

COUNCIL

Monday, 7 December 2020

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Tony Smith) in the
Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor George Davies)

Councillors	T Anderson	JE Green	Y Nolan
	B Berry	EA Grey	T Norbury
	J Bird	P Hayes	C Povall
	A Brame	S Hayes	L Rennie
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Hodson	J Robinson
	H Cameron	K Hodson	L Rowlands
	K Cannon	J Johnson	C Spriggs
	C Carubia	AER Jones	S Spoor
	P Cleary	C Jones	J Stapleton
	W Clements	T Jones	P Stuart
	C Cooke	M Jordan	M Sullivan
	A Corkhill	S Kelly	J Walsh
	T Cottier	B Kenny	S Whittingham
	T Cox	A Leech	I Williams
	S Foulkes	I Lewis	KJ Williams
	S Frost	M McLaughlin	S Williams
	A Gardner	J McManus	J Williamson
	P Gilchrist	D Mitchell	G Wood
	K Greaney	C Muspratt	A Wright

Apologies Councillors M Collins T Usher
S Jones

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Prior to Members' declarations of interest, the Civic Mayor asked the Deputy Monitoring Officer, Vicki Shaw, to provide advice to all Members in respect of motion 1, 'Public Sector Pay Freeze'.

Vicki Shaw informed the meeting of the requirements of the Localism Act and the Members' Code of Conduct, in respect of declaring interests and that the Leader of the Council had submitted a written request for the Council to grant a general dispensation for this meeting only for all Members to be present, speak and vote were they would otherwise have a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of the first motion, Public Sector Pay Freeze.

Written advice had already been provided to Members by the Monitoring Officer, with which she herself concurred, in that with the number of Members

who would be affected, the test for granting a dispensation would be met on the ground that the representation of different political groups would otherwise be affected so as to alter the likely outcome of any vote. Also, quite possibly there would be too few Members left in the meeting, that the transaction of business would be prohibited as the meeting might become inquorate.

The Monitoring Officer was also of the view that, given the nature of this motion on notice and its content, that it was highly likely the courts would agree with the Council if it were of the view that the test that this would be otherwise appropriate, was also met.

On a motion by the Civic Mayor, seconded by Councillor Janette Williamson, it was –

Resolved - That Council grants a General Dispensation, for this meeting only, to all Members, to be present, speak and vote where they would otherwise have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in respect of Motion 1 on the agenda on the grounds that it is appropriate in the circumstances to grant such a dispensation.

The Civic Mayor then informed the meeting that he had also been informed that all the Labour Members present would wish to declare a personal interest in respect of Motion 5 – ‘Union Learning Fund’.

Members of the Council were then invited to consider whether they had any other disclosable pecuniary and / or any other relevant interest in connection with any matters to be determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the interest.

Having been granted a dispensation the following Members then also chose to declare a prejudicial interest in Motion 1, ‘Public Sector Pay Freeze’, by virtue of themselves or a close family member working in the public sector, Councillors Les Rowlands, Stuart Whittingham, Sarah Spoor, Christina Muspratt, Paul Stuart, Jenny Johnson, Janette Williamson, Chris Jones, Christine Spriggs, Tony Jones, Tony Norbury, Chris Cooke, Yvonne Nolan, Alison Wright, Mike Sullivan, Lesley Rennie, Steve Hayes, Jerry Williams, Steve Williams, Tony Smith, Moira McLaughlin, Samantha Frost and Irene Williams.

Councillor Jeff Green and Anita Leech declared personal interests in Motion 6, ‘It’s Time to Put New Arrangements in Place’ by virtue of a parent being in receipt of care.

Councillor Yvonne Nolan declared a personal interest in Motion 3, ‘Getting Cancer Services Back on Track’ by virtue of her being a governor of Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor Mary Jordan declared a personal interest in Motion 3, 'Getting Cancer Services Back on Track' by virtue of her employment.

Councillor Ian Lewis declared a personal interest in Motion 3, 'Getting Cancer Services Back on Track' by virtue of him being a public member of Clatterbridge Cancer Centre.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 7, 'Tackling Child Poverty and Deprivation on Wirral' by virtue of her being a trustee of Feeding Birkenhead.

Councillors Lesley Rennie, Brian Kenny and Jean Stapleton declared personal interests in Motion 2, 'Wirral Council Asked to Back the RSPCA's Fireworks Campaign' by virtue of their membership of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor Julie McManus declared a personal interest in Motion 7, 'Tackling Child Poverty and Deprivation on Wirral' by virtue of her employment.

Councillor Steve Foulkes declared a personal interest in agenda item 6a and the Housing Minutes, by virtue of his membership of Magenta Living.

