

CABINET

Monday, 19 June 2017

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council
	Councillors	P Brightmore	Environment
		A Davies	Transformation
		G Davies	Housing and Community Safety
		C Jones	Social Care and Health
		B Mooney	Children and Families
		M Patrick	Localism and Engagement
		C Spriggs	Delivering Differently
		J Williamson	Finance and Income Generation
		S Whittingham	Highways and Transport

1 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Phil Davies opened the meeting and made reference to the terrible tragedy that had occurred at Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London. Everyone's thoughts and prayers were with the victims and their families. All present stood for one minute in memory of those who had lost their lives in the fire last week.

Councillor Davies informed that Councillor George Davies would be making a statement at the meeting on what the Council was doing locally in respect of similar tower blocks on Wirral. He considered that it was important to reassure Wirral residents on a cross party basis. Meetings would be held and invitations to attend would be sent to the other political groups.

Councillor Davies also referred to the terrible incident that had taken place by the Mosque at Finsbury Park, London last night when a van had been rammed into worshippers in a terror attack. He informed that his heart went out to the victims.

Councillor Davies congratulated the four Wirral MPs on their re-election to Parliament on 8 May 2017. He considered that these election results had sent a clear message to the Government from the people of Wirral that austerity must not and could not continue. He informed that he would be writing to the Prime Minister to demand that austerity be reversed and that the vital public money stripped from the Council's budget be restored.

2 TOWER BLOCKS

Councillor George Davies informed the Cabinet that it was important that Members took a few minutes this morning to reflect on yet another tragedy that had occurred in this country. He stated that the events in London over the past

week had been heart breaking and everyone's thoughts and prayers were with the victims, their families and those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire. Quite rightly, the circumstances of this fire had prompted anger and fear throughout the UK.

Councillor Davies considered it important that Wirral residents were provided with as much information as possible and he knew landlords such as Magenta had been keeping their tenants well informed in the past few days. He informed that:

- Magenta owned eight high rise blocks in Wirral and there were another three which were in private ownership;
- none of the blocks in Wirral had the panels which were seen at Grenfell Tower. The Magenta blocks had all recently been refurbished and none now had gas supplies into the flats;
- Magenta had also been clear that all of its high rise blocks had undergone an annual, independently carried out Fire Risk Assessment and annual inspections; and
- the Council was working closely with landlords such as Magenta and were in constant contact with the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service as it begins to launch a local response to the tragic events in London which would potentially include reviewing every high rise building in the Liverpool City Region.

Councillor Davies reported that he had been reassured by how quickly local Services had responded to this situation and by how quickly the Council had been able to communicate with residents and ensure people did not worry unnecessarily. Clearly though, this was a terribly sad situation and judging by the initial information, it seemed that a number of people and organisations would have questions to answer once the full facts were known. For now the Council's focus must be on supporting the victims and their families, as they begin the long process of putting their lives back together.

Councillor Davies informed that he had asked Senior Officers to convene a COBRA type crisis meeting with representatives of the Emergency Services in order to get a clear view of what needs to be done and he promised to keep the public informed on the proposed way forward.

3 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

RESOLVED:

That the following Key Decisions that have been taken under delegated authority during the period 17 March 2017 to date be noted:

- **Leader of the Council.**
Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package Years 3-6 (STEP)
Effective from 28 March 2017 onwards.
- **Cabinet Member – Public Health.**
Recommission the Healthchecks Programme and Commission a Service to provide Third Sector Infrastructure Support.
Effective from 10 May 2017.
- **Leader of the Council.**
Request for Financial Assistance – Business Growth Grant Funding.
Effective from 18 May 2017.
- **Leader of the Council.**
Request for Financial Assistance – Business Growth Grant Funding and Wirral Waters Enterprise Zone Investment Fund.
Effective from 12 June 2017.

