



Council Supplement

Town Hall
Wallasey
12 December 2008

Dear Councillor

This supplement contains additional matters to be considered at the Council meeting on **Monday 15 December 2008**

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AGENDA

5.4 Cabinet minute 295

Projected Budgets 2009-2011 (10 December)

Recommendation -

(1) Cabinet recognises the urgent need to ensure that Council Tax increases are kept as low as possible and therefore recommends the following savings to Council, taking into account items 6 and 25, in order to continue to narrow Wirral's budget gap and protect Wirral residents from unnecessary financial burdens.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES	
	£
Deletion of posts held vacant for more than twelve months	80,000
Cease to provide uniform grants in the light of ready availability of inexpensive school clothing.*	30,000
ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES	

Reduction in Residential and Nursing Home Fees Contract in line with agenda item 25	1,000,000
Review of Admin Support	100,000
HOUSING AND REGENERATION	
Increase mobile cleaning team to facilitate mobile cleaning of all toilets at regular intervals.	70,000
CORPORATE SERVICES	
Restore element of LAA reward grant to Council budget following decision of Local Area Agreement Board on November 19 th .	1,400,000
FINANCE.	
Transfer of Reserves and Provisions no longer required to the General Fund, with the proviso that £230,000 is set against the projected Housing and Regeneration overspend on Cultural Services.	360,000

(2) In order to ensure that the authority treats children of all faiths equally, the Director of Children's Services be asked to carry out a consultation exercise on changing the home to school transport policy with a view to removing the entitlement to free travel for new pupils attending Roman Catholic schools and to report back to Cabinet on the 23rd February 2009; and

(3) Because it is considered to be in the Council's best interests to implement proposed savings as early as possible, Cabinet asks Council to approve those items which have not been considered by Scrutiny committees where there is all party support and, in so doing, to suspend paragraph 2(a) of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules and to deal with the proposals in accordance with paragraph 2(b), i.e. where there is no such agreement, absence of which should be indicated by the lodging of an objection by 10am on Friday, Council is asked to refer the relevant item to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and subsequent referral to the next Council meeting.

* **Note:** see also agenda item 10a (Matters for debate), part (13).

5.5 **Cabinet minute 296**

Capital Programme and Financing (10 December)

Recommendation - That

- (1) views on the capital programme 2009/12, including the new submissions as detailed in section 7.2.1, be requested;
- (2) if approved, the capital financing requirements be reflected in the Projected Budget and referred to the Council;

- (3) the Prudential Indicators be noted and reported as part of the Treasury Management Strategy in March 2009; and
- (4) update reports on the progress of the programme be presented in accordance with the Financial and Performance Monitoring reporting cycle.

5.6 Cabinet minute 312

Budgetary Issues (Technical Services) 2008/09 (10 December)

Recommendation - That

- (1) the Council be recommended that the current re-engineered 2008-2009 budget detailed in Appendix 1 be agreed, which reflects the virements contained within paragraph 2.2;
- (2) the revised charges detailed in paragraph 5.8 which should generate an additional £50,000 per annum;
- (3) the actions being taken in respect of infrastructure assets be noted and the proposal to capitalise an additional £500,000 of highways maintenance expenditure be agreed as detailed in paragraph 7 and used to address the shortfalls identified in paragraph.8.1; and
- (4) the proposal contained in paragraph 8.1 be noted and the Director of Technical Services explore ways of containing the 2008-2009 deficit within existing resources and report further on the position for 2009-2010 early in the new financial year.

7.1 Additional matter for noting

The following matter is drawn to the Council's attention, as required by the Constitution:

- (i) Cabinet minute 304 (10 December) – Financial Recommendations of the Mersey Waterfront Regional Partnership Board (Reason: waiving of call-in).

8.1 Additional references from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The following minutes of overview and scrutiny committees relate to the Cabinet's savings proposals in minutes 254 and 267:

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning (10 December) – minute 37

Resolved –

- (1) (5:3) That the Committee notes the savings proposed

as a result of the reconfiguration of the Youth Service. However, it believes that there is insufficient information available regarding the detailed implementation of the savings for it to make a reasoned decision on them. Nevertheless, it does support the principles behind the reconfiguration and the work of the Youth Service generally.

(2) (5:3) That the proposal to charge schools the full cost for insurance be accepted.