Councillor Jenny Johnson declared personal interests in both Motion 5, 'Union Learning Fund' by virtue of her employment and Motion 6, 'It's Time to Put New Arrangements in Place' by virtue of a family member's employment.

Councillor Tony Cox declared a prejudicial interest in Motion 4, 'Supporting Car Clubs in Wirral' by virtue of his employment.

31 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor referred to a number of engagements which he and the Mayoress had undertaken recently, including the raising of a Green Flag at Vale Park, New Brighton and thanked all those officers and volunteers involved in maintaining the park. He had also unveiled the 300th bench near to Harrison Park on the promenade in conjunction with the Older People's Parliament.

Green Flags would also be raised on 11 and 17 December, 2020, at Frankby and Flaybrick Hill Cemeteries and he thanked officers and volunteers.

He and the Mayoress had attended the recording of a Remembrance Service at the Priory, Birkenhead, an outdoor service at Egremont Primary School on 11 November, 2020 and a service to honour the Cockleshell Heroes at Woodside Business Park on 6 December, 2020.

He congratulated all the community groups on the Wirral for all the Christmas lights which were on display around the borough along with all the plants and flowers on display maintained by many local volunteers with the support of local businesses.

He and the Mayoress had kept in touch with residents' groups and organisations, throughout lockdown by sending cards and writing letters and he expressed thanks for the remarkable growth of community self help from neighbours and with the support of council officers.

The Civic Mayor announced that apologies had been received from Councillors Sharon Jones, Tom Usher and Mike Collins.

32 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 19 October, 2020 had been circulated to Members.

On a motion by the Civic Mayor seconded by Councillor Anita Leech it was –

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record, subject to the amendment of minute 17, 'Statements and Petitions' in that at paragraph 2, 'Prestbury Avenue' to read, 'Pasture Avenue'.

33 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that no questions from the public had been submitted.

34 **STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the meeting that no statements had been submitted and no petitions were received.

35 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of the Chair of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee regarding the forthcoming consultation on the libraries strategy and new library model. Councillor Tom Anderson responded accordingly and assured Councillor Gilchrist that the consultation would be thorough, inclusive and comprehensive with Friends of Library Groups included at every stage. Paper and site based consultation, when appropriate and safe to do so, would also take place to ensure all those without access to digital information were included also.

Councillor Pat Cleary asked a question of the Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on the rollout of Carbon Literacy Training across the Council. Councillor Elizabeth Grey responded accordingly and informed Councillor Cleary that up to 10 December, five courses had been held with 16 Members attending and with Wirral working towards a silver rating.

36 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 2(x) four matters had been submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 37 to 40 post).

37 **2020/21 REVENUE BUDGET MONITOR QUARTER 2 AND COVID-19 BUDGET POSITION STATEMENT**

The first item requiring approval was in relation to an increase in the budget because of Covid-19 funding.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was –

Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 21 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 11 November, 2020, be agreed in that:

Council approves the increased budget in relation to Covid-19 funding of £42.538m, which is for Council use and notes the additional £132.793m of funds that is to be made available to the Council for onward relay to other organisations as passported funding; a total sum of £175.33m is therefore the combined Covid-19 funding being received by the Council based on current information. Council notes that this recommendation supersedes the recommendation made by Policy and Resources Committee on 7 October, following the recent notification of additional funding.

38 **CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 2 2020/21**

The second item requiring approval was in relation to a revised capital programme.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Anita Leech, it was –

Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 22 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 11 November, 2020, be agreed and that the following be approved:

(1) additional funding for the schemes detailed in paragraph 3.5 of the report as follows:

- Children's System Rationalisation - £0.826m (over a three year period)
- Tree Strategy Delivery - £0.208m (over a four year period)
- Allotments Sites Expansion - £0.127m
- Birkenhead Temporary Market Pre-Development Costs - £50,000
- Concerto Development Asset Management System - £42,000 (over a two year period)
- Capitalisation of Salaries - £0.5m

(2) a revised Capital Programme of £95.1 million for 2020-21, including the virements referred to in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

39 **COUNCIL TAX BASE REPORT 2021/22 (TAX BASE, DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS AND LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME)**

The third item requiring approval was in relation to the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 and proposed Council Tax discounts, the motion for which was moved by Councillor Janette Williamson and seconded by Councillor Anita Leech

Following a short debate, Councillor Williamson replied and commented that she would get the information on the number of external agencies used for debt recovery during her time as Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources. She commented that every Council did use debt recovery agencies. Her aspiration for the Council was that debt recovery was reviewed and it was ensured that whenever possible it was fair and ethical and that was a priority for the Council.

