forums, funding and 'Neighbourhood Plans'.

Councillor J Stapleton reported that inviting people to contribute by consulting widely would result in a true vision for the Local Areas and this work would inform the 2012/13 budgetary process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the approach to developing a 'Neighbourhood Plan' for each of Wirral's Area Forums and the proposed consultation programme be endorsed;**
- (2) the funding streams that will be subject to consultation, through the Forums, be noted and the broad principles set out in the report for the use of participatory budgeting to distribute funding at the October 2011 Area Forum meetings be approved;**
- (3) the essential criteria for allocating funds through the Area Forums together with the specific aims of the funding streams set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;**
- (4) the proposed branding and positioning of Wirral's Area Forums be approved; and**
- (5) Neighbourhood Plans to contribute to the Council's overall budget setting process and influence its outcome.**

44 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REPORTS

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management sought the approval of the Cabinet to publish the information on Wirral Council's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions in the format requested by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) as part of the Single List of Central Government requirements from Local Government (2011/12), for data reference 067-00 "Emissions from Local Authority own estate and operations".

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the report be noted; and**
- (2) approval be given to:**
 - (a) the publication online of the Greenhouse Gas reports (attached to the report at Appendices A and B) as requested by DECC; and**
 - (b) the publication of future Greenhouse Gas reports online as requested by DECC.**

45 HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2026

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services sought the Cabinet's approval and endorsement of Wirral's Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026, including a strategic housing plan (set out at Appendix 1 to the report) and requested that it recommend the Council to approve the Strategy as part of the authority's Capital Programme and Policy Framework.

Members were aware that, although the development of a Housing Strategy statement was no longer a statutory requirement, it was important that, locally, the Council set the strategic framework for future housing policy and investment requirements. The draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026, therefore, had been developed to be reflective of this as well as aligning with the Councils' Sustainable Community Strategy and the outcome of both the Wirral wide consultation 'Wirral's future' and the specific consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 14 October 2010 the draft Housing Strategy 2011 – 2026 was approved for public consultation (Minute No. 172 refers). The initial stage of the consultation process, to test the draft strategy and obtain specific views on all of the key issues which inform housing policies and initiatives for the future, commenced on 22 October 2010 and ran for a six week period ending on 10 December 2010.

The consultation process involved a wide range of key stakeholders, members of the public, formal Partnerships and Forums, with initially over 340 stakeholders formally contacted directly to ask for their views. The Strategy and a short questionnaire requesting views and comments on the vision, the key issues identified and any issues that people felt needed to be included in the strategy had also made available on the Council's website for completion. With the help of staff in the Council's One Stop Shops and Libraries, members of the public had been able to complete the questionnaire either on line or in paper format, providing key feedback detailing their views and comments on the Strategy and the issues identified.

Over the six week consultation process, 1,369 responses had been received, which provided a significant amount of feedback for consideration when developing the strategy further. Significantly, 94% (out of the 1263 respondents) answered that they strongly agreed/agreed with the overall long term vision for housing. There had also been a significant majority of respondents who had agreed that the seven key issues and priorities identified in the strategy were either very important or important.

Officers in the Housing Strategy Team had subsequently collated and reviewed all of the responses received and had adapted and developed the Strategy further to incorporate and respond to the issues the consultation process has raised.

A report had been presented to Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2011, following its request at its meeting on 24 November 2010 for a further report on the outcome of the consultation and draft Housing Strategy (Minute No. 65 refers).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Wirral's Housing Strategy Statement 2011 – 2026, including its strategic housing plan be approved and endorsed; and**
- (2) the Council be recommended to approve the strategy as part of the Council's Capital Programme and Policy Framework.**

46 **REVIEW OF HOMELESS SERVICES IN WIRRAL**

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services provided the Cabinet with an overview of the current successful Homeless Strategy 2008-2010 and action plan and sought Members' approval to commission a review of homelessness in Wirral to ensure the new Homeless Strategy reflected the significant impact of changes in homeless services and the economic climate and policy over recent years.

