



Council Supplement

Town Hall
Wallasey

11 February 2010

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.15 pm on Monday, 15 February 2010** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

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AGENDA

5. **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL (Pages 1 - 8)**

To consider matters referred to the Council for determination. The relevant minutes are attached; copies of the related reports can be provided for Council members on request.

(i) Minute 260 (Cabinet – 14/1/2010) Local Development Framework – Approval of Amended Local Development Scheme

(ii) Minute 261 (Cabinet – 14/1/2010) Local Development Framework Evidence Base – Strategy for Retail, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure

(iii) Minute 268 (Cabinet – 14/1/2010) Local Transport Plan Capital Programme 2010/11

(iv) Local Development Framework – Evidence Base – Open Space Audit (Minute 290 Cabinet 4/2/2010).

(v) Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document – Approval of Preferred Options (Minute 309 Cabinet 4/2/2010).

(vi) Emergency Road Repairs (Minute 318 Cabinet 4/2/2010).

(vii) The Oval Sports and Recreation Centre, Bebington – Scheme Completion Report (Minute 319 Cabinet 4/2/2010).

(viii) Councillor Call for Action – Record and Evidence Trail (Minute 320 Cabinet 4/2/2010).

9. MATTERS FOR DEBATE (Pages 9 - 22)

Pursuant to Standing Order 5(1)(m), and in accordance with Standing Order 5(3), to consider written comments, objections or amendments to minutes submitted under Standing Order 7(2), together with those motions, submitted under item 9 above, that the Council agrees to debate at this meeting and any minority reports submitted in accordance with Standing Order 35(4).

10. VACANCIES (Pages 23 - 24)

To receive nominations, in accordance with Standing Order 25(5), in respect of any proposed changes in the membership of the Cabinet and committees, and to approve nominations for appointments to outside organisations.



Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

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CABINET REFERRALS TO COUNCIL

CABINET – 14 JANUARY 2010

(i) MINUTE 260 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – APPROVAL OF AMENDED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services reported that following the resolution of Cabinet on 23 July 2009 (minute 63 refers) that a revised Local Development Scheme for Wirral should be submitted for the approval of the Secretary of State, the revised Scheme had now been approved by the Secretary of State by letter on 23 November 2009. A resolution of Council was now required to bring the final Scheme into legal effect.

The report also recommended the distribution of the annual award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) for 2009/10.

Resolved – That Cabinet recommends to Council that,

(1) the Local Development Scheme attached to the Director's report, as approved by the Secretary of State, be approved; and

(2) it resolves to bring the approved Local Development Scheme into legal effect on the Monday following the date the resolution of Council is passed;

(3) the HPDG be distributed with £9,915 allocated to the Department of Regeneration for the publication of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment; £27,000 allocated to the preparation of the Joint Waste DPD; and the remainder allocated to support the continued preparation of the Core Strategy DPD;

(4) in the event that the provisional allocation of HPDG is altered, that the final award of grant is distributed on a similar basis.

(ii) MINUTE 261 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK EVIDENCE BASE – STRATEGY FOR RETAIL, TOWN CENTRES AND COMMERCIAL LEISURE

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services informed members of the findings of the Strategy for Retail, Town Centre and Commercial Leisure produced by Roger Tym and Partners on behalf of the Council as part of the evidence base for the Wirral Local Development Framework. The report summarised the main aspects of the study encompassing the key recommendations to the Council, including the recommendation that the Strategy for Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure be approved as a material consideration for use by Planning Committee in the determination of planning applications; that the findings of the Study be used to inform the content of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document and that the findings of the Strategy be used to inform the delivery of Investment Strategy priorities.

Having circulated an amended recommendation to the Cabinet, it was then moved by Councillor Stapleton, duly seconded and -

Resolved – That,

(1) Cabinet confirms the designation of Birkenhead as a sub regional centre and supports Options 5 and 6 for meeting future retail and leisure needs in addition to an allowance for growth for existing retail centres across Wirral and recommends to Council that the Strategy for Town Centres, Retail and Commercial Leisure be approved as a material consideration for use by Planning Committee in the determination of planning applications, except for the status of Oxton Road and Grange Road West, where the recommendations in the report are contrary to the Core Strategy Development Plan Core Document, previously approved for public consultation;

(2) the Council will continue to support proposals for retail development coming forward within existing centres and the new Government Planning Policy Statement 4 retains a clear “Town Centres First” approach to retail development;