On the motion moved by Councillor Janette Williamson, it was then -

Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 23 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 11 November, 2020, be agreed as follows:

- (1) The figure of 94,198.6 be approved as the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 subject to the items below being approved;
- (2) The level and award of each local discount for 2021/22 be:

Wirral Women's & Children's Aid

To continue to award Wirral Women & Children's Aid 100% discount. This remains unchanged from 2020/21.

Care Leaver's Discount

To award Care Leavers the requisite discount to reduce their Council Tax liability to zero until they are 25. This remains unchanged from 2020/21.

Empty Property Discounts

Discount category D = 0% Full charge on properties undergoing renovations.

Discount category C = 0% Full charge on empty properties from date they become unoccupied.

Both remain unchanged from 2020/21.

Empty Property Premium = 100% (200% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty for more than two years. 200% (300% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than five years. 300% (400% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than ten years.

Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme

The Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme, approved by Cabinet in October 2013, continues in its current format for 2021/2022. The Scheme offers help and assistance in exceptional cases of hardship.

(3) Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS)

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, be the approved Scheme for 2021/2022. This remains unchanged from 2020/21 apart from the following:

- a. Where an entitlement to the Care Leaver Discount/Exemption has ceased, Local Council Tax Reduction to be awarded without the need for a further application where their eligibility is known.
- b. The scheme is aligned to all of the DWP's upratings and changes for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION - COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The fourth item requiring approval was in relation to a proposed amendment to the Council's Constitution and its Standing Orders.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, it was –

Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 6 of the Constitution and Standards Committee of 26 November, 2020, be agreed as follows:

That Standing Order 11.1, ‘Representations’ be amended so that the deadline for the public registering to speak be brought forward to no later than midday, three working days before the day of the meeting, in line with the deadline for the submission of public questions.

41 **DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

The Civic Mayor introduced the minutes of the various Committees which had met since the beginning of October up until 19 November, and asked for questions to Committee Chairs on any of the minutes being received.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in respect of minute 5, of the Policy and Resources Committee of 7 October, 2020 regarding the sale of land at Arrowe Park Road, Upton and the timetable for the advertising of this sale of the public open space and that Members be advised as to how many objections had come forward by the closing date. Councillor Williamson responded that a written response would be provided once enquiries had been made after the meeting.

Councillor Chris Cooke asked a question of Councillor Wendy Clements in respect of minute 9 of the Children, Young People and Education Committee of 20 October, 2020 on what recent progress the Council had made in the light of the report to tackle the acute problem of obesity among Wirral’s children. Councillor Clements responded that the former Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee had accepted the recommendations of the healthy weight workshops at its last meeting in March. Since then other matters had taken precedence for Members and officers, yet the work hadn’t been lost, it remained on the Committee’s work programme. Many of the recommendations that were made were actually cross cutting themes, such as the School Streets initiative, Healthy High Streets programme and matters around business rates. It was accepted at the time that these were out of the remit of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. She commented that hopefully walking had been encouraged by lockdown but there was definitely more to do.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Elizabeth Grey regarding the meeting of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee of 22 October, 2020 on whether she would accept his apology for the rude discourteous behaviour shown by a member of the Conservative group at the last meeting of the Committee. In response, Councillor Grey

accepted the apology and appreciated and understood what Councillor Lewis was saying.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Julie McManus regarding the Housing Committee minutes of 28 October, 2020 and asked for the Chair's commitment that the Council would respond to the consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which was closing on 11 January, 2021, and ask for tougher safety measures for tenants in social housing who required better smoke detection and carbon monoxide detections. He also asked that future consultations were brought to the Committee's agenda as and when she saw fit. In response, Councillor McManus stated that she was happy to confirm that officers and members alike welcomed any improved safety measures for residents to be protected. Officers would be considering their full response to questions on those specific issues within the consultation.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham asked a question of Councillor Tom Anderson in respect of minute 9 of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee of 26 October, 2020 and the Chair's plans to build on the success in recent years of Wirral's cultural programme, particularly when Wirral was the City Region's Borough of Culture. Councillor Anderson responded that the Council was currently going through a budgetary process which would define the Committee's work programme for the future. Councillor Whittingham was welcome to attend the meeting and listen to any discussions and he was always open to any suggestions. With regard to the library consultation, Councillor Anderson also commented that any Member was welcome to raise any issues with him which would be addressed by the committee.

Resolved – That all the Committee minutes be received.

42 **OFFICER DECISIONS**

The Council noted an officer key decision taken by the Director of Neighbourhood Services on 24 November, 2020, in respect of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme.