Community and Customer Engagement (4 December) – minute 25

Resolved – That the proposed budget saving of £140,000 in respect of an increase in income from the ongoing work on behalf of Wirral Partnership Homes from 2009/10, be approved.

Housing and Community Safety (18 November) – minute 28

Resolved (5:2) – That the budget saving proposed by the Cabinet [£10,000] in respect of advertising by Wirralhomes] be endorsed.

Note: see also agenda item 10a (Matters for debate), part (11).

Streetscene and Transport Services (8 December) – minute 25

Resolved - That the following budget saving item be endorsed by this Committee:

- the revenue savings of £320,000 arising from the HESPE exercise.

10.1 List of Matters for debate

Attached is the list of motions, submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 8(1), and objections and amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2). The mover of item 4 (Motion: School Crossing Patrols) has complied with Standing Order 17. The order of business is as determined by the party groups in accordance with Standing Order 5(3).



Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

COUNCIL – 15 December 2008

MATTERS FOR DEBATE

The Council is asked to consider the following motions, submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 8(1), and objections and amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2). The mover of item 4 (Motion: School Crossing Patrols) has complied with Standing Order 17.

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

(1) MOTION: STRATEGIC ASSET REVIEW

Proposed by Councillor Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rennie (3 minutes)

(1) Council believes:

that the mark of a just and fair society is how it treats its most vulnerable citizens and that local authorities have an important role to play in encouraging aspiration, healthy living and community spirit.

(2) Council notes:

(a) that 2008 is the National Year of Reading, a year-long celebration of reading, in all its forms, to increase awareness of the many values of reading – anything, any time, any place – for children, families and adult learners alike;

(b) that wards such as Upton, Seacombe, Bidston & St James and Leasowe & Moreton East, have below-average numbers of pupils who achieve L2 or better at Key Stage 1 for reading compared with the national average;

(c) that remarks by Andy Burnham [Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport] in July that the Government wishes local authorities to expand participation in swimming, in particular for the over-60s and under-16s, in their local communities and that £35 million was made available to modernise public swimming pool provision;

(d) that many leisure centres offer valuable alternative activities for young people to shine and achieve their full potential;

(e) that the programmes offered by local libraries and community and leisure centres reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour in areas and communities that have no other source of activity;

(f) that many community centres rely on a small and dedicated team of volunteers who in turn rely on the Council to provide and oversee professional support for maintenance, insurance, budgets, personnel and health and safety.

(3) Council welcomes:

the enactment of the Sustainable Communities Act in October 2008 to reverse the decline in local communities and neighbourhoods affected by the large-scale withdrawal of services and amenities.

(4) Council therefore:

(a) does not support the approval of the Cabinet to close libraries, leisure centres, museums and theatres;

(b) does not support the proposal to withdraw Council funding from community centres forcing their closure or demolition if they cannot find alternative funding within two years;

© believes that fundamental changes to the Wirral wide provision of services by the Council should have electoral support and, as such support for these proposals has not been demonstrated at the ballot box, a Wirral-wide referendum should be held before any decision for the wholesale closure of libraries, leisure centres, community centres, museums and theatres is implemented;

(d) believes that, if our local services are as derelict and starved of investment as the Leader of the Council claims, he is accountable and should accept his responsibility for this by submitting his resignation to the Council.

AMENDMENT:

Proposed by Councillor Holbrook (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Moon (3 minutes)

Delete paragraph (4) and replace with:

(4) Council therefore

(a) welcomes the Cabinet's commitment to invest £20m in modernising Council facilities to provide high quality services in fewer, more modern and appropriate buildings; and the commitment to consult and engage with the community in the design and development of these improved facilities;

(b) welcomes the opportunity arising from the Strategic Asset Review for the increased community ownership of their own assets and the greater opportunities that flow from asset ownership;

(c) welcomes the wider engagement of partners from the other parts of the public sector and the benefits from co-location of services and closer working arrangements;

(d) acknowledges the concerns raised by members of the public and that these representations will be considered; notes that no final decision has yet been taken; recognises that whilst some changes will not be welcome, best endeavours will be used to ensure that, when buildings have to close, valued community activities are provided where this is practicable;

(e) notes that the asset review will deliver better value for money to the council taxpayer; avoiding an additional £45 million pounds in running costs over the next ten years; and will bring about long term sustainability in Wirral's services provision.

