

# COUNCIL

Monday, 22 March 2021

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

Councillors	T Anderson	EA Grey	T Norbury
	B Berry	P Hayes	C Povall
	J Bird	S Hayes	L Rennie
	A Brame	A Hodson	J Robinson
	D Burgess-Joyce	K Hodson	L Rowlands
	H Cameron	J Johnson	C Spriggs
	K Cannon	AER Jones	S Spoor
	C Carubia	C Jones	J Stapleton
	P Cleary	S Jones	P Stuart
	W Clements	T Jones	M Sullivan
	M Collins	M Jordan	T Usher
	C Cooke	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
	JE Green	Y Nolan	

Apologies Councillor A Corkhill

## 65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Prior to Members being invited to declare any interests, the Civic Mayor asked the Monitoring Officer, Philip McCourt, to provide advice to all Members in respect of motions 1, 'NHS Pay Rise', 3 'Recognising the Contribution of Those Who Care' and 8, 'Government Support for Wirral'.

Philip McCourt informed the meeting that motions 1 and 3, concerning those on NHS terms and conditions of employment (including Council staff), and motion 8, concerning those who had been in receipt of furlough, business grants and so forth, were likely to relate to the employment or business of a considerable number of councillors, their families or their close associates. Under Wirral's Code of Conduct, this would mean a substantial proportion of councillors would need to declare an interest and leave the meeting whilst those items were being discussed.

A request had therefore been made that the meeting grant a general dispensation for all Members who might have an interest in motions 1, 3 and 8 for the duration of this meeting.

The authority was permitted to grant a dispensation if, after having had regard to all relevant circumstances, the authority considered that:

- (a) without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business;
- (b) without the dispensation the representation of different political groups would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote;
- (c) granting the dispensation was in the interests of persons living in the authority's area; or
- (d) it was otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

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

**Resolved - That Council grants a dispensation, for all Members, who may have an interest in motions, 1, 3 and 8 for the duration of this meeting.**

No other interests were then declared.

## 66 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor announced that apologies had been received from Councillor Andy Corkhill.

The Council were then invited to observe a minute's silence in memory of Margaret Green, former Labour Councillor and Mayor of Wirral 1998/99.

A further minute's silence was then observed in memory of Sara Everard, recently murdered and for all the women recently killed or having committed suicide due to male violence, including five women on Wirral.

The Civic Mayor then invited the Leader to say some words of thanks to those Councillors not seeking re-election in May.

Councillor Janette Williamson expressed her thanks to Councillors Tony Norbury, Jean Stapleton and Anita Leech for all their work as Councillors and wished them well for the future.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin added her thanks to all the Councillors not seeking re-election, including Councillor Mike Sullivan.

Councillor Jeff Green expressed his thanks and also paid tribute to those Councillors, Geoffrey Watt, Chris Blakeley and Bill Davies who had sadly passed away during the last two years.

Councillors Phil Gilchrist and Pat Cleary added their thanks to those Councillors not seeking re-election.

In response, Councillor Anita Leech paid tribute to Councillor Janette Williamson for her leadership since September, 2020 and of the pride she had felt in working alongside her as Deputy Leader.

Councillor Janette Williamson then paid tribute to the Civic Mayor, Councillor Tony Smith, as the first Mayor of Wirral to serve two terms in office and for the grace, dignity and compassion he had shown in office and in chairing the Council over two years.

Councillors Jeff Green, Phil Gilchrist, Pat Cleary and Moira McLaughlin joined with the Leader of the Council in paying tribute to the Civic Mayor.

The Civic Mayor announced that the Andy Day Memorial Cup, awarded to the Member of the Council who had shown dedication and selflessness during the Municipal Year in memory of the late Councillor Andy Day, was to be awarded to Councillor Christina Muspratt.

The Civic Mayor then made a brief statement on how the sense of community was as strong as ever on Wirral during this past most difficult of years which he summed up in one word, interdependence. He then thanked all the Members for their good will and cooperation and all the officers who had worked alongside him during these past two years.

The Civic Mayor explained that he had agreed to consideration of an additional motion, 'Misogyny is a Hate Crime', which would be considered with the other motions at agenda item 7.

The Civic Mayor then agreed to a short video being shown, in advance of the launch of the Draft Birkenhead Regeneration Framework for public consultation, on 24 March, 2021.

## 67 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 7 and 9 December (Extraordinary Meeting), 2020 and of 1 March, 2021 (Budget Meeting) had been circulated to Members.

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

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings be approved and adopted as correct records.**

68     **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that eight questions had been received from members of the public, in relation to Hoylake beach.

With three of those members of the public present, questions were then received from Anne McArdle, Sean Dalby and Ian Landsborough. Councillor Elizabeth Grey, Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee responded accordingly.

Councillor Grey also responded in turn to a supplementary question from each of the three questioners.