On a motion by the Civic Mayor, seconded by Councillor Janette Williamson, it was –

Resolved – That the officer key decision be noted.

43 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Motions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.1 and were determined as detailed in minutes 44 to 50 below.

MOTION - PUBLIC SECTOR PAY FREEZE

Councillor Paul Stuart moved and Councillor Jean Robinson seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

“Across the UK Over 4 million public sector workers have had the threat of a three year pay freeze imposed on them by the Conservative Government who are determined to make those very people they clapped for each week pay for the Government’s costly mistakes during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This will have huge implications to a large proportion of Wirral residents who are public sector employees. In 2019, the total number of employee jobs was 101,643. Of this number 23.9% are jobs within the public sector with Health being Wirral’s largest industry sector accounting for over 22% of total employee jobs.

Is this how we thank our Nurses, Healthcare workers, teachers, firefighters, civil servants and police officers, who have already had a cut of up to 14% in real terms as a result of the austerity measures brought in by successive Tory governments since 2010?

These same workers risked their lives to save ours during the pandemic, nursed our loved ones, kept our schools open for vulnerable children, cared for the elderly, and kept our streets safe.

The Chancellor seeks to wilfully reignite the damaging debate around public versus private sector workers. The truth is, we need all workers in this country to be treated with dignity, respect and paid a fair wage. There needs to be parity between the two, but not by division, not by a race to the bottom.

This will have a detrimental affect the Wirral economy, with wages of nearly a quarter of the employee population facing a three year pay freeze and the cost of living inevitably rising, people will not have the disposable income they otherwise might to be able to spend locally.

Most families in poverty have at least one member in employment. In-work poverty is increasing. Imposing a three year pay freeze will exacerbate existing levels of poverty across Wirral. We cannot allow our public sector workers to be treated in this way. Government recognition of their vital role during the pandemic must extend further than meaningless gestures. Clapping once a week will not pay the bills.

Council commends the decision to pay the Real Living Wage to care workers; and

Council asks the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, and ask him to fulfil his pledge to 'level up' and not implement a three year pay freeze on public sector workers."

Councillor Mary Jordan moved and Councillor Jenny Johnson seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

"After final paragraph add:

Council notes that this motion was drafted prior to the Chancellor's Spending Review and, in the interests of accuracy:

- The Spending Review includes a pay-rise for more than one million nurses, doctors and others working in our NHS
- Guarantees a pay rise of at least £250 for 2.1 million public sector workers who earn below the median UK wage of £24,000

And notes that the combined effect of these two policies will ensure a majority of public sector workers will see an increase in pay next year.

Council also welcomes the Chancellor's decision to accept in full the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission to:

- increase the National Living Wage by 2.2 per cent to £8.91
- to extend this rate to those aged 23 or above
- to increase the National Minimum Wage as well

These increases will benefit approximately 2 million people – ensuring a full-time worker earning the National Living Wage will see their pay rise by £345 next year, an effective increase of over £4,000 since the policy was introduced in 2016."

Following a debate conducted in accordance with Standing Order 15, and Councillor Stuart forgoing his right of reply, the amendment was put and lost (25:33) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put and it was –

Resolved (39:19) (One abstention) -

Across the UK Over 4 million public sector workers have had the threat of a three year pay freeze imposed on them by the Conservative Government who are determined to make those very people they clapped for each week pay for the Government's costly mistakes during the Coronavirus pandemic.

This will have huge implications to a large proportion of Wirral residents who are public sector employees. In 2019, the total number of employee jobs was 101,643. Of this number 23.9% are jobs within the public sector

with Health being Wirral's largest industry sector accounting for over 22% of total employee jobs.

Is this how we thank our Nurses, Healthcare workers, teachers, firefighters, civil servants and police officers, who have already had a cut of up to 14% in real terms as a result of the austerity measures brought in by successive Tory governments since 2010?

These same workers risked their lives to save ours during the pandemic, nursed our loved ones, kept our schools open for vulnerable children, cared for the elderly, and kept our streets safe.

The Chancellor seeks to wilfully reignite the damaging debate around public versus private sector workers. The truth is, we need all workers in this country to be treated with dignity, respect and paid a fair wage. There needs to be parity between the two, but not by division, not by a race to the bottom.

This will have a detrimental affect the Wirral economy, with wages of nearly a quarter of the employee population facing a three year pay freeze and the cost of living inevitably rising, people will not have the disposable income they otherwise might to be able to spend locally.

