

Council – 18 July, 2011

MATTERS FOR DEBATE

The Council is asked to consider the following motions, submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 8(1), and objections and amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2).

The order of business is as determined by the party groups in accordance with Standing Order 5(4) and the times for speeches by Standing Order 12(8) (all other speakers have 3 minutes).

1. MOTION: BUDGET OVERSPEND

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

- (1) Council expresses its dismay at the £5.3m overspend on last year's budget in Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Technical Services, as reported to the meeting of Cabinet on the 23rd June.
- (2) In view of the massive cut in Council funding approved by the previous administration and given that the pressures creating the overspends were well known, Council believes that corrective action should have been taken at an earlier stage in order to avoid placing more pressure on the current year's budget.
- (3) Council notes that these overspends have been covered by one-off savings from Treasury Management and Housing Benefit, however, as resources get scarcer such one-off sums cannot be relied upon to bail out over-spending areas.
- (4) Council therefore takes this opportunity to remind Chief Officers that they have a Constitutional responsibility: *"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."*

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Tom Anderson (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Simon Mountney (3 minutes)

Delete all and insert:

Council notes:

- (1) The £5.3 million overspend on last year's budget in Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Technical Services as reported to the meeting of Cabinet

on the 23rd June 2011 and that this overspend has been offset by the previous Conservative - Liberal Democrat administration's careful stewardship of its Treasury Management function and Housing Benefit reserve.

- (2) That the previous Coalition administration's budget for 2011/12 has reduced spending by £52 million, delivered a 0% council tax increase, left Council balances of £14 million and reduced debt by £10 million.
- (3) Council thanks staff and the senior management team for their work during 2010/11 to bear down on expenditure while seeking to maintain spending at levels proposed in the Labour-led Council's budget for 2010/11 which given the report to Cabinet on the 23rd June 2011, has now been shown to be inadequate.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist (3 minutes)

Amend paragraph (1) to read:

- (1) Council notes the £5.3m overspend on last year's budget in Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Technical Services, as reported to the meeting of Cabinet on the 23rd June.

Delete existing paragraphs (2) and (3) and insert new paragraph (2):

- (2) Council recognises the achievement that the deficit in Adult Social Services has been halved under the previous coalition administration after inheriting the worst Adult Social Services department in the country at a time of severe financial pressures and whilst substantial and transformational change has been initiated.

Renumber existing paragraph (4) as paragraph (3) and delete "therefore":

- (3) Council takes this opportunity to remind Chief Officers that they have a Constitutional responsibility: "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."

Insert new paragraph (4):

- (4) Council therefore asks that Chief Officers continue to be open, honest and proactive with all elected members, through financial monitoring reports and other reports to the Cabinet, Audit and Risk management Committee and relevant scrutiny committees about projected and potential overspends and the necessary corrective actions.

Right of reply: Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

2. MOTION: LOW PAID WIRRAL COUNCIL WORKERS – PAY INCREASE

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie (3 minutes)

Council notes:

- (1) That the previous Labour Government brought this country to the brink of bankruptcy doubled the national debt and left us with the biggest budget deficit in our peacetime history.
- (2) That as a country we have to spend more than £120 million every single day just to pay off the interest on Labour's debt and this is in fact Labour's true legacy.
- (3) The previous Council coalition administration listened to Wirral residents and delivered a budget that saved £52 million, invested in economic development and child protection, protected key services, delivered a zero percent Council Tax increase leaving Council balances of £14 million and reduced the Council's debt by £10 million.
- (4) That despite having to make difficult decisions to achieve this, provision was made, and the Council's current budget contains, £800,000 specifically to ensure that the Council's lowest paid workers receive a £250 non consolidated pay increase.

Council believes that the current increase in global commodity prices is having a real impact on the price of groceries and fuel.

Council thanks our better paid staff for their understanding and acceptance of the need for a public sector pay freeze, due to the previous Labour Government's profligacy and debt, however, in the interest of fairness, wishes to assist those who earn the least and are often impacted the most when commodity and other prices rise.