69     **STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

The Civic Mayor reported that no statements were to be received but that notice had been given of one petition to be presented.

Kelly Newell then introduced her petition, of some 10,400 signatories, regarding road safety at Spital Cross Roads, Bebington.

Councillor Christina Muspratt then presented a petition regarding pedestrian safety at Broadway roundabout in Bebington.

**Resolved – That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officers in accordance with Standing Order 11.2.**

70     **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor reported that no Member questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

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

In accordance with Standing Order 2(x) three matters had been submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 72 to 74 post).

72     **AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION - HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

The first item requiring approval was in relation to a proposed amendment to the Constitution in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference as detailed in Part 3b, Section 16.4 of the Constitution, as

recommended by the Constitution and Standards Committee of 24 February, 2021.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Steve Hayes, it was –

**Resolved - That the Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference, as detailed in Part 3b Section 16.4 of the Constitution, 'Chairing the Board' be revised to read 'The Board will be chaired by the Leader of the Council (or another elected member as their nominee)' and the Constitution be amended accordingly.**

### 73 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/22**

The second item requiring approval was in relation to the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2021/22 municipal year, as recommended by the Constitution and Standards Committee of 24 February, 2021.

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

**Resolved – That the Calendar of Meeting for the 2021/22 municipal year, be approved.**

### 74 **PAY POLICY 2021/22**

The third item requiring approval was in relation to the Pay Policy statement for 2021/22, as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 17 March, 2021.

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

**Resolved – That the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2021/22, be approved.**

### 75 **DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

The Civic Mayor introduced the minutes of the various Committees which had met since the week of the publication of the last ordinary Council agenda up until 4 March, 2021. He drew Members' attention to three minutes in particular, in accordance with Part 4, Section 4, paragraph 9 of the Constitution, in that a decision was taken, which was regarded as urgent by the Committee, these were:

- Minute 32 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 18 December 2020 – Draft Revenue Budget 2021/22 – Consultation Proposals, as consultation needed to start immediately.
- Minute 43 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 21 December 2020 - Acquisition of Property in Birkenhead, as the acquisition needed to be completed without delay.
- Minute 20 of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee held on 26 January 2021 – Birkenhead Town Deal – Funding Request, as the submission needed to be completed without delay.

He then asked for questions to Committee Chairs on any of the minutes being received.

Councillor Elizabeth Grey asked that it be noted in respect of the item on the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee of 4 March, (minute 33) that there was also a vote on Active Travel Cross Party Member Working Group, which featured in the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee of 16 March, though not on the agenda for this meeting as it post-dated the publication of this agenda, and that these two votes would need to be referenced together.

Councillor Janette Williamson made a comment in respect of the meeting of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee of 16 March, and the very poor level of debate from some Members, and that she would disassociate herself as Leader from the kind of language used at that meeting and that people refrain from the use of such language in future.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham asked a question of Councillor Tom Anderson in respect of minutes 17 and 20 of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, and whether he would commit to both Woodchurch Leisure Centre and Upton library remaining open. In response, Councillor Tom Anderson stated that the Committee had approved a strategy for leisure and libraries which would be coming in the new municipal year. The Committee was working together across political parties to ensure that all leisure centres and libraries served the best interests of the residents. Woodchurch Leisure Centre was currently operating as a vaccination centre and would be for the foreseeable future. It would be for the Committee appointed in the next municipal year to decide on how they proceeded with the Leisure and Libraries Strategies. He commented that he did not support closing any individual community libraries as they served a great purpose for their communities.

Councillor Julie McManus asked a question of Councillor Tom Anderson in respect of minute 24 of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, regarding the Visitor Economy Board. In response Councillor Tom Anderson stated that the last meeting had been rescheduled and would be taking place on 22 April, so he could provide an update following that meeting.

Councillor Pat Cleary asked a question of Councillor Stuart Kelly in respect of the minutes of the Planning Committee of a more general nature in respect to what plans were in place to provide better web-based systems that would make the planning service more user friendly and a more efficient use of officer time. In response, Councillor Stuart Kelly commented that the Council had procured a new IT management system, to be used in a number of service areas including planning. Planning and building control were working towards the end of the year for the new system to go live.

The new system provided an opportunity for revisiting existing systems and processes, and work was currently ongoing around the planning service, which would include a review of the planning pages on the website and what information was available on it presently and in the future. He expressed his disappointment that there didn't seem to be a plan to involve Members, developers, residents and amenity groups to ask them what the web pages should contain and involve users in its design.