Most families in poverty have at least one member in employment. In-work poverty is increasing. Imposing a three year pay freeze will exacerbate existing levels of poverty across Wirral. We cannot allow our public sector workers to be treated in this way. Government recognition of their vital role during the pandemic must extend further than meaningless gestures. Clapping once a week will not pay the bills.

Council commends the decision to pay the Real Living Wage to care workers; and

Council asks the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, and ask him to fulfil his pledge to 'level up' and not implement a three year pay freeze on public sector workers.

45 **MOTION - WIRRAL COUNCIL ASKED TO BACK THE RSPCA'S FIREWORKS CAMPAIGN**

Councillor Lesley Rennie moved and Councillor Ian Lewis seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Following a debate conducted in accordance with Standing Order 15, and Councillor Rennie having replied, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That,

Council is keen to ensure that all Wirral residents' concerns regarding the correct and safe use of fireworks in the Borough are taken seriously.

Council thanks Wirral residents who have shared concerns over the use, and misuse, of fireworks in the Borough, following the national campaign by the RSPCA and others, in 2019 and this year.

While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, fireworks also cause significant problems and fear for others.

They are a source of fear and distress for many animals, including pets, farm livestock and wildlife. Animals affected not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries – sometimes very serious ones – as they attempt to run away or hide from the noise.

Council also notes that fireworks, when misused, are dangerous and can be used to cause a public nuisance.

Council notes the work undertaken by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, through Operation Banger, to reduce anti-social behaviour and sporadic events, linked to fireworks and bonfires and thanks all Fire Officers for their work on this.

Council therefore resolves to:

- continue to support a number of organised, local displays with residents encouraged to attend, including the River of Light Festival (a large scale organised public display which the Council plans responsibly for) and when safe to do so;**
- continue with its practice of working with Parks, Communications and other Council Teams and partners to promote safety messages and advertise events well in advance of the planned dates, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;**
- continue to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;**
- ask the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee to investigate how the Council can work with our licensed venues to encourage the safe, responsible and neighbourly use of fireworks within their grounds;**
- request all Group Leaders write to the Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays and to consider options that could limit the private sales of fireworks to individuals;**

- **support visits by Trading standards and the Fire Service to local suppliers of fireworks, including ‘pop up’ fireworks suppliers, to ensure compliance with existing legislation and to encourage fireworks that are appropriate for public display.**

46

MOTION - GETTING CANCER SERVICES BACK ON TRACK

Councillor Andy Corkhill moved and Councillor Dave Mitchell seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

“Council notes that we are seeing unprecedented disruption to cancer services on the Wirral, in the Liverpool City Region and across England.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, thousands of vital cancer treatments, appointments, and care were postponed or cancelled. People in desperate need of help are still unable to access the support they need and the emotional impact of delays is contributing to a crisis in mental health.

Cancer Research has seen hundreds of millions of pounds lost from its budget and a similar amount of charity donations that usually prop up the research system has been unforthcoming as people struggle financially.

We are lucky on the Wirral that we have two world class Cancer Centres on our doorstep, but even here there are residents who have had operations and treatments postponed or suspended. In areas less well served, residents are not even being referred from their GPs to an Oncology Centre. The result of all this inaction means cancers are being caught later, sometimes too late to avoid preventable death.

Council believes that cancer should not be forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic and requests the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Senior Council Officers to write to the Government, demanding urgent action to deliver cancer recovery plans to prevent this happening, to clear the backlog and to get cancer services back on track.”

Councillor Mary Jordan moved and Councillor David Burgess-Joyce seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

“Delete final paragraph and replace with:

Council notes that in May 2020, NHS England directed all NHS trusts providing cancer services to develop and implement Cancer Recovery Plans and that, since then, Trusts have reported every 14 days on their performance against these plans.

Council also welcomes the recent presentation given to the Partnerships Committee by the Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, which included progress

against their recovery plan and the expansion of services at current and new locations to better serve all those diagnosed with cancer, their families and staff.”

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (19:39) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) –

Council notes that we are seeing unprecedented disruption to cancer services on the Wirral, in the Liverpool City Region and across England.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, thousands of vital cancer treatments, appointments, and care were postponed or cancelled. People in desperate need of help are still unable to access the support they need and the emotional impact of delays is contributing to a crisis in mental health.

Cancer Research has seen hundreds of millions of pounds lost from its budget and a similar amount of charity donations that usually prop up the research system has been unforthcoming as people struggle financially.

We are lucky on the Wirral that we have two world class Cancer Centres on our doorstep, but even here there are residents who have had operations and treatments postponed or suspended. In areas less well served, residents are not even being referred from their GPs to an Oncology Centre. The result of all this inaction means cancers are being caught later, sometimes too late to avoid preventable death.