Council therefore insists:

- (1) As a matter of urgency all required action is taken by the current Labour Administration to ensure the Council honours the implied bargain of a general public sector pay freeze with a £250 payment to those employed by the Council and earning below £21,000 per year.
- (2) A report is provided to all members of the Council informing us of the progress of discussions with staff representatives and when this payment will be made
- (3) Subject to agreement with the Director of Law, HR & Asset management, the content of this resolution is communicated to all staff.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts (3 minutes)

Delete all after "Council notes:" replace with:

- (1) That the budget deficit experienced by this country is a direct result of reckless decisions taken by a global banking industry which required decisive action by the Labour government in order to protect the savings of ordinary people and prevent a thirties style depression.
- (2) Council believes that ordinary people are now being asked to pay the price of bailing out the bankers while bonuses continue to flourish in the city.
- (3) Council recognises that the pay freeze imposed on local government workers by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition impacts most severely on lower paid workers, particularly at a time when the economy is stalling and prices are rising as a consequence of an ill thought out attempt to cut the deficit too rapidly.
- (4) Council also notes that the potential for a flat rate pay increase of £250 to low paid staff formed part of the national pay negotiations for local authority staff and that a provision of £800,000 was set aside in the budget to meet any such pay rise, should it be agreed nationally.
- (5) Council further notes that the national negotiations have now concluded and the Local Authority Employers have reported that no pay rise has been agreed.
- (6) Council recognises that the payment of any non consolidated amount, outside the national agreement, would constitute a local agreement, which would require extensive consultation with the union on a number of issues, and that any decision taken on low paid staff within the Council would also impact on non teaching staff in schools on the same terms and conditions.
- (7) Council further notes that schools are committed to paying national agreements, but not necessarily local agreements and that the amount within the Council's General Fund does not cover the additional schools cost, which would be £621,000 in ongoing revenue costs, which has not been budgeted for.
- (8) Council also notes that no North West Employer has paid this increase.
- (9) Council therefore believes that the implications of any such decision to negotiate a local agreement, in addition to the national agreement, would need to be seriously considered in the proper manner, and within the overall budgetary context, and that a politically motivated Council Notice of Motion is not the appropriate way to formulate a local agreement."

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell (3 minutes)

After 'Council notes' add additional paragraph (5):

- (5) Council also supports the concept of a living wage for workers <http://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/living-wage-campaign/> and notes that 48 employees of the council earn below the £7.20/hour which is considered a living wage, including apprentices, bar assistants and leisure coaches.

After 'Council therefore insists' add new paragraph (3):

- (3) Council asks Cabinet to make arrangements to bring those council employees earning below £7.20/hour up to living wage levels and that contractors supplying public services are also asked to ensure they pay a living wage.

Renumber existing paragraph (3) as (4).

Right of reply: Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

3. OBJECTION: MINUTE 26 (CABINET – 23 JUNE, 2011) FINANCIAL OUT-TURN 2010/11 (Item 5. (i) – Matters requiring approval by the Council

Moved by Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist (3 minutes)

Delete resolution and insert: That

- (1) the revenue out-turn for 2010/11 be agreed;
- (2) the provisions and reserves be agreed;
- (3) it be noted as an achievement that the deficit in Adult Social Services has been halved under the previous coalition administration after inheriting the worst Adult Social Services department in the country at a time of severe financial pressures and whilst substantial and transformational change has been initiated;
- (4) that Chief Officers are asked to continue to be open, honest and pro-active with all elected members, through financial monitoring reports and other reports to the Cabinet, Audit and Risk management Committee and relevant scrutiny committees about projected and potential overspends and the necessary corrective actions.