He further reported that he was aware that officers were in discussion with other authorities, using the same IT system, to ensure the benefits to the customer could be maximized and to ensure the supplier developed the product to meet Wirral's needs. He understood that the key benefit from officers' point of view, was as a cloud based system it would make remote working easier. Officers were setting up user groups with other authorities to see if they could work collaboratively when requesting any further development priorities for the software. Councillor Kelly expressed the opinion that it didn't sound to be too hopeful in getting a real step change in user friendliness for the Wirral planning portal, and he suspected that, unfortunately, Wirral would be stuck with a below par IT system for the foreseeable future, which would be of no benefit to developers, amenity groups, residents or Members. He suggested that this might be something which Policy and Resource Committee Members or the IT working group, would want to look into in some detail.

**Resolved – That all the Committee minutes be received and the three minute decisions regarded as urgent be noted.**

At 7.47pm, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for a short break.

The meeting resumed at 8.03pm.

## 76 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Motions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.1 and were determined as detailed in minutes 77 to 87 below.

77 **MOTION - NHS PAY RISE**

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Yvonne Nolan seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

In moving her motion, Councillor Janette Williamson stated that she was happy for a joint debate to be held on this motion and that moved by the Liberal Democrat Group, as they were very similar in content.

The Council agreed to have one debate on both motions, with both being voted upon separately.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Dave Mitchell seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13 (see minute 78).

Following a debate, and Councillors Gilchrist and Williamson having replied, it was –

**Resolved (41:19) (One abstention) –**

**During the pandemic NHS staff gave their all. Doctors, nurses, porters, and others have worked tirelessly to preserve life on Wirral. Our continued efforts to deal with the impacts of the pandemic on the health of residents is reliant on a strong healthcare system filled with skilled and experienced individuals.**

**Council notes that the government's settlement will likely achieve the opposite of that. The Royal College of Nursing has stated there are already 40,000 nursing vacancies and that "significant numbers" will leave after this "slap in the face..." Council notes the local Trust (WUTH) had the equivalent of 158 Band 5 full time vacancies (18.05%) in August 2020 and is already dealing with rising sickness rates as demands of the pandemic takes its toll on frontline staff.**

**Reducing agency spend, and levels of sickness is something that the local Trust has been working to address, following the most recent CQC visit published in March of last year. Council wishes to add its voice to those telling the government that their proposed pay increase will harm our collective effort alongside health partners to address these problems and provide the best possible care and environment for Wirral health staff and patients alike.**

**Council notes this meagre pay rise does not take place in isolation but in the context of nearly a decade of disappointing pay settlements that have risked devaluing the over 10,000 people who work for NHS providers on Wirral. Even with a 1% pay rise, nurses' pay on Wirral will**



be £2,500 less than in 2010 when adjusted for inflation, with equivalent falls of £3,330 for paramedics and £850 for porters.

The government has defended its decision, with the Prime Minister stating, "We tried to give as much as we could". Wirral Council is acutely aware of the difficulties of balancing a budget, but fundamentally this comes down to priorities, not finances.

Council requests that the Leader calls upon the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to reconsider what is being viewed by many NHS staff as an insulting pay rise of 1%. It urges all local party leaders to work through their relevant channels to highlight their disappointment.

78 **MOTION - RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THOSE WHO CARE**

(See minute 77 above also).

On a motion moved by Councillor Phil Gilchrist and seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell, it was –

**Resolved (41:19) (One abstention) -**

Council notes that the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of Midwives and Unison have, rightly, been highly critical of the Government's submission to the NHS Pay Review Body.

Council observes that The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has attempted to defend the Government's 1% pay recommendation for nurses by saying it *"reflects the difficult financial circumstances that the country is in"*.

Council fully understands the concerns raised by Professor Dame Donna Kinnair DBE, the Royal College of Nursing's Chief Executive & General Secretary, that ...

*"At a time when many experienced nurses are burnt out, exhausted and considering leaving the career they love, the link between unfair pay, staffing levels and patient safety is stark. A pay increase is vital so that existing staff stay in post and the health service is able to begin to fill the tens of thousands of nursing vacancies"* (18.12.2020).

Council recognises that a trained, qualified and suitably remunerated workforce is desirable to secure the quality of health and care provision in the Borough.

In seeking remuneration that encourages workforce development and retention, it has in mind these issues:

- (i) The residents of Extra Care Housing Schemes in the Borough such as Mendell Court, Harvest Court, Granville Court and Willow Bank Court, all benefit from the care and expertise of both social care and NHS staff.
- (ii) The need for enough qualified nurses in Wirral was highlighted when staff from the Walk In Centre at Eastham were re-allocated to Arrowe Park Hospital when it faced particular pressures over waiting times in its Emergency Department.
- (iii) the Terms of Reference of the Health and Wellbeing Board refer to 'a collaborative approach to commissioning improved health and care services' and also refer to a role which does 'review the financial and organisational implications of joint and integrated working across health and social care services'.
- (iv) A large proportion of the workforce at Wirral University Teaching Hospital and other Health Service locations will be Wirral residents who would benefit from appropriate remuneration and career opportunities.