6 DELIVERING WIRRAL'S GROWTH



Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council, said:

“Driving economic growth is a key priority for my administration. Only by building a strong economy can we attract well paid jobs, offer skills training and apprenticeships, and provide support for businesses based in or relocating to Wirral.

This report marks an important step in delivering that ambition. If we are to transform our economy, build better homes and continue to make quality of life improvements for all our residents, we have to make significant changes in how we are organised and better use of the assets and resources available to the authority to deliver sustainable, long-lasting benefits.

The creation of a joint venture property company – Wirral Growth Company – will bring new expertise, new ideas and new investment to Wirral.

“It will allow the Council to share in the risks but reap the rewards of the regeneration of key sites across the whole borough. It will bring benefits to our coastal communities in north and west Wirral, add to the warmth and character of towns and villages across the peninsula, and reposition Birkenhead, its waterfront and town centre as one of the most attractive investment opportunities in Britain today.

It will also provide the Council with a series of new revenue streams which can be reinvested in the services residents rely on, especially important as the Government has announced it will cease to provide funds from 2020/21.

Meeting our 2020 Pledges to increase inward investment, create new job opportunities and continue to support our thriving small business community, the joint venture property company will also encourage other investors and entrepreneurs in Wirral to realise their business goals and give them the confidence that once again, Wirral is a borough on the move.”

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report that reminded Members that on 27 February 2017, the Cabinet had considered and approved an Outline Business Case (OBC) that set out a proposal to create a Property Company. Primarily the purpose of the company had been to enable the Council to use its assets to secure local economic growth, community and environmental benefits and to provide long term sustainable income streams for the Council. The Cabinet had instructed Officers to develop a Full Business Case (FBC) for a joint venture property company to take forward the delivery of growth and regeneration in Wirral.

Appended to the report was a Full Business Case to create a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) between the Council and a private sector investor/developer as a joint venture (JV). Whilst a range of company models existed, the business case concluded that the LLP model was best able to meet the Council’s strategic

objectives and, in particular, offered a governance structure that would allow the Council to exert joint influence over the company with the private sector partner and benefit from more favourable taxation arrangements.

The Business Case showed a potential financial return based upon around 50 indicative sites, including three prospective acquisitions. Whilst a significant proportion of these sites could form part of a development programme, only at the end of the procurement phase would it be clear exactly what would be included within the JV development programme. At present, due diligence on the title to the sites and other potential development constraints were being considered. It was important to note it would be only at the stage of preparing a JV Business Plan for the creation of the JV partnership that the more accurate financial returns would be known. Appended to the Business Case at Appendix 1 was potential Phase 1 Asset Assessment Summary Note.

Councillor Davies informed that the FBC would deliver some important regeneration projects. There was a one billion gross developmental potential. It would allow the Council to meet its pledges around economic development. The Council would put its assets into the JV and a private sector investor would bring capital. The Council was not selling any assets they would provide it with an ongoing income stream. The Rate Support Grant disappeared after 2021 so this was very important and would help the Council to deliver public services going forward. The growth company would aim to deliver meaningful economic growth across the Borough. This was a Wirral wide approach and the model being used had been tried and tested elsewhere.

Councillor Davies referred to the OJEC Process detailed in the report which would be used to secure a partner. He informed that the aim was to be in a position, by the end of the calendar year, where a partner had been identified.

Councillor Davies also informed that the Cabinet would receive a further report prior to the final deal being agreed.

Councillor Janette Williams described the report as visionary and informed that she was excited about what was going to happen on Wirral.

Councillor Angela Davies agreed with Councillor Williamson. She welcomed the proposals wholeheartedly and supported this innovated way forward and thanked Officers for their hard work on this initiative.