Right of reply: Councillor Green (7 minutes)

(2) MOTION: TRANSFORMING WIRRAL

Proposed by Councillor Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

(1) Council welcomes the proposal in the Strategic Asset Report to invest £20m in new or modernised multi-purpose buildings which are fit for the 21st Century.

(2) Council notes that this will be in addition to the opening on 13 December of the Floral Pavilion, as part of a £60m development in New Brighton; the opening of the Council's new, state-of-the-art, Archive Centre; the brand new secondary school to be built in Woodchurch; the major waterfront development planned by Peel Holdings; Wirral PCT's proposed new Community Health facilities at the St. Catherine's site in Birkenhead and the new primary care centre at Victoria Central Hospital in Wallasey; Wirral Metropolitan College's proposed new campus and the potential for the creation of further Higher Education facilities under the University Challenge programme.

(3) Council welcomes this progress towards the regeneration of Wirral, and the plan to use Council assets in Seacombe to kick-start regeneration in one of Wirral's poorest wards, which is in accord with the aims of the Vision for Wirral within the Corporate Plan and which will help create a more prosperous and equal Wirral that we can all take pride in.

Right of reply: Councillor Foulkes (7 minutes)

(3) MOTION: BORDERLANDS ELECTRIFICATION

Proposed by Councillor Holbrook (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Mitchell (3 minutes)

(1) This Council notes:

- its consistent support for the electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands rail line;
- the importance of the Borderlands rail line to the Wirral economy by linking the industries of Deeside with North Birkenhead, where greater employment opportunities are required;
- recent Government statements on the economic downturn, particularly the need to fund public works now, in order to get people back into work when the downturn is over.

(2) Council is dismayed at the recent Network Rail estimate for the electrification and upgrade of the line of £207m and notes this is more than three times the cost estimated for this work by Merseytravel. Council is perplexed at such wildly different estimates, and requests that an independent review of costs is jointly commissioned by Network Rail and Merseytravel to establish the true cost.

(3) Council also notes the application made by Merseytravel to take control of the track of the Merseyrail Network from Network Rail. Council believes by integrating management of the infrastructure with service delivery, greater efficiencies and investment can be secured for the benefit of local people and therefore supports this proposal.

(4) Council therefore:

(i) requests that Merseytravel should now widen these discussions to include the Welsh Assembly Government and seek agreement to take ownership of the Borderlands line as part of these proposals, so that its operation can be fully integrated into the Merseyrail network;

(ii) supports the electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham Borderlands rail line being undertaken by Merseytravel, with the possibility of a 25kV overhead electrified line being considered as an alternative;

(iii) calls upon Wirral's MPs and North West MEPs to lobby the Government on these proposals on the Council's behalf.

Right of reply: Councillor Holbrook (7 minutes)

(4) MOTION: SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS (7 minutes)

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser (7 minutes)

Seconded Councillor Anderson (3 minutes)

(1) This Council recognizes and applauds the invaluable work carried out by school crossing patrols, and which they continue to do, to keep our primary school children safe from accidents and death when crossing the road outside schools.

(2) This Council recognizes that the criteria for deciding whether to provide a school crossing patrol are advisory only.

(3) This Council recognizes that, if 18 school crossing patrols are removed, 23 schools will be affected and road safety around them will worsen.

(4) Council is disappointed with the lack of consultation with schools over the removal of school crossing patrols.

(5) Council believes school budgets should be spent on services within school and not used to subsidise Council responsibilities.

(6) That Council, therefore, recognizes the need for the current number of school crossing patrols to be maintained for the safety of our primary school children.

AMENDMENT:

Proposed by Councillor Patricia Williams (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Teggin (3 minutes)

Delete all after (2) and insert:

(3) Council believes that school budgets should be spent on services within schools' responsibilities, including supporting School Travel Plans.

(4) Council urges that a regular process of updating risk assessments of all the current and future crossing patrols should be in place, the presumption being that sites should continue to be provided unless there has been a change of

circumstances in the area (such as the closure of a school removing the need, or if there is a Pelican or Puffin crossing at that site or nearby) or that the risk assessment identifies sufficient changes to warrant a review and possible discontinuation after full discussion and examination with the school(s) concerned. Risk assessments shall pay due regard to the existing RoSPA guidelines and also to issues such as road gradient, layout, traffic flows speeding, and congestion. The same criteria should be used for assessing applications for new crossing patrols.