Having regard to these issues, Council therefore believes that the interests of Wirral's residents are best served by the award of a pay offer which encourages the recruitment and the retention of sufficient numbers of nurses, locally and nationally, and properly recognises the commitment of all those who have served our community with such dedication throughout the difficulties over the past year.

Accordingly, Council requests that Groups Leaders call upon the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to recognise that the Government's submission is completely misjudged and offensive in the circumstances. Council agrees, therefore, that whilst the Review Body is still considering the evidence, representations to that effect must be made to the NHS Pay Review Body.

## 79 PROCEDURAL MOTION

It was moved by Councillor Andrew Hodson and seconded by Councillor Jeff Green, that:

'Standing Order 9 be suspended until after motions 2 and 4 had been debated.'

The procedural motion was put and lost (26:34) (One abstention).

## MOTION - SUPPORT FOR BRITISH VALUES LOCALLY

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce moved and Councillor Michael Collins seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

“The United Kingdom has a long and proud history on the world stage and has been a beacon for peace and democracy, both within its own shores, and as a promulgator abroad. We have, as a result, a great reputation for attracting peoples from across the globe who want to make their home here for those very reasons; not least our tolerance of race, lifestyle, politics, religion and gender.

The exiting of the European Union in January 2020 prompted a flurry of new international trade deals, designed to complement the existing EU arrangement, together with a ramping-up of the establishment of the UK as a sovereign nation free to engage at will. This will lead to a greater drive to ‘Buy British’ and Wirral Council should play its part.

A number of key moments in 2020 proved that the British public, whether they voted for or against leaving the EU, do not feel any less proud of their country and it is important we as public officials support this important view as we extend our reach on the world stage. As a primary display of this, Council therefore requests Policy and Resources Committee to consider and to support the visible display of the Union Flag in all public areas with immediate effect and show it on all correspondence.”

Councillor Samantha Frost moved and Councillor Stuart Whittingham seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

*“In paragraph 1 line 2 and 3 replace all text after democracy up to and including abroad and replace it with that has been the envy of the world.*

*In paragraph 1 line 3 replace the word attracting to welcoming.*

*In paragraph 1 line 4 and 5 replace all after our with British values of tolerance and respect.*

*In paragraph 2 line 1 replace the word prompted after 2020 with potentially may lead to...*

*In paragraph 2 line 2 replace the word designed with ideally.*

*In paragraph 2 line 4 insert the word potentially between This and will*

*In paragraph 3 line 1 and 2 delete the text between public and do.*

*Add the following to paragraph 3 line 6:*

As part of this consideration Council requests that the Policy and Resources Committee consider that the Council already has a flag flying policy, the Union Flag is already flown on several public buildings and that any proposed changes to the flag flying policy should be subject to widespread public consultation that involves all communities, faiths and minorities groups.

*Insert the following paragraph between paragraphs 1 and 2:*

Council believes that pride in one's country is a spirit of comradeship for those who share our country, regardless of their background or walk of life. It is about recognising when our country is faltering and helping it to do better. Pride in one's country is representing what is best about it, and putting its best face forward, to the rest of the world. It isn't about believing our country is always right. It means apologising when our country has been wrong and learning from the mistakes of the past to make a stronger future.

*Between paragraph 2 and 3 insert the following paragraph:*

Council notes that the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy will lead to an increase of goods and services being procured locally, thus protecting and creating local jobs as well as retaining wealth in the local area.

*Insert the following paragraph after paragraph 3:*

This Council continues to uphold such pride in one's country and pride in our wonderful borough of Wirral and will continue to do so."

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

The amendment was put and carried (39:21) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was then put, and it was –

**Resolved (38:21) (Two abstentions) - The United Kingdom has a long and proud history on the world stage and has been a beacon for peace and democracy, that has been the envy of the world. We have, as a result, a great reputation for welcoming peoples from across the globe who want to make their home here for those very reasons; not least our British values of tolerance and respect.**

**Council believes that pride in one's country is a spirit of comradeship for those who share our country, regardless of their background or walk of life. It is about recognising when our country is faltering and helping it to do better. Pride in one's country is representing what is best about**

it, and putting its best face forward, to the rest of the world. It isn't about believing our country is always right. It means apologising when our country has been wrong and learning from the mistakes of the past to make a stronger future.

The exiting of the European Union in January 2020 potentially may lead to a flurry of new international trade deals, ideally to complement the existing EU arrangement, together with a ramping-up of the establishment of the UK as a sovereign nation free to engage at will. This potentially will lead to a greater drive to 'Buy British' and Wirral Council should play its part.

Council notes that the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy will lead to an increase of goods and services being procured locally, thus protecting and creating local jobs as well as retaining wealth in the local area.

