



Budget Council

Town Hall
Wallasey

1 March 2019

Dear Councillor

This supplement for the Council meeting to be held at **6.00 p.m. on Monday, 4 March 2019** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, should be read in conjunction with the Council Summons dated 22 February 2019.

This meeting will be webcast at
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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AGENDA (additional papers)

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 44)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10 December 2018 (ordinary meeting) and 25 February 2019 (extraordinary meeting).

8. COUNCIL BUDGET (Pages 45 - 66)

Documents attached:

- (i) Cabinet Budget Resolution 2019/20 (Minute 54) revised to include Police and Fire Authority Precepts. **(Pages 45 – 60)**
- (ii) Conservative Group Budget Objection. **(Pages 61 – 62)**
- (iii) Liberal Democrat Group Budget Amendment. **(Pages 63 – 66)**



Director: Governance and Assurance

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COUNCIL

Monday, 10 December 2018

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Geoffrey Watt) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Tony Smith)

Councillors	RL Abbey	S Frost	B Mooney
	B Berry	A Gardner	C Muspratt
	J Bird	P Gilchrist	T Norbury
	C Blakeley	JE Green	C Povall
	A Brame	EA Grey	L Rennie
	P Brightmore	P Hackett	J Robinson
	K Cannon	P Hayes	L Rowlands
	C Carubia	A Hodson	C Spriggs
	P Cleary	AER Jones	J Stapleton
	W Clements	C Jones	P Stuart
	T Cottier	S Jones	M Sullivan
	T Cox	T Jones	A Sykes
	A Davies	M Jordan	T Usher
	G Davies	S Kelly	J Walsh
	P Davies	B Kenny	S Whittingham
	WJ Davies	A Leech	I Williams
	P Doughty	I Lewis	KJ Williams
	D Elderton	C Meaden	S Williams
	G Ellis	M McLaughlin	J Williamson
	S Foulkes	J McManus	G Wood

Apologies Councillors T Anderson K Hodson
D Burgess-Joyce D Mitchell

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Prior to the meeting formally commencing and at the invitation of the Civic Mayor, Rev David Chester led the Council in prayer.

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

Name	Item No. and Nature of Declaration
Councillor Lesley Rennie	Item No. 12(5) – Notice of Motion (Minute 85 refers). Personal – by virtue of her being a board member on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor Paul Hayes	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal – by virtue of his being a member of the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee.
Councillor Jeff Green	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal – by virtue of his employment.
Councillor Mary Jordan	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her employment, her son working for the NHS and being the company secretary for a charity at Arrowe Park Hospital.
Councillor Phil Gilchrist	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being a governor of the Cheshire and Wirral NHS Partnership Trust.
Councillor Tony Norbury	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of his daughter working for the NHS.
Councillor Sharon Jones	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her employment.
Councillor Joe Walsh	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of his daughters working for the NHS.
Councillor Steve Foulkes	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal – by virtue of him by virtue of his membership of the Merseytravel Committee of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
Councillor Chris Meaden	Item No. 12(5) – Notice of Motion (Minute 85 refers). Personal – by virtue of her being a board member on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.
Councillor Jerry Williams	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal – by virtue of his membership of the Merseytravel Committee of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
Councillor Christina Muspratt	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her daughters working within the NHS.
Councillor Phillip Brightmore	Item No. 12(2) – Notice of Motion (Minute 82 refers). Pecuniary – by virtue of him being a member of the Communication Workers Union and having received sponsorship in the past. Would leave the Chamber whilst this matter was debated.
Councillor Chris Jones	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her employment.

Councillor Janette Williamson	Item No. 12(3) – Notice of Motion (Minute 83 refers). Personal –by virtue of her employment.
Councillor Stuart Whittingham	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal –by virtue of his employment.
Councillor Angela Davies	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her employment.
Councillor Brian Kenny	Item No. 12(5) – Notice of Motion (Minute 85 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being a board member on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority; and Item No. 12(2) – Notice of Motion (Minute 82 refers). Personal and prejudicial – by virtue of his involvement with the Communication Workers Union.
Councillor Ron Abbey	Item No. 12(10) – Notice of Motion (Minute 90 refers). Personal – by virtue of his membership of the Merseytravel Committee of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
Councillor Adrian Jones	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of his wife working for the NHS.
Councillor Jean Stapleton	Item No. 12(5) – Notice of Motion (Minute 85 refers). Personal – by virtue of her being a board member on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.
Councillor Moira McLaughlin	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of her daughters working within the NHS.
Councillor Mike Sullivan	Item No. 9 – Matter referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute 69 refers). Personal – by virtue of his daughter working for the NHS.

62 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Tom Anderson, David Burgess-Joyce, Kathy Hodson and David Mitchell.

The Civic Mayor welcomed newly elected Councillor Jean Robinson to the Council.