Council believes that cancer should not be forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic and requests the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Senior Council Officers to write to the Government, demanding urgent action to deliver cancer recovery plans to prevent this happening, to clear the backlog and to get cancer services back on track.

47 **MOTION - UNION LEARNING FUND**

Councillor Brian Kenny moved and Councillor Adrian Jones seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter, and it was –

Resolved (39:19) (One abstention) – That

Wirral Council notes:

- 1. On Tuesday 6 October, the TUC received a letter from the Department for Education saying that ministers have decided to end the Union Learning Fund from March 2021.**
- 2. The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to support trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces for both union members and non-members. The fund supports workplace projects across England, and is coordinated by the TUC.**
- 3. Each year around 200,000 workers are supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC. Thousands of workers, based in Wirral, are currently eligible for this support. These learners undertake all sorts of job-relevant learning and training, including basic literacy and numeracy, ICT skills, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational training, continuing professional development and many other informal and formal courses.**
- 4. In 2019–20, the ULF was worth £12m. If upheld this decision will effectively end union-brokered skills training, and will undermine key government skills and retraining priorities at a crucial moment for our economy.**

Wirral Council understands that:

- 1. Union learning reaches people that other DfE programmes do not reach.**
- 2. There is an independent evaluation of the Union Learning Fund every two years. It was most recently evaluated by the University of Exeter in 2018. They spoke to 2,459 learners, and found:**
 - Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of learners with no previous qualifications got a qualification.**
 - 47 per cent of those with entry level or level 1 qualifications got a qualification at a higher level.**
 - Four in five (80 per cent) said they had developed skills that they could transfer to a new job.**
 - Two in three (62 per cent) said their new skills made them more effective in their current job.**

- One in five (19 per cent) said they had been promoted or given increased responsibility and one in 10 (11 per cent) got a pay rise.
3. The 2018 independent evaluation found that union learning provided excellent value for money:
 - For every £1 spent on the Union Learning Fund, there is a return of £12.30: £7.60 to the worker, £4.70 to the employer.
 - The Union Learning Fund delivers an estimated net contribution to the economy of more than £1.4bn as a result of a boost to jobs, wages and productivity.
 - The return to the exchequer (through reduced spending on welfare benefits and other factors resulting from the boost to jobs and wages) is £3.57 for each £1 spent on the Union Learning Fund.
 - The £12m government funding levered in an additional £54m from employers, unions and training providers in 2019–20.
 4. The government has said it will put reskilling workers at the heart of its economic recovery plans after the pandemic. In September 2020, the government announced a new fully funded entitlement to achieve a first level 3 qualification, delivered through the National Skills Fund. Union learning is ideally placed to support this aspiration, in two ways:
 - directly, through delivering relevant level 3 courses to workplace learners, which is already a core function of the Union Learning Fund and was assessed as highly effective by the 2018 independent evaluation
 - directly, through enabling those with basic skills to learn and develop, putting them in a position to progress to level 3 skills
 5. Successive governments of all parties have valued this role – and have supported the Union Learning Fund. As government funding, it is paid as a contract and is subject to stringent monitoring requirements. Union Learning Fund money can only be spent on the direct costs of getting working people into learning and skills training, and the associated costs of delivering this programme.
 6. ULF projects adapted quickly to delivering online learning and training for workers during the pandemic and have actually surpassed the number of outcomes expected by government since the beginning of April.

Wirral Council resolves to:

- (1) Express its public support for the continuation of the Union Learning Fund.

- (2) Ask the Leader of the Council to raise this issue with our 4 local MPs and encourage them to call on the government to reverse its decision.**

48 MOTION - IT'S TIME TO PUT NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Dave Mitchell seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

In formally moving his motion, Councillor Gilchrist stated that he was happy to accept the Conservative amendment, proposed by Councillor Lesley Rennie and seconded by Councillor David Burgess-Joyce as follows:

“After final paragraph, add:

Furthermore, Council requests the five Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing the view of Council.”