(5) Officers be requested to develop a policy incorporating all the points raised in (4) above and present a report to the Cabinet within the next six months.

Right of reply: Councillor Fraser (7 minutes)

(5) MOTION: ILLEGAL DRUGS – APPARATUS

Proposed by Councillor Kenny (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Knowles (3 minutes)

Council notes that the ready availability in retail outlets in Wirral and Merseyside generally of apparatus for the inhalation, ingestion and injection of illegal drugs may be hampering the national drive to reduce drug dependency and addiction. The Chief Executive is requested to investigate, in co-operation with the Borough's crime prevention partners, the feasibility of introducing local by-laws prohibiting the sale of such apparatus.

Right of reply: Councillor Kenny (7 minutes)

(6) MOTION: DECLINE IN BEE POPULATION

Proposed by Councillor Gilchrist (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Mitchell (3 minutes)

(1) This Council expresses its thanks to Wirral's Environmental Health staff and to the Call Centre for its established and enlightened policy of assisting householders to understand the importance of bees.

(2) Council applauds the fact that enquirers are encouraged to contact local beekeepers for advice and are discouraged from thinking of bees as 'pests' in any way.

(3) Council notes that a series of written questions were asked in the House of Commons in May and July 2008 about declining bee numbers, colony losses and the funding of research into this serious situation.

(4) Council recognises that the British Bee Keepers Association organised a lobby of Parliament in November 2008 urging an increase in funding for research into the diseases which have led to the decline in the bee population.
http://www.britishbee.org.uk/bbka_research_campaign.php

(5) In view of this, Council asks that all Wirral's Members of Parliament be requested to pursue increasing this funding in view of the vital contribution that bees make to pollination and to sustainable agriculture.

Right of reply: Councillor Gilchrist (7 minutes)

(7) OBJECTION: RECONFIGURATION OF THE YOUTH SERVICE (Cabinet minute 267 - 27 November 2008) (PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011)

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Karen Hayes (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes that, as a consequence of this reconfiguration of the Youth Service, seven as yet unnamed Youth Centres across the Wirral will be closed, and this Council rejects the loss of amenities for our young people, especially at a time when this Labour / Liberal Democrat Administration is closing down leisure centres, libraries and the highly rated Pacific Road complex.

(2) Council should instruct the Labour/ Liberal Democrat Cabinet to come clean with both our young people and our staff and name the Youth Centres which are to be closed

(3) Council therefore does not accept the Budget saving of £150,000

Right of reply: Councillor Foulkes (7 minutes)

(8) MOTION: ROAD TO DAMASCUS CONVERSION

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Knowles (3 minutes)

(1) This Council notes with amazement the road to Damascus conversion of the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Wallasey to the cause of the Unions in their fight against privatisation and in the call to develop public service alternatives, as reflected in the call-in of minute 251 to the Social Care, Health and Inclusion Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which she signed.

(2) Cabinet further notes that this dramatic abandonment of Conservative Party ideology extended to an opposition to the open tendering of transport provision, an area of privatisation previously dear to Conservative hearts, and is accompanied by a total disregard for the financial consequences to the Council, which included an estimated 20% reduction in transport costs at a saving of £360,000 in a full year.

(3) Cabinet further notes that declared Conservative opposition to Cabinet measures which would reduce council tax levels has now reached £8.5m, which, on its own, is the equivalent of an additional 7% increase in council tax, or £96 a year on a band D property, without taking into account any potential savings from the Strategic Asset Review.

(4) Council waits with fascination to see where the Conservative policy of total opposition to all Cabinet decisions will take them next and how high they are prepared to let council tax climb for the hard pressed residents of Wirral.

Right of reply: Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

(9) OBJECTION: ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES TRANSPORT (Cabinet minute 254 - 6 November 2008) (PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011)

Proposed by Councillor Watt (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Sheila Clarke (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes that:

(i) transport service users and their carers greatly value the standard and continuity of care currently provided by the in-house team;

(ii) it is proposed to put the transport service out to tender without prior consultation with staff and without assistance for staff to produce an in-house bid;

(iii) the fairness of any tendering process has been compromised by the publication of the current in-house costing in the report to Cabinet;

(iv) the suggested saving arising from putting the transport service out to tender does not take into account the cost of compliance with TUPE regulations.