Right of reply: Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

4. MOTION: VAT RE-THINK TO JUMP-START ECONOMIC GROWTH

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Pat Hackett (3 minutes)

Council notes that:

- (1) Retail sales fell by twice the expected rate in May (1.4%).
- (2) The Office of Budget Responsibility has revised its overall growth forecasts for 2011 from 2.6% to 1.7%.
- (3) Unemployment forecasts for the next 4 years have been revised upwards. Inflation forecasts for the end of 2011 have risen sharply from 1.6% to 4.2% with a further increase next year.

In the light of evidence that economic recovery is at best sluggish and at worst has completely stalled, Council calls for the coalition government to reverse temporarily the 2.5% increase in VAT introduced in January until the economy is growing strongly again.

Council agrees that slowing down the pace of deficit reduction with a temporary VAT cut now would give the flat-lining economy the jump-start it so urgently needs, boost jobs especially in the retail sector, and be a better way to get the deficit down for the long term.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Alan Brighouse (3 minutes)

Delete paragraph (1)

Delete all after paragraph (2), renumber paragraph (2) as paragraph (1) and add:

- (2) A temporary VAT would reverse deficit reduction, increase debt pressures and Government borrowing and risk undermining sensitive bond markets and lowering investor confidence, which is needed to create jobs.
- (3) Any cut in VAT will add to inflationary pressures later.
- (4) Had decisive action on the deficit not been taken at an early stage in this Parliament, the economic recovery would have been undermined by international and market pressures.
- (5) Acknowledges that times are tough for people due to Labour's failure to properly regulate the financial and banking system.

Right of reply: Councillor Phil Davies (7 minutes)

5. MOTION: SELF DIRECTED CARE AND PERSONAL BUDGETS

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie (3 minutes)

Council welcomes the freedom and choice given to Wirral residents by self directed care and personal budgets

Council notes:

- (1) The national target requiring, in compliance with NI130, Wirral to facilitate self directed assessments with 30% of service users.
- (2) The Labour led Wirral Council had, at the end of the activity year 2009 – 2010, achieved just 8% of such assessments.
- (3) That in response to this inadequate and unacceptable performance last year's coalition administration extended the personalisation project to all service users and required an increase in those residents benefiting from self directed support for the remainder of the activity year 2010 – 2011 and every subsequent year.
- (4) The result reported that at the end of May 2011 Wirral had offered 41% of eligible residents self directed support, improving our performance from where Labour left us in the bottom 5 to comfortably in the top third of 153 authorities.
- (5) All Council contracts for domiciliary care, personal supported living and residential and nursing care have been updated to ensure the service will be provided in a personalised way and focussed on delivering outcomes such as improved health and well being and dignity in care.

Council further notes:

- (1) The replacement of the HART service with the STAR service (short term assessment and reablement) and the important role it plays in helping people to return home and live independently following illness and discharge from hospital.
- (2) The critical role the STAR service has in supporting people through an assessment and recovery process and facilitating the opportunity for a support planned and personal budget to be organised following their discharge from the service.
- (3) The previous coalition administration's plans for the STAR service to be co-located with Wirral University Teaching Hospital and the DASS locality teams and to ensure the independent providers of the enablement part of the new service is thorough and of high quality, as requested by residents in the 'Wirral Future' consultation, is progressing well.
- (4) The changes made have provided further opportunity to develop integrated working with Wirral University Teaching Hospital, particularly around the work of

occupational therapists, physiotherapists, community nurses and the planning for effective discharge.

- (5) The most recent reports show that the number of delayed discharges from hospital has been reduced to zero and the Department, together with Wirral University Teaching Hospital and Wirral NHS have been asked to present to a regional conference as a case study of excellence in partnership working.

Council expresses its thanks and appreciation to:

The new Director, all of the staff and leaders within DASS and across the Council, who have worked so hard to achieve this strategic and transformational change in the breadth and quality of service provided to Wirral residents.

The new independent providers, NHS Wirral and the Wirral University Teaching Hospital for their support and partnership working to create a truly integrated care pathway.