Councillor Phil Brightmore was pleased that the Council's assets were being kept so that future generations could benefit from them.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet

- (1) approves the Full Business Case (FBC), noting the indicative list of sites within the FBC (including those that are likely to form phase 1)**

and recognising that the figures within the FBC are likely to change and are predicated on three strategic acquisitions being made;

- (2) authorises the Director of Transformation to commence and conduct an OJEU works concession competitive dialogue process to identify a private sector partner with which to form a joint venture vehicle to develop sites and areas within Wirral to meet the Council's strategic objectives approved by Cabinet on 27 February 2017 and set out in the FBC. The procurement would include the full range of services required to promote and deliver development, including development management, contracting, asset management services and potentially facilities management services. That the Director of Transformation be authorised to select a shortlist and the bidders to be invited to participate in competitive dialogue and then continue dialogue through to preferred bidder stage;
- (3) approves the proposed form of the joint-venture as a 50:50 long term (10 year plus potential 5 year extension) Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with a board of two Council representatives and two from the private sector partner starting from the principle of equal sharing of risks and rewards;
- (4) approves the structure and principles of the joint-venture documentation as set out in the FBC, including the way in which sites will be brought forward for development, following the preparation of site development plans and valuation to ensure the Council receives best consideration;
- (5) agrees that, where appropriate, the Council will consider using compulsory purchase powers (providing the joint-venture LLP indemnifies the Council for costs in the usual way);
- (6) authorises the Strategic Commissioner for Growth to apply for planning permission and City Region funding in relation to any of the proposed sites within the programme as considered appropriate;
- (7) agrees that the Director of Transformation shall report back on the proposed outcome of the procurement process, if possible with the recommendation to appoint a preferred bidder, before the end of 2017, recognising that this will require significant resource commitment in order to be achieved; and
- (8) notes that further authority will be sought from the Cabinet to appoint the partner for the creation of the joint venture vehicle, the appointment of representatives to protect the Council's interests on the LLP, for the terms of transfer of sites to be included in phase 1, to

approve the three year business plan for the joint-venture and to enter into legal documentation in due course.

7 WIRRAL PLAN: A 2020 VISION - CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES: WIRRAL TOGETHER STRATEGY



Councillor Matthew Patrick, Cabinet Member – Localism and Engagement, said:

“In Wirral we are extremely lucky to have thousands of residents who are engaged, who care passionately about their local communities and who think nothing of giving up their time to help others. The response to the recent incident in New Ferry is a shining example of how a community can come together and support itself.

“This Strategy is about Wirral getting better at supporting those residents who want to volunteer. It is about helping people to help themselves and others, through making it simpler, easier and more attractive to be a volunteer.”

Councillor Matthew Patrick introduced a report which reminded the Cabinet that The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision set out a shared partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan were underpinned through the delivery of a set of key strategies.

Appended to the report was the Wirral Together Strategy; a key strategic document which articulated ambitions related to volunteering and community involvement which would assist the delivery of all areas of the Wirral Plan.

Councillor Patrick thanked Annette Roberts, Chief Executive of Community Action Wirral and a member of Wirral’s Partnership Board who had carried out a wonderful job leading the development of a Strategy which recognised the essential role that active citizens and volunteers played in building strong communities. He also thanked all those who had been engaged in this over the last 12 months when a lot of meetings had been held.

Councillor Patrick informed that the three priorities of the Strategy were to inspire people to get involved in their communities, to encourage more people to volunteer in Wirral and to work together to remove barriers to volunteering.

The Cabinet noted that the Strategy included a set of partnership actions to be delivered over the course of the three-year Strategy. The Strategy would be reviewed on an annual basis with regular performance reporting taking place through appropriate governance arrangements.

It was noted that this matter affected all Wards within the Borough and was therefore a key decision.

Councillor Chris Jones informed that volunteering was a huge issue and it was great that this Strategy was around volunteering.

Councillor Bernie Moody welcomed this important Strategy and that there were no barriers in the volunteers' way.

Councillor Phil Davies made reference to the Strategy's action plan. He considered that the Strategy was excellent and that lots of people would like to be afforded the opportunity to be a volunteer. This Strategy was a positive move forward and would help the Council deliver the Wirral Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Wirral Together Strategy, which was appended to the report, be approved.