(2) Council therefore does not accept the Cabinet's recommended budget saving of £180,000.

Right of reply: Councillor Foulkes (7 minutes)

(10) MOTION: THE ECONOMY

Proposed by Councillor Mountney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Rowlands (3 minutes)

(1) This Council notes the impact the current economic climate is having, and will continue to have, on Wirral businesses and residents alike.

(2) Council further notes that National Government has provided little effective direct support to local businesses and residents of the Wirral.

(3) Council requests that the Chief Executive reports to the Cabinet and relevant scrutiny committees at the earliest possible opportunity, following urgent discussions with his senior officers and Wirral businesses, on the feasibility of introducing the following measures on Wirral:

(i) Merseyside Special Investment Fund to be requested to make emergency loans available to support businesses for cash-flow purposes and not just capital or revenue expansion plans;

(ii) support for businesses on how to take up business rate relief;

(iii) that Council run a campaign to highlight the poor uptake of benefits across the Wirral, and that this Council should work with the Department of Work and Pensions to encourage the uptake of benefits, including pensions credits and income support, through the better use of our housing and council tax records;

(iv) that this Council further investigate the formation and support of a wider network of Credit Unions, the benefit of which would bring longer-term stability to both the businesses and residents of the Wirral;

(v) the establishment of a Winter Warmth Partnership (Wirral MBC, Social Care, PCT, Health Service, Fire Service). An emergency fund should be established that should step in when an individual's health is at risk. This partnership should also make referrals for benefit checks and fire safety checks through its partner members;

(vi) establish a website that promotes and advertises council contracts and encourages local companies to tender for them;

(vii) from 1 January 2009, this Council revising its payment terms from 30 days to 10 days for all small businesses that provide goods and services to the Council;

(viii) the Council consider the removal or reduction of parking charges at our shopping centres.

(4) Council further requests that officers work with local businesses and employers to ensure their needs are effectively communicated to central Government.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jean Stapleton (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Kelly (3 minutes)

Delete all after paragraph 1 and insert:

(2) Council acknowledges the initiatives already under way to help businesses and residents during the current economic crisis:

- the 'Free after Three' parking arrangements from 4 December enabling Christmas shoppers to benefit from free parking after 3.00pm every Thursday during the run-up to Christmas in shoppers' car parks in Birkenhead, Liscard, Heswall and West Kirby; along with free all-day parking on Boxing Day and New Year's Day to attract shoppers to the Christmas and New Year sales;
- the "Health Through Warmth" (HTW) initiative, with which the Council has been actively involved since 2003, which operates through locally based partnerships that seek to help vulnerable people whose health is adversely affected by cold, damp living conditions, achieved by facilitating the installation of appropriate energy efficiency and heating measures (sometimes as an emergency), along with the provision of related advice and information. Clients are referred by health and other key community workers who have attended locally based awareness sessions offered by HTW;
- the Fuel Poverty training seminar for members held on 21 October 2008, which brought together: Health Through Warmth; Energy Projects Plus; Firefighters from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service Community Safety Team; the Citizens' Advice Bureau and Wirral Borough Council, and agreed to further collaboration between those partners, the Primary Care Trust, and the Joint Director of Public Health, to tackle fuel poverty and health-related issues in Wirral.

(3) Council further asks the Chief Executive to ensure that:

- (i) businesses continue to be informed about how to take up business rate relief, and that such information is sent out, as normal, with the rates bills, and also given to any business struggling to pay its bills that might benefit;
- (ii) the Council continues its campaign to increase the take up of benefits and works closely with the Department of Work and Pensions to ensure that those who are entitled to benefits receive them, including pension credits and income support;
- (iii) wherever possible the Council exceeds its target of paying small businesses within thirty days, aiming to pay bills wherever possible in a much shorter timescale, and ensures that all appropriate employees are made aware that rapid payment of bills by the Council in times of recession can play a major part in ensuring a healthy cash flow for small businesses;
- (iv) officers work with local businesses and employers as appropriate and ensure that their needs are effectively communicated to Central Government.

(4) Council welcomes the move by the North West Regional Development Agency to set up a special fund to assist businesses who may face difficulties in the current financial crisis.