A number of key moments in 2020 proved that the British public do not feel any less proud of their country and it is important we as public officials support this important view as we extend our reach on the world stage. As a primary display of this, Council therefore requests Policy and Resources Committee to consider and to support the visible display of the Union Flag in all public areas with immediate effect and show it on all correspondence. As part of this consideration Council requests that the Policy and Resources Committee consider that the Council already has a flag flying policy, the Union Flag is already flown on several public buildings and that any proposed changes to the flag flying policy should be subject to widespread public consultation that involves all communities, faiths and minorities groups.

This Council continues to uphold such pride in one's country and pride in our wonderful borough of Wirral and will continue to do so.

## 81 **MOTION - COMMUNITY INVESTMENT BONDS**

Councillor Chris Cooke moved and Councillor Pat Cleary 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 (unanimously) –**

**Against the background of having to tackle a serious budget deficit, Council recognises the need to be innovative in securing a firm financial footing for the future of the borough.**

**Council believes that alternatives to borrowing from the Treasury via the Public Works Loans Board can be considered.**

**An increasingly popular and effective means of raising money for projects such as active travel, charging points for electric vehicles and renewable energy are Community Investment Bonds, sometimes known as Community Mutual Investments.**

**For example, these have been used successfully by West Berkshire Council to raise £1m to fund installation of solar panels on council buildings and by Warrington Council to fund its Affordable Green Homes project.**

**Community Investment Bonds can empower local residents by enabling them to invest in ethical projects benefiting their local communities for modest, but safe returns. They are an attractive and constructive alternative to saving with banks at low interest rates and with no guarantee that the money will be invested ethically. They can be an important addition to an area's community wealth building approach.**

**Council, therefore, asks that the Policy and Resources Committee includes in its work programme for the upcoming financial year an examination of Community Investment Bonds. This work to include:**

- **A review of the use of Community Investment Bonds elsewhere in the country**
- **An assessment of their potential application to fund projects in Wirral**
- **An outline of the practical steps required to set up Community Investment Bonds in Wirral**

## **82 MOTION - LIVERPOOL CITY REGION FAIR EMPLOYMENT CHARTER**

**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 (unanimously) -**

**Wirral Council notes:**

- **A landmark partnership agreement on employment and skills, and public sector workforce development has been reached between the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, LCR Local Authorities and Trade Union partners.**

- **Brokered by the TUC, Metro Mayor, Acting Mayor and local leaders, the agreement will see Trade Unions and political leaders working together to develop the public sector workforce, promote good practice on learning and development and developing partnerships to deliver good quality Employment and skills projects across the city region.**
- **The recent launch of the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter by Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram.**
- **That the Charter is a welcome move to help raise employment standards and working practices for people across Wirral and the wider City Region.**
- **That low-pay, insecure work and a lack of employee voice are problems that we are committed to tackling.**
- **That Decent jobs, access to quality training, upskilling and reskilling, and a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion are all necessary if we are to create a fair and inclusive city region.**
- **That this is a positive step to work with good employers to share best practice and improve conditions for local workers.**

**Therefore, Wirral Council resolves to:**

**Continue working with the Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region to champion healthy, fair, inclusive and just workplaces.**

### **83 MOTION - THE NHS COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME**

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

In moving the motion, Councillor Jeff Green confirmed that he was happy to accept the Labour Group amendment, which was moved by Councillor Jo Bird, and seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny as follows:

*‘Add at the beginning:*

Wirral Council remembers one year ago, the first reported covid death on the Wirral on 23 March, 2020. We mourn over 950 Covid related deaths on the Wirral.

There have been over 900 excess deaths, more than average for last 5 years. We share the ongoing grief of bereaved families and friends on the Wirral and beyond.

We re-double our efforts to combat this deadly disease and its disproportionate impact on communities already suffering from poverty and discrimination. We recognise inequalities of life expectancy on the Wirral where people in Heswall can expect to live 12 years longer than people in Rock Ferry.

We also support vaccine equality across the world. As the World Health Organisation says, none of us will be safe until everyone is safe.

*Add a new paragraph, after the penultimate paragraph:*

Council also wishes to place on record our sincere thanks to all front-line workers (too many to mention here), who have placed their own health and lives in danger, to ensure that Wirral residents were able to live their lives as well as possible, under extremely difficult circumstances.'

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate this matter, and having agreed to the Labour amendment, the substantive motion, as amended, was put and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) –**

**Wirral Council remembers one year ago, the first reported covid death on the Wirral on 23 March, 2020. We mourn over 950 Covid related deaths on the Wirral.**

**There have been over 900 excess deaths, more than average for last 5 years. We share the ongoing grief of bereaved families and friends on the Wirral and beyond.**

**We re-double our efforts to combat this deadly disease and its disproportionate impact on communities already suffering from poverty and discrimination. We recognise inequalities of life expectancy on the Wirral where people in Heswall can expect to live 12 years longer than people in Rock Ferry.**

**We also support vaccine equality across the world. As the World Health Organisation says, none of us will be safe until everyone is safe.**

**Council recognises that, at the time of submission of the motion, 22,213,112 people have been vaccinated in the UK. In Wirral 128,633 residents have been vaccinated which includes all Wirral residents in Priority Groups 1-9 to be offered a vaccine. This covers the following residents:**



1. Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults.
2. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers.
3. All those 75 years of age and over.
4. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.
5. All those 65 years of age and over.
6. Adults aged 16 to 65 years in an at-risk group.
7. All those 60 years of age and over.
8. All those 55 years of age and over.
9. All those 50 years of age and over.