Former Councillor Bob Moon for resisting the opposition calls to stop this change and sustaining it while receiving the unwarranted personal abuse thrown at him as he worked as the Executive Member for DASS with his department and partners to ensure the former coalition administration's vision for a transformed public service was delivered.

Council requests:

The new processes, including the resource allocation model (RAS), continue to be monitored closely, with any further opportunities for improvements identified and reported.

Subject to agreement with the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management, the content of this resolution and the Council's thanks be communicated to all DASS, Finance, Strategic Change and internal Comms staff involved in achieving this transformation.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Anne McArdle (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Pat Glasman (3 minutes)

Delete everything after "Council notes" and replace with:

- (1) The national target NI130 required all councils to ensure that by April 2011 at least 30% of all eligible carers/service users had a personal budget. This was achieved.
- (2) By the end of May 2011 Wirral had offered 41% of eligible residents self directed support through personal budgets. This achievement was down to hard work by DASS staff and a credit to their professionalism under challenging circumstances. This statistic puts Wirral 41st out of 153 authorities which is excellent news.

- (3) While the extension of personal choice to individuals in this way is clearly a success story, Council is aware that real choice will ultimately be dependant on the ability of personal budgets to actually purchase the care needed, and that charging policies need to be monitored with this in mind.
- (4) Council further notes that all new Council contracts for domiciliary care, residential and nursing care have now been accepted by providers. In regards to Supported Living, meetings between tenants, carers and their selected new providers have now concluded and the new arrangements commenced on July 1st. Again this was achieved through an excellent partnership approach between DASS staff, carers and providers.
- (5) While Council welcomes the fact that the STAR service, which replaced the HART re-ablement service, now provides a full re-ablement service, it regrets the break up and part privatisation of an extremely successful and cost effective service which saw 70% of its clients either needing fewer services or no services at all after the six week intensive re-ablement programme, thereby saving the Council considerable sums of money.
- (6) Council also regrets the fact that the transition was managed in such a way that for a twelve week period clients who should have received a full re-ablement service did not receive that service but received a standard domiciliary care service instead. On past figures, that would mean that over 300 people did not have the intensive specialist care to get them back to independent living, which would have allowed their level of ongoing care requirements to drop or stop altogether, thereby saving the Council considerable sums of money, which will now be an ongoing cost to the Council instead.
- (7) Council welcomes the co-location of the STAR service with Wirral University Teaching Hospital and the DASS locality teams and the moves to ensure the quality of the enablement on offer, as campaigned for by Wirral residents and other stakeholders, including the Older Person's Parliament and Wirral Local Involvement Network (LINK).
- (8) Council asks that the new processes, including the resource allocation model (RAS) continue to be monitored closely, with any further opportunities for improvements identified and reported.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

After "Council expresses its thanks and appreciation to:" insert the following new paragraph:

All service users and their carers who supported this agenda with endurance and enthusiasm throughout the pilot stage.

Alter the final paragraph to:

Subject to agreement with the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management, the content of this resolution and the Council's thanks be communicated to all DASS, Finance, Strategic Change, internal Comms staff, service users and carers in achieving this transformation.

Right of reply: Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

6. MOTION: SHALE GAS FRACKING

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell (3 minutes)

Council notes with concern that:

- (1) Mining company Cuadrillo Resources is undertaking test drilling for shale gas deposits near Blackpool in Lancashire. They are using a technique called hydraulic fracturing; an American technology known as 'fracking', controversial because it involves drilling dozens of wells over a relatively small area and pumping hazardous chemicals underground at high pressures to fracture the rock and release the gas. Drilling was recently suspended following earthquakes on the Fylde coast.
- (2) IGas Energy has licenses, over more than 700km² between Manchester and the Mersey / Dee estuaries, to extract gas from onshore underground coal seams covering land from West Manchester to North Wales, including locations in Liverpool and Wirral. The company has estimated that 1.95 trillion cubic feet of shale gas may lie trapped under Wirral alone. A new licence round is planned by DECC this year.
- (3) IGas has announced a framework agreement with Peel Environmental Ltd that gives access to coal bed methane production sites within Peel's land holdings in the North West. As part of this agreement, Peel will give unlimited access to their entire land holdings in the North West of England for the purpose of identifying those sites suitable for IGas operations.
- (4) In May, amid environmental concerns, the French Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of a motion to ban hydraulic fracturing.
- (5) There is a lack of understanding and evidence in relation to the environmental impact and safety of shale gas 'fracking'. There is also uncertainty concerning the adequacy of regulatory powers and oversight.
- (6) The Co-operative commissioned study from the University of Manchester's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, 'Shale gas: a provisional assessment of climate change and environmental impacts' reported a number of conclusions in relation to the extraction and use of shale gas, including:

- A significant risk of ground and surface water contamination by the hazardous chemicals involved in extraction.
- The requirement for high volumes of water in shale gas extraction could put considerable pressure on local water supplies.
- The likelihood that close proximity of extraction sites to population centres would create additional pressure on scarce land-use resources through increased risk of intrusive noise pollution, truck movements and land use demands that could arise.
- The likelihood that exploitation of this additional fossil fuel resource will increase net carbon emissions.
- The risk that exploitation of shale gas will delay major investments in zero- and very low-carbon technologies.

Therefore, Council:

- (a) States its opposition to any application by IGas or other companies to carry out shale gas or coal gas methane testing or extraction in Wirral until such time as the Council is satisfied as to the safety of the process and that the risk of adverse environmental impacts have been fully addressed.
- (b) Requests the appropriate chief officer prepare a report for the Planning Committee, the Economy and Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees to aid members in better understanding the council's responsibility and regulatory role in relation to gas exploration.
- (c) Further requests the Economy and Regeneration OSC to include a study of the potential economic impacts of shale gas exploration and exploitation in Wirral in its workplan, including whether the impact of a proliferation of shale gas drilling on the Liverpool City Region will adversely impact on it becoming a leading area for the manufacture of low carbon technologies and development of a green economy.

Right of reply: Councillor Mark Johnston (7 minutes)

7. MOTION: FAIR DEAL FOR WIRRAL

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

- (1) Council notes that, under current proposals for the localisation of business rates, Wirral could be severely disadvantaged as the area would raise far less in business rates than it currently receives as part of a national redistribution of rates.
- (2) Council notes that the proposals contain an initial equalisation of resources to prevent any immediate loss, but that this would be a one off solution and that over time the gap between what Wirral can collect and the resources available to other wealthier councils will grow considerably, adding to the disparity of

resources between richer and poorer areas already created by specifically targeting cuts on the Area Based Grant which was designed to help poorer areas.

- (3) Council therefore re-iterates its demand that any new system should be designed in such a way that Wirral and similar Councils with a low economic base and high levels of deprivation should be given a Fair Deal and not deprived of much needed resources.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell (3 minutes)

Delete all after paragraph (1) and replace with:

- (2) Council believes that what is needed is a long term solution that delivers a fair funding formula for all local authorities.
- (3) Council reminds Cabinet and Chief Officers that the previous coalition administration instructed, at its meeting of 14th April 2011:
- That Officers and Members, as appropriate, undertake detailed work and proactively make representations to influence Government, with the aim of securing a fair and rebalanced funding formula to tackle Wirral's underlying problems and provide adequate resources for local services.
 - That input be made to collective lobbying through bodies such as SIGOMA, LGA, Liverpool City Region, other Councils and representative bodies, as appropriate, to promote the case for equalisation, seeking to ensure that those local authorities with a low income from business rates and a high level of Government grant support are not adversely affected by the proposed repatriation of business rates
- (4) Council reminds Cabinet members that this Chamber agreed at its meeting of 18th April 2010 to:
- Request Cabinet to draw together a report to highlight data on Wirral's underlying social problems, in particular highlighting how Wirral has benefited substantially from the redistribution of the business rates over the years, with the aim of securing a fair and rebalanced funding formula to tackle those underlying problems and provide adequate resources for local services.
 - This report be then used as part of a campaign involving SIGOMA, the Local Government Association and other councils in speaking up for local Councils and ensuring the Department for Communities and Local Government specifically understand local needs
- (5) Council, therefore, is disappointed that this proactive work, requested with the aim of influencing Government thinking on development of a fair funding formula has not been forthcoming and that too the emphasis needs to shift away from complaining about the Government and towards influencing and improving the Government's proposals.

