

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 November 2021

Present:

Councillor EA Grey (Chair)

Councillors	H Collinson	M Collins
	S Foulkes	S Mountney
	C O'Hagan	L Rowlands
	I Williams	C Cooke
	B Berry	A Brame

41 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website for two years.

42 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

43 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest. There were no declarations of interests.

Councillor Stephen Foulkes noted that he was a member of Planning Committee who had made the planning decision on the West Kirby flood alleviation sea wall (see Minute 47 below) but was approaching the decision at this Committee with an open mind.

44 **MINUTES**

Resolved (by assent) –

That, subject to 'appreciate' in the resolution for the Love Wirral Strategy minute being amended to 'appreciation', the minutes of the meeting of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee held on 20 October 2021 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

45 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Question 1 – Neil Smith [Read out by Chair]

As the Chair of this meeting has declared a “climate emergency” why is Wirral Council:

- Still driving round on quad bikes spraying pavements and streets outside schools and people’s houses with Glyphosate?
- Providing/sponsoring community fireworks displays for certain areas on the Wirral?

Both of which seem hypocritical against your policy of a ‘climate emergency’ when it seems Wirral council picks and chooses to apply its rules when it suits.

Answer – Cllr Liz Grey [Chair]

First of all, I would like to thank Mr Smith for his question.

I would like to assure him that we are actively engaged in phasing out glyphosate as promised, and we are pursuing alternatives for weed control. This committee recently approved a short-term contract on the understanding that officers step up the pursuit of glyphosate alternatives and reducing usage further, and to make the case for future in house provision for weed control.

As for fireworks, I agree with you that we need to consider the environmental impacts of these and again, we have been working more closely with environmental agencies, such as Natural England, to ensure best practice here.

Thank you again for your question.

46

STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

Petition: Save West Kirby Promenade - Pursue Other Flood Alleviation options [Presented by Anthony Clark]

Thank you for the opportunity to present this petition to ask councillors and Committee to save West Kirby Promenade and pursue other flood alleviation options. The full petition can be read at www.change.org/savewestkirbypromenade.

West Kirby Promenade is an iconic location and one of the jewels in the crown of the Wirral enjoyed by thousands of people every year. Many local residents believe proposals to create a 1.2 metre high concrete wall along the Promenade will be hugely detrimental. The 1.2 metre footway to the rear of the promenade is well below national standards and should be reconsidered against the Equalities Act. Users cannot pass and will be forced into the road, causing a very significant safety issue, perhaps that greater than the flood risk itself.

On item 7 of tonight’s agenda, you are asked to agree and delegate the decision to an officer to appoint a contractor to undertake £6 million worth of

work to deliver this scheme, starting as early as February next year. You are asked not to agree this.

Due to the high level of concerns locally and the sensitivities of this proposal, the final decision should be taken democratically and not delegated. The petition asks for the Council to pause and allow a much wider democratic debate. Do not be rushed by a 'buy it now or lose it' threat of funding from the Environment Agency. This is not the way to make decisions. There is a very real risk that costs will escalate, and is the £2.4 million of Wirral Borough Council allocation funding best spent on this right now? Does the investment of £2.4 million warrant the needs and risks today?

As Committee members, are you assured that this is the best option? Are you satisfied that you have seen other options to tackle flood alleviation on West Kirby Promenade and that they have been exhausted? Are you assured that over 5,000 tons of concrete is the best option for West Kirby Promenade? Is £6 million best value? And is this design solution really worth the sacrifice right now? Thank you Chair.

47 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

There were no questions by Members.

48 **ACCEPTANCE OF TENDERS AND AWARD OF CONTRACTS - HIGHWAY SERVICES**

The Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure introduced this report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which recommended acceptance of tenders and the award of term contracts for various highway services. The contracts were to run from December 2021 until November 2025, with one of the contracts running to March 2026. There were no extension provisions within the contracts. There were benefits in terms of movement toward the Council's net zero carbon emissions goals and community wealth and these would be monitored throughout the term of the contracts.

In answer to Members questions it was established that:

- There were bidders for all of the contacts although some were rejected as not compliant
- Bids were judged on a spit between quality, cost and social value, and the split was determined with advice from the Procurement officers

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the tenders for the Wirral Highway A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A1.4, A1.5 and A2 Term Service Contracts, December 2021 to November 2025, submitted to Wirral Council on 8 October 2021 be accepted;**

- (2) the tender for the Wirral Highway A3 Term Service Contract, December 2021 to March 2026, submitted to Wirral Council on 8 October 2021 be accepted;
- (3) the award of all seven contracts be approved, subject to contract and subject to expiry of the relevant standstill period without challenges, to the following suppliers:

Contract Ref	Service Description	Successful supplier
A1.1	Surface Treatments (Surface Dressing)	Kiely Bros Ltd
A1.2	Surface Treatments (Microasphalt)	Kiely Bros Ltd
A1.3	Surface Treatments (Slurry Sealing Processes)	JPCS Ltd
A1.4	Surface Treatments (Carriageway Microasphalt Hand Applied Patching)	Colas Ltd
A1.5	Surface Treatments (Carriageway and Footway Retread Processes)	Colas Ltd
A2	Carriageway Structural Resurfacing (HRA/DBM/Plane and Inlay)	Hanson Contracting
A3	Civil and Highway Engineering Works (Traffic schemes, footway reconstruction and public rights of way)	Cambrianway Limited

49 **WEST KIRBY FLOOD ALLEVIATION - AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE**

The Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure introduced this report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which presented the West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme which had received Planning Approval on 2 November 2021. Planning and grant funding conditions required the main construction activity to be undertaken between April and October 2022, which did not fit in with the Committee's schedule of meetings, so delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhood Services was required to award the advanced and construction phase works contracts.