Council wishes to commend the people of Wirral for their steadfastness and compliance with the rules around the use of face coverings, regular handwashing and maintaining social distancing coupled with working from home, when possible. We all recognise the huge impacts and difficulties this will have had and commit to supporting action on the consequential impacts on residents' mental health that the pandemic will have caused.

As Wirral follows the Roadmap and lockdown is cautiously eased, Council encourages Wirral residents to continue to follow the hands, face, space guidance, adhere to national guidance and reject the spurious anti-vaccine propaganda. Council encourages any Wirral resident who has not taken up their opportunity to be vaccinated to do so.

Council wishes to place on record its sincerest thanks to the scientists (publicly and privately funded), pharmaceutical companies, procurement professionals, GPs, healthcare professionals, Council staff and volunteers who have made this miracle a reality by ensuring the success of the vaccination programme here in Wirral.

Council also wishes to place on record our sincere thanks to all front-line workers (too many to mention here), who have placed their own health and lives in danger, to ensure that Wirral residents were able to live their lives as well as possible, under extremely difficult circumstances.

Council therefore requests the Leader of the Council to write to Wirral Council's Chief Executive and the Chair of Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group thanking them and their staff, on behalf of the Council, for this heroic effort.

**MOTION - RIGHT TO FOOD**

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Christine Spriggs 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 (unanimously) –**

**We are seeing a crisis of food poverty born out of the political choices and systemic failings created over the past four decades, which have now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. The figures are devastating for one of the richest nations in the world and highlight the inequality of the UK in 2020.**

**The Trussell Trust reports a soaring 81% increase in emergency food parcels from food banks in its network during the last two weeks of March 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, including a 122% rise in parcels given to children as the coronavirus pandemic continued to unfold.**

**There are consistently high rates of poverty across Wirral. We recognise the growing concern amongst our health and care professionals of the current situation and the likely exacerbation of poverty figures through the impact of the Covid19 pandemic and economic uncertainty as we enter 2021. Council notes the following information:**

- During the pandemic Wirral Council has delivered nearly 18,000 food parcels to vulnerable residents across Wirral.**
- In 2019, 17.7% of children lived in low-income poverty in Wirral. That equates to 10,687 children affected by poverty, and 16,512 people [who] used Wirral Foodbank, with a 25% increase in single parents using it last year.**
- 14,753 is the number of people supported by Wirral Foodbank in 2020. This equates to 132,777 meals.**

**The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for children to be able to access food and support activities during school holidays.**

**The National Food Strategy is the first independent review of England's entire food system for 75 years. Its purpose is to set out a vision for the kind of food system we should be building for the future, and a plan for how to achieve that vision. It is headed by Henry Dimbleby and next reports to Government in early 2021.**

**The Right To Food campaign is arguing that the 11 million people in food poverty should be central to this strategy. As the sixth richest nation in the world it is a travesty that our citizens are unable to feed themselves.**

**Enshrining the 'Right To Food' into law would clarify Government obligations on food poverty and would introduce legal avenues to hold Government bodies accountable for violations.**

**This Council calls for the 'Right To Food' to be incorporated into the 'National Food Strategy'. We ask the Leader to write to Henry Dimbleby to further this request.**

## **85 MOTION - GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR WIRRAL**

Councillor Jeff Green moved and Councillor Lesley Rennie seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13:

'Council acknowledges the unprecedented support provided by Government to the residents and businesses of Wirral throughout the Covid pandemic.

So far, the Council has received more than £206.4 million in direct Covid funding support from the Government, on top of the Council's base budget of £304.7 million, set in March 2020.

Council notes that, of this £206.4 million from the Government:

- £128.9 million was to support businesses in the form of non-discretionary and discretionary grants, business rates relief and business district improvement funding
- £39.4 million was for the Council to manage the delivery of services and alleviate pressures resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic
- £10 million was to help prevent the spread of Covid infection in Care Homes
- £8.6 million was for Test, Trace and Outbreak Management support
- £7.5 million was to replace lost Council income
- £3.9 million was for Council Tax Hardship support
- £2.1 million was for Community Testing
- £1.3 million was for homelessness support to ensure 'Everybody In'
- £1.2 million was for supporting our most vulnerable families with food and power via the Covid Winter Grant Scheme
- £0.9 million was for increasing workforce capacity in Care Homes
- £0.5 million was to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents
- £0.5 million was for emergency food and supplies
- £0.4 million was for Test & Trace £500 Payment Support Payment Scheme
- £0.3 million was for re-opening our High Streets safely

- £0.3 million was for new burdens relief
- £0.2 million was for ensuring Covid compliance

In addition, the Council has requested and received exceptional financial support (capitalisation directive) by the Government whereby a further £24 million of funding can be realised.