- (6) Council is further concerned that the current Labour Administration is demonstrating a lack of confidence in their own abilities to stimulate Wirral's economy and that they would prefer to rely on a system of handouts from Whitehall than to take any responsibility for localised fund raising.
- (7) Council welcomes the opportunity for a delegation to meet with Eric Pickles in order to continue to influence Government thinking for the benefit of the people of Wirral in the development of a fair funding formula for local government that is sustainable in the longer term, from which the Council can properly plan the delivery of local services and which properly recognises factors important to Wirral, such as social and economic deprivation.

Right of reply: Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

8. MOTION: LOCALISM FOR MERSEYRAIL

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Les Rowlands (3 minutes)

- (1) This Council notes with disappointment the decision made by the controlling Labour Group on the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority to end immediately, without further reports, or the results of any business case study the opportunity to take local control of the Merseyrail Electrics network from Network Rail.
- (2) Council notes that this process has been ongoing for many years, and that in 2005/06 a business case for Full Local Decision Making (FLDM) was prepared and submitted showing clear benefits for Merseyside. This was endorsed by the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and was a Key Policy in Local Transport Plan Two (LTP2).
- (3) Council further notes that FLDM was relaunched as Localism for Merseyrail (LFM) in 2010 and that the imperative for greater local control over the network infrastructure remains and the commitment to developing the case for this was reiterated in Local Transport Plan Three (LTP3).
- (4) Council also notes that LFM has the support of the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR) and the Rail Freight Industry.
- (5) Council believes that a fully integrated Merseyrail network would be in the best interests of Merseyside's commuters and would enable local people and rail customers to have greater say in the decisions taken affecting the rail network in Merseyside.

Council therefore requests:

- (1) That the Chief Executive writes to the Chief Executive and Director General of Merseytravel, Neil Scales, and to the Chairman of the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority (MITA), expressing our Council's disappointment at the decision made at the Authority's meeting on 27th June, 2011.
- (2) That MITA reverse the decision made at its meeting of the 27th June and ask that Merseytravel Passenger Transport Executive (MPTE) commission a Business Case Study to determine benefits and risks of LFM. The results of that study are considered by a future MITA Authority meeting before a final decision is made on whether to move this matter forward to the next stage.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Ron Abbey (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor John Salter (3 minutes)

Replace all the motion with:

- (1) The Council notes that the Chair of Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority, Councillor Mark Dowd, raised concerns about the validity of Virtual Integration via a letter dated 10th September 2010 which was published in November 2010 in a Modern Railways publication.
- (2) In the context of this letter, which pointed out problems specific to Merseyside, including the constant problems caused by closeness to the River Mersey, and in the light of the McNulty report of June 2011 which called for a 30% reduction in rail funding and the relaxation of Health and Safety at Work regulations, Council recognises that it would have been imprudent to spend a further £1.1m on a business study after £1.5m had already been paid for a previous report.