Members debated the issue which established:

- The Environment Agency could provide additional funding if there were cost increases for materials beyond the contingency already within the project's budget
- There were to be public realm improvements as part of the works

- There would be a range of opinions but it was also likely to provide a focus for visits and a novelty value which should increase visitor numbers.

Resolved – That

- (1) **the proposed procurement process and strategy for the construction of the West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme set out at paragraph 3.7 of this report be approved; and**
- (2) **authority be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhood Services to award the advanced Engineering Construction Contract and also the main construction phase Engineering Construction Contract.**

50 **PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021**

The Director of Public Health presented her independent and statutory Annual Report requirement for 2020/2021. The Report described enduring health inequalities in Wirral, the immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these differences in health outcomes and recommended actions to take to improve residents' health. Previous reports had led to action in the reduction of people smoking in the borough to levels below the national average; increased support for people who were feeling socially isolated plus significant activity across a range of partners to highlight and reduce the damage caused to our communities from alcohol abuse and gambling. The 2020/2021 Report seeks to direct action that we need to take to reduce the impact of health inequalities on our residents and improve health for everyone in the borough.

The Covid-19 pandemic had made health inequalities worse, highlighting the ten year difference in life expectancy between east and west Wirral. The Wirral was better than the English average in some such as green space and air quality but not in life expectancy and fuel poverty. The five recommendations in the report should result in delivery plans and partnership working with community groups and the NHS.

Members noted that morbidity was changing with people dying younger and there was no impetus for extra care housing on Wirral. They also noted other issues such as the health benefits of volunteering such as litter picking and obesity.

Members expressed their thanks to the Director and her team for the thorough and important report. Needs to be in our minds in all we do. Also like to add to include road safety as part of public health work in future.

Councillor Liz Grey proposed that road safety be explicitly added to future Health Annual Reports. This was seconded by Councillor Clair O'Hagan.

Resolved –

That the recommendations detailed within the Public Health Annual Report be endorsed and road safety be added to future Annual Health Reports.

51 **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE BUDGET REPORT**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented this report which noted the feedback and outcomes from the Budget Workshops for this Committee which had taken place in August and September 2021. The workshops had enabled officer and Member liaison on proposed budget options, to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, had been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council. The Budget Workshops considered whether the proposals included in the MTFP for the 2022/23 budget, and beyond, were to be taken forward or whether they were to be replaced by alternative proposals that the committees will recommend. No options had been rejected in the workshops.

Members noted that:

- The identified savings could be used as a baseline for the budget process
- More savings may be requested once the financial settlement from Government was known
- The report stated that there had been three workshops when there had been two, and some additional information requested at them could not yet be given.
- That future rewilding proposals would include consultation with local Members before implementation to address the emerging problem of encroachment onto residential areas
- No proposals had been either fully endorsed or rejected.

Resolved (7 for, none against, 4 abstentions)

That the Budget Workshop feedback and outcomes, as detailed in appendix 1, being reported to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration, be agreed.

52 **ECET QUARTER 2 MONITORING**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which set out the financial monitoring information for the Committee as at quarter 2 (Apr – Sep) of 2021-22. The Committee was accountable for ensuring that the Committee budgets remained within the relevant envelope and would take collective responsibility via the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that the whole Council budget remained in balance at all times, by agreeing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line, should a deficit be forecast. There had been variances from the forecast,

mainly due to parking charges not being implemented and increased demand for some services. Some capital schemes had been moved to this Committee too.

Members questioned the detail of the report and established that the car parking equipment had yet to be purchased and work was to commence consultation on some of the required Traffic Regulation Orders. This would involve comments from the consultation coming back to Committee before decision.

Resolved - That

- (1) the projected year-end revenue forecast position of £0.552m adverse, as reported at quarter 2 (Apr – Sep) of 2021-22 be noted.**
- (2). progress on the achievement of approved savings and the projected year end forecast position at quarter 2 (Apr – Sep) of 2021-22 be noted.**
- (3). the reserves allocated to the Committee for future one-off commitments be noted.**
- (4). the projected year-end capital forecast position of £2.036m favourable, as reported at quarter 2 (Apr – Sep) of 2021-22 be noted.**

53 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Members considered the proposed work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

Members noted that some items had been deferred due to a by-election at the end of November 2021, and that the Active Travel Working Group could not find a date to meet in December. The Chair had asked that if any decisions were being made before their meeting, both Committees were to be briefed and informed. The Chair proposed an amendment to reflect this. This was seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes.

Resolved –

That this Committee note the work programme and the fact that the Active Travel Working Group is not meeting in December as planned we expect that any decisions about active travel that may need to be made before the Working Group can meet will be made jointly with this Committee and the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee in line with the arrangements made between the two Chairs agreed at Policy and Resources Committee on 30 June 2021.

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