(3) in Liscard, for example we have granted Planning Permission for redevelopment of the Cherry Tree Centre and we continue to encourage the owners to implement the scheme;

(4) the findings of the Strategy be used to inform the content of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document;

(5) the findings of the Strategy be used to inform the delivery of Investment Strategy priorities;

(6) in addition, Cabinet requests that as part of the current consultation on the Spatial Options that views be sought on whether any other local shopping areas should be considered for possible inclusion as “local centres” within the LDF Core Strategy;

(7) Cabinet requests further reports be produced –

(a) on the interventions and recommendations made in the consultants’ report in the following areas, following consultation with the centres affected and the local area forums and other local stakeholders as appropriate:

Hoylake town centre

New Ferry town centre

New Brighton (Seabank Road)

Seacombe (Borough Road/Poulton Road)

Wallasey Village

Irby Village

(b) setting out options to deal with the derelict sites identified within the Prenton (Woodchurch Road) centre;

(c) setting out options to address the requirement for additional car parking spaces in Moreton town centre;

(d) setting out options, following consultation with stakeholders,

(iii) MINUTE 268 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Technical Services reported that in November 2007, the Department for Transport (DfT) had approved a Local Transport Capital settlement for Wirral of £7,684,000 for 2010/11. He set out a proposed Local Transport Plan (LTP) Capital Programme for approval based on this settlement.

Resolved - That the LTP Capital Programme, as set out in the Director's report, be approved.

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CABINET – 4 FEBRUARY 2010

MATTERS FOR THE APPROVAL OF COUNCIL

290 MINUTE 308 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - EVIDENCE BASE - OPEN SPACE AUDIT

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services presented a report summarising the initial findings of the Open Space Audit, produced by consultants Strategic Leisure, which was required to provide part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework and to establish the future strategy for the management of the Council's parks and open spaces. It was recommended that a public consultation exercise be undertaken and that the finalised Audit, taking account of the consultation responses, be reported back to Cabinet for approval and inclusion in the emerging Local Development Framework for Wirral.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy to make any necessary factual corrections to the report before the process of public consultation commences**
- (2) public consultation be undertaken along the lines set out in section 5 of this report; and**
- (3) the finalised Audit, taking into account the findings of the public consultation, be reported back to Cabinet for consideration and approval before the findings are included in the emerging Local Development Framework for Wirral.**

MINUTE 309 JOINT MERSEYSIDE WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - APPROVAL OF PREFERRED OPTIONS

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services reported that the Council was being asked to approve the content of a Draft Waste Development Preferred Options Report to be published for public consultation in February 2010, which identified sites that might become future allocations. He submitted a report setting out his comments on the proposed preferred options in relation to Wirral, which included one site at Cammell Lairds and two existing sites at Wallasey Bridge Road, Bidston, as having potential for new built facilities to deal with waste transfer and recycling. An agreed sub-regional Core Report was attached to explain the overall content of the proposed consultation document and to set out the recommendations to be considered by each of the partner Councils. The report to Cabinet, therefore, only concentrated on specific information related to Wirral.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Cabinet is pleased to note that this report does not contain any proposals for landfill on Wirral and believes that this is a reflection on the success and increasing levels of recycling that have been achieved in Wirral.**
- (1) recommendations (i), (ii), (iii) and (v), set out in paragraph 11 of the Core Report attached to the Report, be approved;**
- (2) recommendation (iv) set out in paragraph 11 of the Core Report attached to the Report be altered to read ‘that the Waste DPD team is authorised to make editorial changes to the Preferred Options Report as may be agreed and directed by the Councils; and’**
- (3) the principle of funding the future stages in the preparation of the Waste DPD be approved, with any future funding subject to further approval of Cabinet, following a future report.**

291 MINUTE 318 EMERGENCY ROAD REPAIRS

The Director of Technical Services submitted a report confirming a one-off financial injection of £250,000, funded from balances to the Highway Maintenance Budget for this current financial year, to facilitate a programme of emergency road repairs resulting from the recent extreme weather conditions.

RESOLVED:

That a one-off financial injection of £250,000, funded from balances to the Highway Maintenance Budget, to facilitate a programme of emergency road repairs resulting from the recent extreme weather conditions, as described in the report, be approved.