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter and it was then –

Resolved (unanimously) –

Council notes that:

- a. in 1999, a Green Paper was announced and the then Government set out to consult on the future of social care funding and a Royal Commission was set up. This published proposals which included a more generous means-test and free personal and nursing care;**
- b. in 2009, the Labour Government’s Green Paper proposed a National Care Service;**
- c. in 2011, the Commission on the Funding of Care and Support, set up by the Coalition Government, proposed a cap on lifetime social care charges and a more generous means-test;**
- d. in 2014, the Coalition Government legislated to implement the Commission’s recommendations with cross-party support;**
- e. in July 2015, the Conservative Government postponed their introduction citing funding pressures and a lack of preparedness by local authorities.**

Council recognises that, since 2017, there has been a succession of promises to fund and reform the long term funding of Social Care. These have included:

The promise of a Green Paper made by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 2017,

- a promise to “work to improve social care and bring forward proposals for consultation” in the Queen’s Speech in June 2017;
- a statement, in November 2017, that a Green Paper would be published by the Parliamentary summer recess in 2018 and would “focus on care for older people”;
- the setting out of seven principles to “guide the Government’s thinking ahead of the Social Care Green Paper” in March 2018;
- the intention announced, in January 2019, to publish a Social Care Green Paper “by April 2019”.

Finally, the Queen’s Speech of 19 December 2019 included this commitment...

‘My Ministers will seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long term reform of social care. They will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it.’

Council believes that Wirral’s residents need Parliament to deliver a way forward that will help them plan for their future care needs with some degree of certainty. Council recognises that all those involved in Wirral’s social care sector have worked, through the past months of the pandemic, to support Wirral’s people in care homes and in the community. It has faced shortages of PPE, distressed families who have lost loved ones and, latterly, the anxiety of those who have not been visited and been unable to visit.

In view of this pressured and chequered history, Council requests that Wirral’s Members of Parliament do all they can to secure a consensus on a way forward that will secure funding and meet the needs of the frail and vulnerable members of our community.

Furthermore, Council requests the five Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing the view of Council.

49 **MOTION - TACKLING CHILD POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION ON WIRRAL**

Councillor Kate Cannon moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

“Poverty is devastating and deeply destabilising to families and communities, and residents from Wirral suffer from poverty at a higher rate than they did ten years ago, and at a higher rate than the national average. (Wirral children in low-income poverty has seen a 23.3% increase since 2015/16.)

It is particularly damaging during crucial stages of development, and the lasting effects that poverty has on physical and psychological processes are now well documented and long-lasting.

Child poverty is not simply about struggling to make ends meet financially but are linked with a wide range of deprivation issues such as poor-quality housing, poor health and low levels of educational attainment. Children in poverty are also more likely to go missing and have increased risk of exploitation and grooming.

Late interventions can be effective, but those made in the first five years of a child's life are by far the most effective. The early interventions are also the most cost-effective.

With the social problems in our borough getting worse over the last decade – not better – and with the complex and varied nature of the causes and effects of poverty, Council recognises the significant work that has already been done to establish a poverty profile in the borough. It endorses the workstreams already going on to reduce child poverty, and asks that Children, Young People and Education Committee considers this motion and requests it begins to lead on compiling a comprehensive child poverty strategy for the borough.”

Councillor Moira McLaughlin moved and Councillor Mike Sullivan seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

“Delete everything in the original Notice of Motion after 3rd paragraph ending in “Children in poverty are also more likely to go missing and have increased risk of exploitation and grooming”

And insert the following:

‘A strategy to eradicate child poverty needs to address family poverty and should have a national, as well as a local dimension which encompasses policies to lift families out of poverty, alongside action to reduce the impact of inadequate income by providing help at community level.

Wirral has been at the forefront of this approach through the work of the community based organisation Feeding Birkenhead Supporting Wirral one of a number of 15 pilot areas across the country that forms Feeding Britain.

To date examples of how this approach has been successful are:

- (1) Using locally gathered evidence, Feeding Britain highlighted to Government that serious delays in payment of Tax Credits was resulting in families being left without income for long periods. This brought about an improvement at national level to the administration of Tax Credits.

- (2) Feeding Britain raised issues of additional charges for people using pre-paid meters for their fuel. These are often people on low income and it was able to negotiate with Ofgem that a cap on pre-payment be introduced.
- (3) The model for school holiday provision developed in Wirral, was presented to MPs by Feeding Britain, got cross party support and was the basis of the School Holiday (and Activity) Bill.
- (4) Feeding Britain developed the scheme which has become Kick Start, aimed at providing employment opportunities for young people.

Any local strategy needs to be comprehensive and work across all Council Departments and with community and voluntary sector, health, business and private sector partners.

Wirral has a well-established network of community and voluntary sector organisation which have a strong history of co-operation to address food and fuel poverty and offer help with debt and other factors which reduce disposable income.

It is 4 years since the Council's strategy "Improving Life Chances" was developed by the then Director of Public Health and though there are several other very good initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, it is clear that there is a need for a more integrated approach which uses the learning from research and builds on the recent activity to alleviate food poverty.