Right of reply: Councillor Chris Blakeley (7 minutes)

9. MOTION: CONSULTATION

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell (3 minutes)

This Council:

- (1) Reaffirms its commitment to enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken, as agreed unanimously by Notice of Motion at Council on 15 February 2010.
- (2) Believes that last year's Wirral's Future consultation, using the task force model and public questionnaire, followed the principles set out in that Notice of Motion to:

- Share the problem or issue and develop broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions;
 - Develop a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making, and;
 - Improve the use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads.
- (3) Acknowledges the need for consultation to include a strong independent element and recognises the crucial work of the independent task forces - comprised of experts in their thematic fields - and thanks them again for their work.
- (4) Also believes that this approach played a substantial and legitimate role in achieving a balanced Budget for 2011/12 whilst protecting services, cutting the cost of running the Council and ensuring no compulsory redundancies.
- (5) Calls on the Leader to set out detailed plans, timetables and targets for how this year's Budget consultation will be conducted.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

After "This Council:" Delete everything and replace with:

- (1) Believes that it is important to consult people not just on general priorities, but on the specific proposals, and that the role of Scrutiny by elected members is crucial in this process.
- (2) Notes that the role of Scrutiny in the budget process is enshrined in the Constitution because of its importance. Council further recognises that it is within the power of Scrutiny Committees to ask independent members from organisations outside the Council to provide information to Scrutiny Committees in order to widen the debate taking place and ensure that a strong independent element can be retained.
- (3) Recognises the need to consult properly with those service users directly affected by budget proposals and to include this either within the Scrutiny Process or through statutory consultation, as appropriate.
- (4) Further believes, in line with the localism agenda, that many people have strong affinities to the neighbourhood in which they live and would welcome the chance to review the services available to them and to use the funding available to enhance the life of the local community. Council therefore welcomes the coming launch of a wide spread Consultation, involving members of the public, residents associations and community representatives, which will lead, through the Area Forums, to the production of Neighbourhood Plans, based on a carefully collated Area Profile, which can be used to specify local priorities.

(5) Believes that this will allow the Council to map demands for services, or changed services, across areas and identify patterns of priority and need across the borough and that this in turn can be fed into the budget process.

(6) Therefore asks the Cabinet to consider the appropriate consultation measures to be used as part of the budget procedure, including specifically targeted consultation, locally targeted consultation and/or a more comprehensive approach reaching as wide a constituency across the borough as possible in order to enhance the credibility of the process.

(7) Asks the Cabinet to report on the possible timetable for any such consultations.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie (3 minutes)

Delete all after: “(5) Calls on the Leader to “ and replace with:

- Confirm the venues and dates at which the public will have the opportunity to take part and notes that, at this stage of the successful ‘Wirral’s Future’ consultation in 2010, the main programme had already circulated
- Confirm which organisations, employers, service users and partners are involved in the consultation, noting that , at this stage of the successful ‘Wirral’s Future’ consultation in 2010, this information was already available
- Publish the names of the individuals who have written the questionnaire and the names of those who will consider the responses from the public and notes that, at this stage of the successful ‘Wirral’s Future’ consultation in 2010, this information had already been circulated
- State how many contacts and how many qualitative responses will be considered a ‘success’, noting his Party’s criticism of the contact with more than 40,000 people and 5,500 completed questionnaires in the successful ‘Wirral’s Future’ consultation in 2010

Right of reply: Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

10. MOTION: BRITAIN’S LOST TALENT

Proposed by Councillor Ann McLachlan (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Tony Smith (3 minutes)

Council notes that:

(1) Under the Tory-led Government youth unemployment has hit almost one million, or 1 in 5 young people;

- (2) The coalition government has scrapped Labour's successful Future Jobs Fund and abolished Labour's guarantee of work or training for every 18-24 year old on the dole for six months;
- (3) Putting young people on the dole is not just a waste of talent but a waste of money. Failing to get Britain back to work fast enough is helping to push up welfare waste by £12.5 billion, the equivalent of £500 per household.

Council supports Labour's 'Britain's Lost Talent' campaign which calls for the coalition government to repeat last year's bank bonus tax and use a portion of the money raised to create over 100,000 youth jobs and prevent another lost generation like the 1980s.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse (7 minutes)

Seconded by: Councillor Mark Johnston (3 minutes)

Delete and replace paragraph (1):

- (1) Youth unemployment has fallen amongst those aged 16-24 in the three months to April 2011. It fell by 79,000 to 895,000 but still stands at more than 19%.