MINUTE 319 THE OVAL SPORTS & RECREATION CENTRE, BEBINGTON - SCHEME COMPLETION REPORT

The Director of Regeneration reported upon the final outcome of the successful remodelling of the main sports building at the Oval Sports Centre.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the achievements gained through the remodelling and refurbishment works undertaken at the Oval Sports Centre be noted;**
- (2) the increased construction costs and fees on the project, as outlined in section 5.0 of the report, be approved and a variation to the Capital Programme to cover the costs, in the sum of £609,685, be agreed; and**

- (3) **the changes and enhancements made to the Council's tendering procedures for major construction schemes be noted.**

MINUTE 320 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION - RECORD AND EVIDENCE TRAIL

Further to minute (9/12/09) when Cabinet had recommended the Protocol in respect of Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) to Council for approval (Appendix A), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management had prepared a checklist of evidence to help Members gather information to assist any Councillor Calls for Action (Appendix B). It had been endorsed by the Scrutiny Programme Board at its meeting on 14 January 2009 (Minute 35 refers) and referred to the Cabinet for consideration and recommendation to the Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

That the use and implementation of the Councillor Call for Action – Member Checklist and Evidence, set out at Appendix B, be approved and appended to the Protocol for adoption by the Council.

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Council - 15 February 2010

MATTERS FOR DEBATE

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

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

1. TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOME CARE - CONTRACTED SUPPORT

Proposed by Councillor Geoffrey Watt (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Tony Pritchard (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes:

(a) the further measures proposed by Cabinet to reduce the contracted cost of residential and Nursing Home Care from private sector providers.

(b) that the Department of Adult Social Services is the major purchaser of such services in Wirral and has a legal duty under the Competition Act not to exploit its dominant position.

(c) that many of Wirral's residential and Nursing Homes are small family businesses and currently provide services on extremely tight margins.

(2) Given the potential risk to the well being of service users, the quality of care provided and employment in this key sector, Council calls on Cabinet to keep the needs of people uppermost in its mind and ensure that it is fully aware of the consequences for vulnerable service users as it negotiates revised contracts with service providers if, through the approach it is adopting, such businesses are forced to withdraw from the provision of such services.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts (3 minutes)

Delete all after '(1) Council notes:'

Insert:

(a) The proposal to maintain the current baseline fee levels for care homes as an interim measure, pending the re-negotiation of new contracts for 2011, which

will take account of the fact that fee levels in Wirral remain among the highest in the area, and which will also take account of the need to develop quality premiums within the contracts which properly reflect the standards of care within the homes and which lead to improved quality of life for residents.

(b) Council further notes that the recent Care Quality Commission's report on Wirral's Adult Social Services judged Wirral to be "performing well", and that Wirral's success in reducing the number of people being placed in care homes and the reduced fees levels contributed to that judgement, particularly when taken alongside the investment in services which are helping more people remain in their own homes for longer. These include enhanced Home Care, Home Re-ablement, Assistive Technology and the development of four Extra Care Housing Schemes, three of which are in Wallasey.

Right of reply: Councillor Geoffrey Watt (7 Minutes)

2. CALL FOR LIGHTER EVENINGS

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Chris Meaden (3 minutes)

(1) Council expresses its concern over the safety implications of changing the clocks in October so that evenings are darker.

(2) Council notes that both ROSPA and Living Streets, reputable organisations concerned with safety, favour a system which does not create lighter mornings and darker evenings between October and March.

(3) Council notes that Living Streets estimate that 450 deaths are caused by the present system and, they argue, the most dangerous time on roads is between 3p.m. and 6p.m. as drivers and school children head home, and that children and the elderly are most susceptible to accidents at these times.

(4) Council further notes that the Department of Transport also estimate that 80 fewer fatal accidents would occur if evenings were lighter.

(5) Council recognises that altering the present system may cause problems in the north of Scotland where the reduction in daylight hours is more acute, but believes that, if the Scottish Parliament believes that special consideration was needed for Scotland, they would have the power to pass the necessary legislation.

(6) Council therefore agrees to add its voice to the growing clamour for the current system using British Summer Time to be rescinded and priority be given instead to maintaining lighter evenings as opposed to lighter mornings.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Geoffrey Watt (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor David Elderton (3 minutes)

Delete all and replace with:

(1) Council notes that organisations concerned with road safety favour the abandonment of Greenwich Mean Time and its permanent replacement with Central European time in all or parts of the United Kingdom, believing that this would reduce road accidents.