Council therefore requests that:

- (A) The Policy and Resources Committee undertake to pull together the different policies and strategies aimed at alleviating the problems which lead to poverty into a comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy and recommends that the expertise and experience of organisations involved in this area of work are used to inform that strategy.
- (B) That a set of performance indicators are developed which can monitor any improvement in poverty rates.
- (C) That these are reported on an annual basis, or as appropriate, to Policy and Resources Committee and the policy is updated as required.' "

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost on the Mayor's casting vote (29:29). (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) -

Poverty is devastating and deeply destabilising to families and communities, and residents from Wirral suffer from poverty at a higher rate than they did ten years ago, and at a higher rate than the national average. (Wirral children in low-income poverty has seen a 23.3% increase since 2015/16.)

It is particularly damaging during crucial stages of development, and the lasting effects that poverty has on physical and psychological processes are now well documented and long-lasting.

Child poverty is not simply about struggling to make ends meet financially but are linked with a wide range of deprivation issues such as poor-quality housing, poor health and low levels of educational attainment. Children in poverty are also more likely to go missing and have increased risk of exploitation and grooming.

Late interventions can be effective, but those made in the first five years of a child's life are by far the most effective. The early interventions are also the most cost-effective.

With the social problems in our borough getting worse over the last decade – not better – and with the complex and varied nature of the causes and effects of poverty, Council recognises the significant work that has already been done to establish a poverty profile in the borough. It endorses the workstreams already going on to reduce child poverty, and asks that Children, Young People and Education Committee considers this motion and requests it begins to lead on compiling a comprehensive child poverty strategy for the borough.

50 MOTION - SUPPORTING CAR CLUBS IN WIRRAL

Councillor Tony Cox, having previously declared a personal prejudicial interest in this item, left the 'virtual' meeting room whilst it was under consideration.

Councillor Pat Cleary moved and Councillor Chris Cooke seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

"Council notes:

the targets for new housing imposed by government on Wirral, the desire to protect our precious greenbelt and the resulting need to achieve higher density levels in new housing developments;

the unanimous declaration of a Climate Emergency by Council in July last year and the related “clean travel” commitments outlined in the Cool 2 climate strategy with a clear objective to decarbonise local travel

the many changes indicated as part of the Cool 2 strategy which include: “a shift from individual ownership of vehicles to the use of travel services, e.g. car clubs”;

that Car Clubs are an alternative to car ownership. They enable people to share cars, and only pay when they are using them. Although many schemes now operate across the country, there is no established scheme for Wirral;

that many councils actively support local car clubs in a variety of ways – providing financial and/or marketing support, facilitating vehicle access and via specific policies which, for example, mandate provision for car club vehicles in new housing schemes.

Car clubs therefore have a role to play in supporting a number of the council’s objectives for transportation, regeneration, climate change and sustainability.

Council requests that:

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee incorporate a study of car clubs into its work programme, to include:

- A survey of the current provision of car clubs in the Liverpool City Region
- An analysis of council support for car clubs elsewhere in the country and the potential application of similar support in Wirral
- Recommendations as to the specific policies and measures required to help facilitate future car club provision in Wirral”

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce moved and Councillor Andrew Gardner seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

“Replace final bulletin point with:

Recommendations as to the specific non-punitive or sanctionable policies and measures required to help facilitate future car club provision in Wirral.”

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (18:39) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

Resolved (39:18) (One abstention) – That Council notes:

the targets for new housing imposed by government on Wirral, the desire to protect our precious greenbelt and the resulting need to achieve higher density levels in new housing developments;

the unanimous declaration of a Climate Emergency by Council in July last year and the related “clean travel” commitments outlined in the Cool 2 climate strategy with a clear objective to decarbonise local travel;

the many changes indicated as part of the Cool 2 strategy which include: “a shift from individual ownership of vehicles to the use of travel services, e.g. car clubs”;

that Car Clubs are an alternative to car ownership. They enable people to share cars, and only pay when they are using them. Although many schemes now operate across the country, there is no established scheme for Wirral;

that many councils actively support local car clubs in a variety of ways – providing financial and/or marketing support, facilitating vehicle access and via specific policies which, for example, mandate provision for car club vehicles in new housing schemes.

Car clubs therefore have a role to play in supporting a number of the council’s objectives for transportation, regeneration, climate change and sustainability.

Council requests that:

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee incorporate a study of car clubs into its work programme, to include:

- **A survey of the current provision of car clubs in the Liverpool City Region**
- **An analysis of council support for car clubs elsewhere in the country and the potential application of similar support in Wirral**
- **Recommendations as to the specific policies and measures required to help facilitate future car club provision in Wirral.**