Government has continued to demonstrate it is committed to levelling-up Wirral, with £28.2 million awarded to Wirral as part of the Future High Streets Funding programme and the announcement of Freeport status for the Wirral dockland areas as part of the LCR bid.

Council further notes that:

- 139,000 Wirral jobs were protected through the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- £62.3 million was distributed to Wirral residents via the Government's Self Employment Income Support Scheme
- £209.9 million has been loaned to Wirral businesses via the Government Business Interruption and Bounce Back Loan schemes

Council believes it is right that all political parties recognise the Government's ongoing support for Wirral and work together to ensure the future prosperity of our residents.

Council therefore, on behalf of Wirral residents and businesses, thanks the Government for the unprecedented and necessary level of support and requests the Chief Executive and political Group Leaders write to the Government thanking them for their support so far and committing to working together, constructively, with the Government for the prosperity of Wirral's residents and our current and future businesses.'

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Karl Greaney seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

*'Delete the first two paragraphs and replace with:*

Council has received more than £206.4 million in direct Covid funding from Government

*Delete the last two paragraphs and replace with:*

Council notes that whilst the Chancellor in his recent Budget extended the Self Employed Income Support Scheme, Excluded UK have said that there are at least three million taxpayers and households who have been affected by loss of income due to Covid-19, and the further support announced does not account for the decimation of businesses and income from the last year, and for many now included, this is too little too late.

The following letter has been sent to Rishi Sunak and signed by the co-founders of Excluded UK, cross party MPs, Sir John Bird, academics and business leaders.

*“Dear Chancellor,*

*We are writing to you from ExcludedUK with collective support from a wide range of organisations and many individuals with regard to gaps in the government Covid-19 support scheme affecting some three million UK taxpayers.*

*While many have received vital support since the onset of the pandemic, so many others have been left behind. The three million figure, now so often referred to, comes from HMRC data and BEIS Business Population Estimates and has been confirmed by figures released by the National Audit Office. It is not just the 1.5 million self-employed that you have previously referred to. Standard Life Foundation’s latest survey estimated that as many as 3.8 million are in fact affected.*

*The impacts are far-reaching and only set to become more acute, with ever-increasing financial hardship as each month passes and spiralling debt that has already devastated people’s livelihoods and businesses and will continue to do so for years to come without the support so vitally needed. These impacts equally extend to households – children and families, and for small business owners, their employees, freelancers and contractors too if their own businesses are in peril.*

*This is a substantial section of the workforce and they need support to get through this crisis – people who were furthering their careers by starting a new job, those in between jobs, those who for whatever reason were denied furlough, those who took the plunge to set up a new business, those with entrepreneurial spirit serving their communities and beyond, freelancers, those combining PAYE and self-employment, those whose maternity or parental leave fell at a certain time, people excluded due to pensions, bereavement payments, carers’ allowance, redundancy, shielding and more.*

*These are people who are the lifeblood of our economy and communities, many who have been taxpayers for years and not previously had to rely on the State, and businesses that are viable. Moreover, people are facing the crisis among so much uncertainty that still lies ahead, particularly for those in the hardest hit sectors.*

*Various proposals have been presented to the Treasury that are not complex and do guard against fraud. We urge you to consider these and include measures in the upcoming Budget that will provide the much-needed financial support for those who find themselves outside of the scope of the eligibility*

*criteria of the existing schemes. Not helping these people is equally at odds with economic recovery.*

*Providing this support now is the right and fair thing to do.”*

Council wishes to acknowledge to Government on behalf of many local businesses and residents that the money provided by government has been important to their survival and is grateful to all staff involved in the speedy and efficient administration of government Covid funding, however that large numbers of people have been excluded from such assistance.

Council further notes that Government told us to ‘do whatever it takes’ but in fact only reimbursed us for 75p out of every 95p in loss of income as a result of Covid. Council notes that this has resulted in a shortfall of £6.944m in funding, which forced us to request a Capitalisation Directive. Council notes that the mishandling of successive lockdowns, the PPE scandal which left our care homes vulnerable, and councils struggling to keep up with ever-changing guidance at a time where their resources were already depleted. The National Audit Office has recently noted that 10 years of austerity has made local authority finances structurally fragile. It said “funding reductions ...means that authorities’ finances were potentially more vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic”. It urges the Government to draw up a long-term plan for councils to help them recover from the ‘financial scarring’ caused by the pandemic.