(2) Council notes that in Wirral, this would mean the mid-winter sun does not rise until 9.28 am and yet still set as early as 4.53 pm.

(3) Council notes that mid-winter sunrise occurs 22 minutes earlier in London and 28 minutes later in northwest Scotland than in Wirral.

(4) Council notes that power to legislate on time zoning has not been devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

(5) Council notes that the estimated beneficial effects on road accident statistics are based upon adjusted data gathered forty years ago during the British Standard Time experiment.

(6) Council recalls the misery that was inflicted by prolonged dark mornings on the daily lives of people, including schoolchildren, living in Wirral and the great relief felt when that experiment was abandoned.

(7) Council therefore believes that Greenwich Mean Time should be retained throughout the United Kingdom in the months of November, December, January and February.

Right of reply: Councillor Harry Smith (7 minutes)

3. ENGAGEMENT

Proposed by Councillor Simon Holbrook (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly (3 minutes)

Council notes that:

(1) The impending and unprecedented squeeze on public finance, estimated to leave a budget shortfall of £60 - £70m between 2011 and 2014, will place severe pressure on all areas of council spending.

(2) Whilst remaining fully committed to minimising costs through improved ways of working, the likely scale of government grant reductions will be such that spending on all front line services will come under pressure.

(3) To successfully meet these challenges, methods of service delivery will need to change and innovate in a way that ensures those services still meet residents needs.

(4) To deliver broad public support for change in the way council services are delivered, a new approach is required to ensure the active engagement and support of local people.

(5) Statutory consultation processes (such as in planning or schools reorganisation) and non-statutory processes such as in the Strategic Asset Review can sometimes be insufficient to overcome the barriers to change that can occur by not sharing problems at an early stage and consulting only on preferred options. The Council's new Comprehensive Engagement Strategy is an important step forward, but more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council requests that:

The Director of Corporate Services bring forward proposals for enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken. Such proposals shall encompass a flexible system of engagement and consultation at appropriate points in the process in order to aid decision making, and should include:

- Sharing the problem or issue and developing broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions.
- Developing a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making.
- Developing the role of the area forums within any engagement process, to include more delegated budgets and decision making, empowerment of local residents and opportunities to influence policy change through local involvement.
- Improved use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads. This information will also be available through libraries and one-stop shops.
- Developing the role of full council to allow 'open debates' which will guide the development of policy.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie (3 minutes)

Insert new paragraphs (1) & (2):

(1) Council agrees that the Sue Charteris Public Inquiry demonstrated the public appetite for meaningful consultation, but regrets that at no stage could the Administration convince the inquiry or Wirral residents that its consultation procedures, or its response to them, had been adequate or appropriate.

(2) Council notes that the junior partner in the Council's Administration has been listening to Wirral's Conservative Group and welcomes the death bed conversion contained in the motion below, to introduce genuine consultation arrangements and Direct Democracy even if it is a cynical and futile attempt by one half of the Administration to turn back the clock and atone for past mistakes brought about by its own arrogance.

Retain the remaining paragraphs and renumber:

(3) The impending and unprecedented squeeze on public finance, estimated to leave a budget shortfall of £60 - £70m between 2011 and 2014, will place severe pressure on all areas of council spending.

(4) Whilst remaining fully committed to minimising costs through improved ways of working, the likely scale of government grant reductions will be such that spending on all front line services will come under pressure.

(5) To successfully meet these challenges, methods of service delivery will need to change and innovate in a way that ensures those services still meet residents needs.

(6) To deliver broad public support for change in the way council services are delivered, a new approach is required to ensure the active engagement and support of local people

Replace former paragraph (5) and insert new paragraph, now number (7):

(7) Statutory consultation processes (such as in planning or schools reorganisation) and non-statutory processes such as in the Strategic Asset Review can sometimes be insufficient to overcome the barriers to change that can occur by not sharing problems at an early stage and consulting only on preferred options as well as failing to consult local communities adequately to reflect a sense of place. The Council's new Comprehensive Engagement Strategy is an important step forward, but more needs to be done'.