8

WIRRAL RESIDENTS LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES: TOBACCO CONTROL AND ALCOHOL STRATEGIES



Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member – Social Care and Health, said:

“To have the best chance of improving their health then residents need to know what they are facing, what their options are, and where to go for help. Smoking and alcohol misuse are the leading causes of ill-health and early death in Wirral.

It's vitally important we support every resident affected by these issues, and this Strategy describes how we will bring down the rates of smoking and alcohol misuse in the borough.”

Councillor Chris Jones introduced a report which informed that The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision set out a shared partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan were underpinned by the development and implementation of a set of key strategies.

Appended to the report were copies of the Strategies developed to address both tobacco and alcohol use in the borough as outlined in the Wirral Plan Healthy Lives pledge: “We want all of our residents to have a good quality of life and live healthy lifestyles in clean and safe environments”.

Councillor Jones informed that these Strategies had been developed with residents, partners and stakeholders to ensure that there has been extensive engagement in their development and priority areas for action.

Tackling tobacco use in Wirral requires action to address individual, cultural and social influences on smoking behaviour.

The aim was also that Wirral become a place that promoted a responsible attitude towards alcohol and minimised the risks, harms and costs of alcohol misuse to allow individuals, families and communities to lead healthier and safer lives.

These matters affected all Wards within the borough and approval of both Strategies was key decision.

Councillor Bernie Moody informed that she had been involved with the development of the Strategies. It had involved attendance on a 12 week course where those on it had been thoroughly grilled. The amount of enthusiasm exhibited by the young people in attendance had been breath taking and consequently, hard work underpinned these Strategies.

Councillor Phil Davies considered that if the Council could work with people to quit smoking and/or reduce their alcohol intake it would clearly result in an improvement in their health.

RESOLVED:

That both the Tobacco and Alcohol Strategies be approved.

WIRRAL VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY



Councillor Phil Brightmore, Cabinet Member for Environment, said:

“Wirral’s tourism industry continues to go from strength to strength. We are the fastest growing visitor destination in the Liverpool City Region; with thousands more people discovering Wirral every year.

We cannot take this for granted, and expect this growth to simply continue year-on-year. We must make sure we do everything possible to promote our borough throughout the UK and internationally.

This new Tourism Strategy is a big step. Produced through a collaboration of industry experts, local businesses and partners, it helps us clearly define a new approach for marketing Wirral.

I am confident this work will help us achieve all of our ambitions for the tourism industry in Wirral, increasing the value of the economy and helping create many more jobs.”

Councillor Phil Brightmore introduced a report which informed that The Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision set out a partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan were underpinned through the delivery of a set of key strategies.

Appended to the report was the Wirral Visitor Economy Strategy 2017-18, a key strategic document which articulated ambitions related to growing the value of the Visitor Economy in Wirral and the associated creation of jobs, which would assist the delivery of various aspects of the Wirral Plan.

Councillor Brightmore informed that he was eager to build on this ambitious expert led Strategy that had been developed in collaboration and would be delivered in partnership over a three year period. Four ambitious priorities had been identified:

- (1) Developing Wirral’s Tourism Marketing Strategy and Positioning the Peninsula as an Outstanding Destination.
- (2) Generating Greater Benefit from Conferences, Business Meetings and Events.

- (3) Developing Wirral's Tourism Assets and Experiences to Increase Competitiveness and attract New Visitor Markets.
- (4) Establishing a Sustainable and Accessible Visitor Economy.

Councillor Brightmore thanked everyone who had given up their time to help with the development of the Wirral Visitor Economy Strategy.

This matter affected all Wards within the borough and was, therefore, a key decision.

Councillor Christina Spriggs informed that there had been some great feedback on where the Council was up to with regard to the Strategy. She considered that the cross cutting themes that were coming through skills development from this work were heartening and that the Culture Visitor Economy was going to be massive.