The Cabinet was informed that completing a review of homelessness would assist in meeting one of the Council's Corporate Priorities to significantly 'prevent and alleviate homelessness' by continuing to focus on the continuous evaluation and improvement of homeless services to meet local needs. The Council's Homeless Service had benefited from significant investment over recent years to respond to the issues identified in the last Homeless Review carried out in 2007.

It was noted that local authorities were required to consider the local housing needs within their individual areas, including those of homeless households, to whom they had a statutory duty to provide assistance. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 there was a statutory requirement for the Council to produce a Homeless Strategy informed by a comprehensive review of all forms of homelessness in its area.

A new Homelessness Strategy was required to be published within the period of five years, beginning on the day on which the last Homelessness Strategy was published (which was 26 June 2008). The aim was to ensure that local authorities took a comprehensive and strategic approach to the management and prevention of all forms of homelessness in their areas. Commissioning a complete review of homeless services and provision in Wirral and developing and implementing a new Homeless Strategy were also action targets which had been identified as needing to be completed within the Housing Strategic Plan, which was the subject of a separate report to the Cabinet (Minute No. 44 above refers).

Following the last homelessness review the Council's Homelessness service had been re-branded as a Housing Options service with a focus on prevention of homelessness. Operationally it was reported that the Council's Housing Options service had seen a significant rise in demand, with a 57% rise in housing and debt

advice cases opened during 2010/11, compared with the previous year. The number of statutory homeless acceptances had increased by 51% in 2010/11. This reflected the national picture which had seen an increase in homeless acceptances, in three consecutive quarters, for the first time since 2003. Members were informed that further work was required in order to understand the reasons for this and how to best respond. Consultants would work with officers and key partners to explore these issues in more detail and this detail would inform a new Homeless Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the achievements of the successful 2008 - 2010 Homeless Strategy be noted; and**
- (2) consultants be engaged to carry out a review of homeless services in Wirral which will inform the development of a new Homeless Strategy for the Borough.**

47 **INVESTMENT SUPPORT SERVICES FRAMEWORK**

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services informed the Cabinet that Invest Wirral delivered a range of business support services that helped businesses set up and grow and maintain competitiveness. The report set out proposals to develop these services further, in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and, therefore, to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of the Borough. The report outlined how these services would be co-ordinated and delivered through a proposed Investment Support Services Framework enabling Invest Wirral to offer a single point of contact and a seamless advice and guidance service to support Wirral businesses.

Councillor P Davies welcomed the report and informed that the help the Council provided to Wirral businesses was one of its key priorities. He was very impressed with the work of Invest Wirral including the fantastic One Stop Shop it provided. This was a valuable addition to what was provided for Wirral businesses.

Councillor S Foulkes emphasised the need for both the private and public sectors to create jobs and paid tribute to Business Angels which was an exciting initiative that was catching everyone's imagination.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Invest Wirral be requested to develop an Investment Support Services Framework that includes the business support activities described in detail in the report; and**
- (2) the procurement proposals for delivering the investment support services set out in the report, be agreed.**

48 **PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SHADOW HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD FOR WIRRAL**

A report by the Chief Executive set out recommendations and the draft Terms of Reference for the establishment of a shadow Health and Wellbeing Board for Wirral

in response to a request from the Cabinet, at its meeting on 17 March 2011 that such a Board be established at the earliest opportunity, and at the latest by October 2011 (Minute No. 348 refers).

The Cabinet was aware that 'Liberating the NHS: Legislative framework and next steps', the outcome of the consultation on the Government's Health White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS' which had been published in December 2010. It was clear from this that the Government would be legislating, through the Health and Social Care Bill, to establish Health and Wellbeing Boards in every upper tier local authority by April 2013. It was noted that scrutiny would be part of corporate structures and would not rest with Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWB). Developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and a high-level joint health and wellbeing strategy (JHWS) would become a formal statutory responsibility for both councils and GP commissioning consortia in April 2013.