Replace paragraph following 'Therefore, this Council requests that' with:

The Director of Corporate Services bring forward proposals for enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions and the overall strategic direction of the Council include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken, as well as having their implementation monitored. Such proposals shall encompass a flexible system of engagement and consultation at appropriate points in the process in order to aid decision making, and should include:

Retain bullet points and add new paragraph:

(8) Further, calls on the Council to instigate a full and open consultation on the strategic direction of Wirral Council to deliver a forward-plan that encompasses the aspirations of all Wirral's people and not just the preconceptions and prejudices of an out-of-touch Cabinet.

Right of reply: Councillor Simon Holbrook (7 minutes)

4. GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

Proposed by Councillor Tom Anderson (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor James Keeley (3 minutes)

Council notes and congratulates the high proportion of Wirral's graduates. Council further notes that Wirral has a disproportionately high level of Wirral graduates seeking work outside the borough, due to a lack of graduate opportunities in Wirral.

Council believes that if we can encourage Wirral youngsters who have participated in higher education to stay in the locality this will enhance our attractiveness for inward investment and the local economy.

Being the largest employer on Wirral, Council therefore resolves to request the Chief Executive:

(1) To conduct a review of Departments where there may be a skills gap and where a graduate training scheme could be feasible.

(2) To investigate the possibilities of the Council establishing a Graduate Training Scheme as other Local Authorities have done in the North West.

(3) Contact the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), who specialise in Local Authority graduate training schemes, to explore how Wirral may participate.

(4) To report his findings to an early meeting of the Cabinet.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Simon Holbrook (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Sarah Quinn (3 minutes)

Replace paragraphs (1) and (2) with:

(1) To develop a policy on graduate recruitment, training and development as part of the Council's Workforce Planning Strategy that will support skills development within the Council.

(2) Where appropriate, to work jointly with other local authorities and public sector partners in order to seek to share the costs of running such a scheme.

add to the end of paragraph (4):

and the Employment and Appointments Committee.

Right of reply: Councillor Tom Anderson (7 minutes)

5. ELECTED MAYOR FOR LIVERPOOL

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

(1) This Council condemns the Conservative Party plans to impose an elected Mayor on the city of Liverpool if they win the next general election.

(2) Council further condemns the fact that the Mayor, who will be elected only by the people of Liverpool, will be given executive responsibility for travel across Merseyside, and potentially for other matters affecting Wirral, which means that the people of Wirral will have no say in matters that directly affect them.

(3) Wirral is an equal partner in City Region Governance. This would be undermined if the Mayor of Liverpool has executive powers as indicated.

Right of reply: Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

6. MID WIRRAL LINE

Proposed by Councillor Jean Quinn (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Frank Doyle (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes that the long hoped for electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham line has not progressed much beyond the feasibility study stage.

(2) The scale of the project has resulted in Merseytravel, Central Government and the Welsh Assembly Government being unable to secure the funding necessary.

(3) Council believes that development and electrification of the Borderlands line has become even more vital during the current economic crisis and subsequent period of recovery. In the short term, it would provide immediate opportunities for employment of construction workers.

(4) Development and electrification of the Borderlands line would create improved links to an area of economic opportunity for some of our more deprived neighbourhoods in North Birkenhead in need of access to jobs and the financial stability and self-esteem that come from employment.

(5) Studies show that the provision of new stations at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) would attract the most people to use the line.

(6) Council believes that for the project to have any chance of being completed it will have to be delivered in affordable stages.

(7) Therefore, Council resolves to support the upgrading of the Borderlands railway in stages, starting with the provision of new stations on the existing diesel line at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) in the short term

followed by electrification to Woodchurch in the medium term and further electrification along the route as required.

(8) The Council Chief Executive is asked to convey the terms of this motion to Merseytravel and request that the Chief Executive, Director General of Merseytravel presents a report on progress to an appropriate meeting of Cabinet.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis (3 minutes)

Delete all text and replace with:

(1) Council recognises and applauds the enormous amount of work, time and money that Merseytravel, the Welsh Assembly Government and other stakeholders have put in to the proposals for the electrification of the Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) line.

(2) Council recognises that linking the line into the Merseyrail Electrics network will bring significant economic benefits to Wirral, Liverpool city region and North Wales, with the obvious environmental benefits.

(3) Council recognises that electrification of the Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) line is, and remains a Merseytravel policy.

(4) Council is dismayed that the Network Rail assessment of costs for the proposed Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) electrification programme, were significantly inflated at £207 million pounds, compared to independent assessments, and have acted as a significant barrier to deliver the electrification programme.