Councillor Brightmore paid tribute to Councillor Spriggs for the work she had carried out in respect of the Strategy.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that it was hugely important sector and there were aspirations to increase the visitor economy. These were exciting times and the Visitor Economy must be linked with regeneration opportunities on Wirral. The quality of life factor was absolutely critical to encourage people to come to Wirral.

RESOLVED:

That the Wirral Visitor Economy Strategy be approved.

10 **CAR PARKING CHARGES TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER -
CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS**



Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member – Highways and Transport, said:

“These proposals have been put forward as part of the plan to help us achieve £45 million in savings without cutting back on the services which people most rely on.

A key area of concern has been the possible impact on the local residents and businesses that rely on the use of our parks on a daily basis and we are looking to introduce a household membership scheme that will equate to a cost of £1 a week in response to this.

It is important that we properly consider these further representations received and I would like to thank everyone for their comments, however I am satisfied that all important points have been taken into account and the Council should now press ahead with implementing these proposals as quickly as possible.”

Councillor Stuart Whittingham introduced a report which considered representations submitted against the modified Traffic Regulation Order consulted upon in respect of the following proposed car parking charges budget savings options:

- Increase car parking tariffs at all Council operated car parks by 20p; and
- Introduce car parking charges in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrowe Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park.

The report recommended approval of a revised set of proposals taking into account the representations received to the modified published proposals.

The Cabinet noted that the Wirral Plan 2020 pledge relevant to this report, and to the parking service area, was Pledge Thirteen: Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future, and the proposal supported the Transport Strategy priority to keep traffic moving safely and efficiently.

Councillor Whittingham referred to the Government’s austerity measures which had meant tough decisions like these ones having to be taken. He informed that Council Services, as well as other Public Services e.g. Police and Fire, NHS, were being cut to the bone.

Councillor Whittingham drew attention to the fact that even though the proposals had been reduced from those originally consulted on back in January 2017, there was still an important requirement of the statutory process to give notice to inform persons affected of the modifications and to give due consideration to any further representations received.

Notices had been erected at the sites and a public notice had formally advertised this in the local press on 8 March 2017. During this formal notice period the following further representations have been received:

- 141 individual representations (via letter or email) to all of the modified car parking charges budget proposals; and

- 16 of the individual representations included specific traffic management concerns. The general concern was of the traffic impact in other areas, displaced parking in to adjacent roads, traffic congestion, blocked access, dangerous parking, road safety concerns, conflict and inconvenience with residents.

On detailed assessment, officers were satisfied that there were no fundamentally different or new points being raised that had not already been considered hence it was recommended that authority be given to implement these proposals without further delay. All representations had been made available to Members of the Cabinet in advance of the meeting.

This matter affected all wards in the borough and was a Key Decision included on the Council's Forward Plan.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that by its actions, Central Government had slashed the Council's budget. If its austerity policies were reversed the Cabinet would reverse its decisions on car parking charges. Until then, Members had difficult decisions to make. The Government could listen or plough on with its disruptive policies. The Cabinet had listened to the representations made by local businesses, local Groups etc. The funding that would be generated from car parking charges would be reinvested. The challenge was what are the alternative savings, if not these ones? Sadly, the Cabinet must continue with this car parking charges policy but it had taken on board the further representations it had received.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- (1) notes the report and the objections received to the modified charges and published Traffic Regulation Order consultation;
- (2) approves the increase in car parking tariffs at all Council operated car parks, where charges already apply, by 20p;
- (3) approves the introduction of car parking charges in country parks with charges of 50p for 1 hour, £1 for 2 hours and £2 all day in Arrowe Country Park, Royden Country Park, Eastham Country Park and Thurstaston Country Park;
- (4) approves the introduction of a household membership scheme for the use of country parks in (3) at a cost of £50 per annum; and
- (5) approves and confirms the draft Traffic Regulation Order appended to the report giving effect to (1) to (4) above.