Delete paragraph (2) and replace with:

- (2) The last time youth unemployment was lower was in the three months to April 2009 and that the peak in youth unemployment was caused by the recession precipitated under Labour's watch by the financial and banking crisis.

Delete final paragraph and insert additional paragraph (4):

- (4) Council, therefore, welcomes recent news that the government has delivered an extra 103,000 apprenticeships over the last year, twice as many as expected, helping to break down barriers between academic and vocational learning in sectors such as advanced manufacturing and IT.

Right of reply: Councillor Ann McLachlan (7 minutes)

11. MOTION: 20 MPH ZONES

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Bob Wilkins (3 minutes)

Council:

- (1) Notes its ongoing policy and strong commitment to road safety in Wirral through the introduction of 20 mph zones on all non-major roads in residential areas and

in the vicinity of schools, funded as part of a four year programme in both the 2010/11 and 2011/12 Council Budget.

- (2) Notes that a similar commitment is being shown to road safety in other local authority areas, such as Liverpool, Warrington and Portsmouth, to reduce the number and severity of accidents by increasing the number of residential roads with a 20 mph speed limit.
- (3) Values the positive improvement in road safety and reduction in the frequency and numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Wirral's roads that reducing the speed limits in residential areas brings.
- (4) Welcomes recent changes announced by Norman Baker MP to Department for Transport rules making it easier for councils to introduce changes to 20 mph speed limits.
- (5) Is concerned that, to date, none of the £1.1m available for this four year policy option in Wirral has yet been committed to reducing speed limits to 20 mph on non-major residential roads.
- (6) Therefore, instructs the Director of Technical Services, in consultation with residents, Area Forums and ward councillors to commence the programme of works necessary to implement 20mph speed limits on all non-major residential roads, setting out a prioritised timetable for completion of the scheme and starting with existing 'Accidents Down 2 Zero' areas, where appropriate.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan (3 minutes)

Delete all after paragraph (4) and insert new paragraph (5)

- (5) Recognises the value of instigating a rolling programme setting up 20mph zones but believes that, in the current difficult budgetary climate where high numbers of priorities are competing for limited resources, it would be prudent to consider the speed and scale of this programme as part of the overall budget process before making any final financial commitments.

Right of reply: Councillor Tom Harney (7 minutes)

12. MOTION: MERSEYTRAVEL ALLOWANCES

Proposed by Councillor Dave Mitchell (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Bob Wilkins (3 minutes)

- (1) This Council welcomes attempts by Liberal Democrat and Conservative councillors to increase transparency and public accountability through calls for an

independent remuneration panel to be set up to investigate Merseytravel allowances paid to councillors.

- (2) Council notes that Merseytravel is the only travel authority not to have an independent review for members' allowances and expresses its disappointment and concern that the Labour-dominated authority has rejected the plan for their allowances to be set independently, choosing instead to set their own salaries and allowances.
- (3) Council urges Merseytravel members from Wirral to push for an independent review to happen at the earliest opportunity.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor George Davies (3 minutes)

Replace all the motion with:

The Labour Group on Wirral Council call on the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority to confirm that an independent remuneration panel has been set in motion to look into Authority Members' allowances.

Right of reply: Councillor Dave Mitchell (7 minutes)

13. MOTION: CRUISE TURNAROUND REVIEW

Proposed by Councillor Ann Bridson (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly (3 minutes)

- (1) This Council welcomes the Government's decision to review the case for cruises to start and end at Liverpool's Pier Head and re-iterates its support for the campaign calling for the licence to be granted for cruise turnarounds.
- (2) Council requests the chief executive, and other officers as appropriate, to continue to lobby the case for a Pier Head turnaround, highlighting the economic benefit to the entire city region area.

Right of reply: Councillor Ann Bridson (7 minutes)