(5) Council believes by integrating management of the infrastructure with service delivery, greater efficiencies and investment can be secured for the benefit of local people. Therefore Council further supports the efforts made by Merseytravel to take control of the track of the Merseyrail Network from Network Rail, and welcomes the support of a future Conservative Government for such a pilot scheme on the Merseyrail network.

(a) Therefore, Council requests that Merseytravel, working with all other relevant stakeholders, continue to explore all options that may be available to them to deliver electrification of the Bidston Wrexham Line (Borderlands), either in stages, or in its totality, in a format that they believe will be the most cost effective, while bringing the most beneficial results to Wirral, and the wider Merseyside communities.

(b) Council also resolves to support any further changes that will make Network Rail more accountable and responsive to its customers, and to local and regional circumstances and priorities.

(c) Council is asked to convey the terms of this motion to Merseytravel, and invites the Chief Executive, Director General of Merseytravel to attend a future Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (to which all elected

Members be invited to attend), to give an update on the proposals for the electrification of the Bidston Wrexham Line, and the way forward.

Right of reply: Councillor Jean Quinn (7 minutes)

7. THE BIG LUNCH

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Les Rowlands (3 minutes)

(1) This Council recognises the benefits community interaction: reduction in street crime, shared transport, increase support of local businesses, physical improvements to neighbourhoods etc

(2) This Council notes that whilst 9.6million regularly use social networking sites, 97% of UK communities have become more fragmented in the last 30 years.

(3) Council believes that innovative projects, such as The Big Lunch, encourage a sense of community, sparking new, sustainable networks of value for people.

(4) Council therefore resolves to ask officers to investigate ways of helping communities to organise a Big Lunch event in their neighbourhood and to reduce the cost of requesting a road closure for this event.

Right of reply: Councillor Leah Fraser (7 minutes)

8. PROSTATE CANCER IN WALLASEY AND MORETON

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Steve Williams (3 minutes)

(1) Council is concerned to note that Wallasey has the fifth highest rate of prostate cancer in England (out of 529 constituencies) for deaths from prostate cancer - 44 deaths per 100,000, 77% higher than the average for England.

(2) Council notes that one of the main factors affecting a man's chances of survival is the length of time between the first symptoms and diagnosis. It welcomes the recent public health campaigns by Macmillan and the ongoing work by organisations such as the North West Cancer Research Fund.

(3) Council also welcomes the initial response of the Primary Care Trust to these alarming figures and requests a report on the issues be brought to the Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Chris Teggin (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Ann Bridson (3 minutes)

Replace (1) with:

(1) Although the number of deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral is about the same as would be expected when compared to the rate of death in England as a whole, Council is concerned to note that the latest available data shows that between 2002 and 2008 there were 407 deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral.

Replace (3) with:

(3) Council welcomes the initial response of NHS Wirral to these figures, calls for a Wirral wide education campaign encouraging men to be screened for this condition and requests a report on the issue is brought to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Right of reply: Councillor Leah Fraser (7 minutes)

9. EMPTY RATES

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie (3 minutes)

(1) This Council welcomes the Chancellor's announcement of a temporary, one year, increase in the threshold exempting empty commercial properties up to £18000 rateable value from business rates.

(2) Council deplores the Government's decision to remove business rate relief on empty properties from April 2011 noting that:

- The tax is a heavy burden on small firms struggling with the recession. They tax individuals and companies on property assets that generate zero income.
- Buildings are empty because of a lack of demand. During a downturn, both rents and capital values fall, there is no reason for a Landlord to keep a building empty.
- Rates are a tax for provision of local services, empty buildings make little demand on local services.
- Speculative developments and regeneration projects are being shelved according to the Government's own regeneration experts. In the current economic climate, as occupier confidence wanes, it becomes more difficult to find commercial tenants.
- Older buildings are being demolished sooner than intended. Buildings nearing the end of their life might previously have been let at modest rents on a short term basis, before redevelopment. However, empty rates now make it cost effective to knock down a perfectly good building than to find a tenant. This

will reduce the supply of affordable property. It also contradicts the Government's green policy.

(3) Council asks the Chief Executive writes to the Chancellor asking for the restoration of empty rate relief.

Right of reply: Councillor Jeff Green (7 minutes)

10. IMPACT OF BUSINESS RATE REVALUATION

Proposed by Councillor John Hale (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Leah Fraser (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes the on going impact of the recession and the serious effect sudden and massive increases in business rates could have on job losses and business failures.