The Council had already been approved as an early implementer for Health and Wellbeing Boards.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the first meeting of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board be held by the end of September 2011;**
- (2) the Draft Terms of Reference and membership of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board be as outlined in Appendix A to the report; and**
- (3) the success of the partnership application for Place Based Leadership development support from the National Leadership Council be noted and the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health be requested to ensure the views of the Council and partners are reflected in the construction of a development programme that makes best use of the resource offered through the award.**

49 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

50 SOCITIM - REVIEW OF ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Further to Minute 33 above, the Cabinet considered the detail of the confidential Appendix to the report at Item No. 10 on the agenda.

The Appendix contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. For this reason it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the confidential Appendix to the report on Electronic Documents and Records Management System be noted.

51 SOCITIM - REVIEW OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Further to Minute 34 above, the Cabinet considered the detail of the confidential Appendix to the report at Item No. 11 on the agenda.

The Appendix contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. For this reason it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the confidential Appendix to the report on Customer Relationship Management System be noted.

52 NON DOMESTIC RATE HARDSHIP RELIEF

A report by the Director of Finance informed the Cabinet that within its administrative duties of the collection of Non Domestic Rates, the Council must consider whether ratepayers sustained hardship by paying rates. Rates could be remitted in full or in part where hardship had been established. The Cabinet was requested to consider an application in line with the current policy and criteria detailed at Appendix C to the report.

The report contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. For these reasons it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED:

That the application for hardship relief, in line with the current policy and criteria, detailed at Appendix C to the report, be agreed.

53 NNDR DISCRETIONARY RELIEF

A report by the Director of Finance reminded Members that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 3 February 2011, had agreed a revised policy for awarding discretionary non domestic rate relief (Minute No. 306 refers). An application had recently been received from a ratepayer (attached as Appendix B to the report) that did not fully meet the criteria and was referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

The report contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. For this reason it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED:

That the application for Non Domestic Rate Discretionary Relief, from a rate payer, that does not fully meet the criteria, be declined.

54 CONTRACTUAL REVIEW OF GREEN WASTE PROCESSING CONTRACT

A report by the Director of Technical Services informed the Cabinet that the Council had received a claim for increased payment from a company who provided a service to process garden waste into reusable compost.

The report detailed the reasons supporting this claim, which had arisen from the significant increases in fuel costs over the past 12 months. Also, a key contributing factor had been the company's unsuccessful attempts to secure a local processing site and the costs associated with this. The report also set out various options available to the Council.

Officers considered that, in the circumstances, the claim was fair and reasonable and recommended that the increased rate proposed be accepted. However it was proposed that this be on the basis of a short term agreement, subject to further work being undertaken with the company over the next six months or so, to see if anything could be done to facilitate it securing a local composting site.

The report contained commercially sensitive information on existing and potential future market rates, to provide a garden waste composting service. For these reasons it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members note the outcome of the contractual negotiations with the company, along with the key implications associated with the officers' assessment of the alternative options;**
- (2) in accordance with the details contained within section 5.4 of the report, the company's claim for a revised rate of £19.08 to be backdated to 1 April 2011, however, this agreement be subject to a number of conditions namely:**
 - (a) officers from Technical Services, work in conjunction with their colleagues from Forward Planning and Wirral Invest, with a view to helping to facilitate a suitable alternative composting site for the company;**
 - (b) the agreement to relate to the period April 2011 to March 2012 and a further report be submitted to the Cabinet later this year, detailing the outcome of the work proposed in (a) above and a detailed review of the potential options for the way forward; and**
 - (c) in the event that a mutually satisfactory solution cannot be found for a way forward from April 2012 to the planned conclusion of the existing Contract in March 2014, officers provide proposals**

for a planned withdrawal from the contract on the basis of allowing sufficient time for a retendering of the contract.

55 TRANSFER OF INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT AND TENDER EXERCISE FOR THE PROVISION OF ADULT TRANSPORT SERVICES

Further to Minute No. 41 above the Cabinet considered the detail of the confidential Appendix to the report at Item No. 18 on the agenda.

The Appendix contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a third party. For this reason it was in the public interest to exclude the press and public in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the confidential appendix to the report on the Transfer of Integrated Transport Unit and Tender Exercise for the Provision of Adult Transport Services be noted.