Right of reply: Councillor Mountney (7 minutes)

(11) OBJECTION: WIRRAL HOMES ADVERTISING (Cabinet minute 254 - 6 November 2008) (PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011)

Proposed by Councillor Blakeley (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Leah Fraser (3 minutes)

(1) This Council notes that the Housing and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 18 November 2008, was not aware of the proposals with regard to the Strategic Asset Review (SAR), and the potential loss of many public buildings, when it considered this budget saving.

(2) Council notes that, as a consequence of the SAR, there is potentially the loss of many locations, such as libraries, leisure centres, community centres and other public buildings that would have otherwise made available to the public the weekly Wirral Homes advert.

(3) Therefore, Council believes that those people who are looking for housing, and who rely on the Wirral Homes advertisement being freely available, will be severely disadvantaged.

(4) Council therefore does not accept the Cabinet's recommended budget saving of £10,000.

Right of reply: Councillor Foulkes (7 minutes)

(12) MOTION: ADULT SOCIAL CARE – PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE

Proposed by Councillor Mountney (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Watt (3 minutes)

(1) This Council recognises that a number of concerns were raised by a Council 'whistleblower' in October 2007 under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which in turn has resulted in the Audit Commission issuing Wirral Council with a Public Information Disclosure report.

(2) Council notes the findings of the report:

- Although 30 accredited providers are used by the Council only 12 contracts have been signed and returned by providers.
- No formal arrangements have been established for the contract monitoring of supported living providers.
- There are no arrangements at present for feedback from service users where there is dissatisfaction with services or where quality standards have not been met.
- There remains a substantial risk that users receiving services from one of the Councils service providers are being charged unfairly.
- The Council does not always know the actual contributions that the provider requires service users to contribute for services they provide. Consequently the Council is not in a position to know whether the aggregate of charges levied on service users by the Council and contributions required by the provider are in compliance with the guidance of fairer charging. It is not clear who is currently ensuring that these service users are receiving adequate protection for the risk of financial abuse.

(3) Council notes the fact that these findings had previously been raised with officers of the Council by the whistleblower and, whilst thanking the Audit Commission for the production of this report and bringing the matter out into the open, condemns the fact that the Council's own procedures are so defective as to have needed the Audit Commission's intervention to bring them to the notice of the Council and the public.

(4) Council believes that this PIDA report and the Department's unwillingness to bring to the Council's attention the whistleblower's concerns regarding the treatment of those in our care demonstrates a lack of effective governance, management and leadership within the Department.

(5) Therefore this Council instructs the Chief Executive to appoint an independent person of sufficient standing and experience to investigate these matters fully, speedily and rigorously and to bring their findings to the Council's attention, including any disciplinary action, if required, at the earliest possible occasion.

AMENDMENT:

Proposed by Councillor Paula Southwood (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Ann Bridson (3 minutes)

Delete paragraphs (3), (4) and (5) and replace with:

(3) Council notes that following the receipt of the PIDA report prompt action has been taken to

- (i) thoroughly investigate all issues and allegations;
- (ii) take immediate and urgent action to address the issues raised.

(4) Council believes that, though the receipt of the PIDA report is a matter of grave concern, the actions by the internal audit team, key officers, Cabinet members and the members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee demonstrate an appropriate response to these issues.

(5) Council welcomes the appointment, as reported at Audit and Risk Management Committee on 1 December, of an independent person of sufficient standing and experience to investigate any staff disciplinary measures that may be required.

Right of reply: Councillor Mountney (7 minutes)

(13) OBJECTION: SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND TRANSPORT (Cabinet minute 295 – 10 December 2008) (PROJECTED BUDGETS 2009-2011) *

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke

Seconded by Councillor Karen Hayes

(1) Council notes that the removal of the uniform grant will affect the most needy in our community especially at a time of such deep financial hardship, and the grant should be retained.

(2) Council should instruct the Labour/ Liberal Democrat Cabinet to stop the further review of the cost of School transport. Parents of whatever faith have a right to choose the best school that meets not only their children's needs but also their beliefs. This Council should not be imposing barriers to this and again inflicting a further financial burden at this critical time.

(3) Council therefore does not accept the budget saving of £ 30,000 and agrees that a further review of the cost of school transport should not take place.

* **Note:** Provided the Council accepts the remainder of minute 295, then under the terms of part (3) of the minute these elements should be referred to the Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee without the need for a vote.

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