(2) Council as a matter of urgency, requests the Chief Executive to develop and present proposals to an early meeting of Wirral's Cabinet for a tax relief scheme to help the worst affected businesses in Wirral.

(3) Council believes that the scheme should be particularly focussed on the smaller Wirral businesses facing the biggest increases.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (3 minutes)

Delete all after, '(1) Council notes' and Insert:

that the level of rates for local businesses is not set locally, but nationally and that business rates are then pooled nationally and re-distributed to local government as part of the overall local government settlement, affecting the amount of grant which the government gives to each local council.

(2) Council further notes that any local tax relief scheme would not be funded by the government, but would have to be funded in a discretionary manner by the local Council.

(3) Council recognises that the Conservative Party nationally has clearly stated its intent to impose major cuts in public spending in order to reduce the national budget deficit, and that, if past history is anything to go by, local government would face severe reductions in grant under a Conservative government, making discretionary payments difficult to meet.

(4) Council notes that, once again, this would, in effect, be a transfer of costs from national to local government.

(5) Council also recognises that the Conservative party have pledged to scrap inheritance tax on estates worth up to a million pounds, or two million pounds for a couple, benefiting many of their wealthy supporters.

(6) Council believes that the money spent on reducing inheritance tax would be better spent on supporting local businesses and calls on the Conservatives locally to demand that their national party changes their policies to include a nationally funded tax relief scheme for local businesses facing difficulties in the current recession.

Right of reply: Councillor John Hale (7 minutes)

11. ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Karen Hayes (3 minutes)

(1) Council notes that anti social behaviour is one of the top issues for Wirral residents. Council believes that easily accessible and well-maintained services for young people are one of the most effective ways of providing positive alternatives for young people, most of whom are more likely to be victims of crime than the perpetrator.

(2) Council notes that participants in the Youth Parliament have previously raised issues of crime, anti social behaviour and provision of youth services with members and officers.

(3) Council notes that a review is being conducted on the provision of services for younger people and therefore requests officers ensure that young people and voluntary and community organisations be widely engaged in a meaningful consultation before a decision on the future shape of those services is made.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor George Davies (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan (7 minutes)

Insert the following 3 paragraphs after paragraph 1 and re-number accordingly.

(2) Council welcomes the success of current schemes to tackle youth related crime which have seen recently reported incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people in Wirral, reducing by 21% and arrests of young people falling by 20%.

(3) Council notes that at the centre of the range of initiatives is the multi-agency Challenge and Support Project which makes contact with all young people who are identified as engaging in anti-social behaviour or at risk of doing so, and both challenges their behaviour and looks at ways of providing support or intervention to deal with underlying problems. Council welcomes the fact that this has seen a significant improvement in behaviour in over half the young people referred and has

seen a notable reduction in the number of ABCs and ASBOs issued against young people.

(4) Council also welcomes the fact that Youth Crime Action Plan funding has also resulted in increased engagement with young people on the streets and at the end of the school day; increased reparation by young people engaged in crime and anti-social behaviour and multi-agency operations targeting and improving the safety of young people engaged in behaviour that is a risk to themselves and/or others.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor John Salter (3 minutes)

Add final paragraph:

Council notes that Seacombe's Allandale Youth Club has for many decades been a centre of beneficial youth engagement of the kind discussed in earlier paragraphs. Council applauds its management committee and volunteers for bringing the club to a high standard of excellence for the young people of our locality. However, with no permanent funding base such charitable trusts risk facing an income hiatus from time to time. Council therefore also applauds the timely response of our professional officers, and those of Wirral Biz, who responded to a request to provide guidance towards a strengthened management structure and a medium/long term business plan. Council further applauds local pubs and clubs for agreeing to stage discrete fund raising events to assist the Allandale in the short term thereby demonstrating a high degree of community support.

Right of reply: Councillor Sheila Clarke (7 minutes)

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Council Vacancies

STATUTORY COMMITTEES AND PANELS

SOCIAL CARE AND INCLUSION

(i) Discharge from Guardianship by Wirral Council under the Mental Health Act 1983 Panel (1:1:1) (Established by Cabinet 26/11/09 – members to be appointed from membership of Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Vacancy

Vacancy

Councillor A Bridson

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