Council requests that the Chief Executive and political Group Leaders write to the Government with the above letter which will help ensure more Wirral residents and businesses are supported financially and that Government put local authority finances on a long-term sustainable footing.’

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

The amendment was put and carried (40:20) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was then put, and it was –

**Resolved (40:20) (One abstention) –**

**Council has received more than £206.4 million in direct Covid funding from Government**

**Council notes that, of this £206.4 million from the Government:**

- **£128.9 million was to support businesses in the form of non-discretionary and discretionary grants, business rates relief and business district improvement funding**

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Council requests that the Chief Executive and political Group Leaders write to the Government with the above letter which will help ensure more Wirral residents and businesses are supported financially and that Government put local authority finances on a long-term sustainable footing.

## 86 **MOTION - REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Councillor Tony Norbury moved and Councillor Christine Spriggs 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 (unanimously) –**

**We as Wirral Borough Council recognise the extreme hardships faced by refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from across the world, many fleeing from war, oppression and other human rights violations.**

Council believes we as a council want to help and play our part in making the World a better place for all by pledging to become a recognised Borough of sanctuary, officially joining the network of councils who are already recognised as places of sanctuary and welcome for all.

Council would wish to make to make Wirral a borough where:

- Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are treated with respect, dignity and equality
- A fair, humane and effective process is in place to support migrant communities
- An empathetic, people centred approach is in place
- Co-production and collaborative processes are valued, to engage the wider community and migrant communities
- The barriers to integration and interaction within the community are removed.

Council asks the Policy and Resources Committee to include in its work programme for the forthcoming municipal year, to consider:

(1) embedding a borough of sanctuary and welcome workstream into our policy committee structure linking into the work already underway through our MEAS team linked to our schools and expanding BAME communities supported by our council partners at Wirral Change, The Deen Centre and The multi-Cultural Organisation

(2) by pledging to:

- Challenge and campaign for migrant rights and against the 'hostile environment'
- Celebrate the contribution refugee, asylum seeker and migrant communities bring to the borough of Wirral
- Raise awareness about some of the issues these communities face
- Facilitate training for local businesses and organisations to ensure they can offer a service which is welcoming to all migrants
- Be inclusive throughout the process by listening and engaging with people with lived experience, community organisations, statutory services, faith groups, businesses and much more.

## **87      EMERGENCY MOTION - MISOGYNY IS A HATE CRIME**

Councillor Samantha Frost moved and Councillor Janette Williamson seconded an emergency motion which the Mayor had agreed as an item of urgent business.

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

**Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) –**

**This council notes that the Law Commission is currently reviewing all current hate crime legislation to consider whether gender/sex should be made a protected characteristic in hate crime legislation, after closing its request for submissions at the end of December 2020. The initial recommendations of the Law Commission Review suggested the inclusion of sex/gender as a protected characteristic. Misogyny is currently recorded, or its inclusion is being considered, as a hate crime by 11 out of 43 police forces in the UK.**

**Council notes that this proposal is backed by major campaign organisations on hate crime, women's rights and community safety including but not limited to: Citizens UK, the Fawcett Society, Plan UK, Our Streets Now, Centenary Action Group, UN Women UK, the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, Juno Women's Aid, and Muslim Women's Network, and Hate Crime Campaigners including the Jo Cox Foundation, Hope not Hate and Tell Mama.**

**Council understands that women and girls across the country and on Wirral suffer harassment and abuse every single day. A YouGov national survey in 2021 found that 97% of women in the UK aged 18-24 had been sexually harassed, whilst 80% of UK women of all ages had experienced sexual harassment in public spaces. Council also notes that one of the leading factors why women do not report experiences of sexual harassment is that they "didn't think reporting it would help".**

**Studies have shown that the intersectional nature of discrimination means that women and girls with additional protected characteristics, such as those who are BAME, disabled, or LGBTQ+, are even more likely to experience harassment, discrimination and abuse.**

**The adoption of misogyny as a hate crime was successfully implemented in Nottingham, where analysis showed an increase in reporting as well as an increase in the use of wider services. It also showed that the vast majority of local people wanted the scheme to continue.**

**The Council resolves:**

**Council believes that the lived experiences of women and girls across the Borough, City Region and our country should be listened to and requests the Leader to write on behalf of the Council to call upon:**

- **the Government to listen to those experiences and urgently act on any recommendations the Law Commission makes to strengthen the law on hate crime, and to reform legislation around harassment to recognise as an offence a 'course of conduct' which targets women and girls in their community.**
- **the Government to provide the resource and funding for police forces across the UK to effectively tackle harassment, misogyny and domestic abuse.**
- **Merseyside Police to record the harassment of women and girls as a hate crime, following successful trials in Nottingham and elsewhere.**