The Civic Mayor commented on a further 85 engagements that he and the Mayoress had undertaken since the last meeting of Council and referred to a number of highlights including the events in commemoration of the 100 year anniversary of the 1914-18 Armistice, and the loss of Birkenhead War Poet Wilfred Owen.

The Civic Mayor then informed the Members that he had received two requests from Councillors wishing to address the Council.

The Civic Mayor then invited Councillor Moira McLaughlin to make a short personal statement. Councillor McLaughlin addressed the Council stating that it was with sadness that she had resigned the Labour Whip and thanked Members across the Chamber from all parties for their kind words of support.

The Civic Mayor then invited the Leader of Council to give his statement. Councillor Phil Davies provided Members with an update on the most recent status of workforce negotiations at the Cammell Laird Yard, Birkenhead.

63 **PROCEDURAL ITEM**

The Civic Mayor informed that as per the last meeting of Council the current Standing Order 18 referred to the ‘...normal method of voting at meetings of the Council shall be by show of hands...’ and that the Council therefore needed to determine if they wished to use the electronic voting system.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the electronic voting system be used for all votes at this meeting.

64 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 October, 2018 had been circulated to Members. On a motion by the Civic Mayor, seconded by Councillor Phil Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the minutes of the meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record.

65 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 21, the Mayor received petitions submitted by –

Councillor Leslie Rennie – on behalf of 21 residents of Upton in respect of Upton Victory Hall – to stop the demise of the building, and improve the street scene (Rake Lane).

Councillor Gerry Ellis – 476 signatories calling for an end to the condemning and felling of Wirral’s trees.

Councillor Wendy Clements – 471 signatories asking the Council not to build on greenfield sites, to concentrate on brownfield sites, and bring empty properties back into use.

Councillor Steve Foulkes – 18135 signatories re: Save Our Minor Injuries Units and Walk-In Centres.

Councillor Steve Foulkes – 188 signatories re: Cessation of the 492 and 495 bus routes in the evenings and on Sundays.

Councillor Angela Davies – 104 signatories requesting the re-instatement of the 83A bus service (Prenton / Birkenhead).

Resolved – That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with Standing Order 34.

66 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Ms Lorraine Krimou, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on the subject of Charging Policies for daycare providers, notably the PVI sector.

Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, responded accordingly.

Ms Krimou asked a supplementary question in accordance with Standing Order 10, and Councillor Bernie Mooney responded accordingly.

Mr Simon Gong, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on the subject of street lighting outages, maintenance and repairs.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member Highways and Transport, responded accordingly.

Mr Gong asked a supplementary question in accordance with Standing Order 10, and Councillor Stuart Whittingham responded accordingly.

Ms Keren O'Rourke, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on the subject of UK Climate Change.

Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member Environment, responded accordingly.

Ms O'Rourke asked a supplementary question in accordance with Standing Order 10, and Councillor Anita Leech responded accordingly.

Mr Geoffrey Roberts, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on proposals to outsource

management of the Warren Golf Course, and sought assurances on the lease agreements for existing tenants.

Councillor Phillip Brightmore, Cabinet Member Leisure and Recreation, responded accordingly.

67 **LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND CHAIRS REPORTS**

The Mayor introduced the reports from the Leader, Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs and asked for questions on any of the reports.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member Highways and Transport, regarding £1.465 million pounds recently provided by Government for the repair of damaged roads and work on bridges. What proposals did the Cabinet Member have for allocation of these funds, and could Members submit bids for a share of this additional funding to tackle the concerns of their residents in relation to highways matters.

Councillor Whittingham responded that that money was welcomed and a report of the 2019/20 repairs programme was to be reported in the New Year, he added that an email would be sent to Members with details nearer the time.

Councillor Mary Jordan asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member Finance and Resources, on how investing £26 Million in the Hoylake Golf Course helped the most vulnerable.

Councillor Williamson responded stating that this was matter not covered in her report, but income generation was core to the Council's new way of working, as had been referred to in the Cabinet Member, Environment's answer to an earlier question.

Councillor Jean Stapleton asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding the Council's plans when it assumed the role of Borough of Culture.

Councillor P Davies responded that he was pleased to have attended the official handover at St Helens the previous weekend and was proud that Wirral had been selected for this role in 2019. He provided an update on a number of proposed highlight projects and informed Council that more details would be announced in due course.

Councillor Bruce Berry asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth, regarding the plans for £150 million investment in Birkenhead, and questioned why other investment had not been set aside for centres such as Liscard and New Ferry.

Councillor A Davies responded that the massive investment programme planned for Birkenhead Commercial District was well known, and a key driver for regeneration under the auspices of the Wirral Growth Company.

Councillor Alan Brame asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member Housing and Planning, requesting updated figures regarding empty / substandard properties being brought back into use.

Councillor G Davies responded, directing Councillor Brame to the last paragraph of his report, stating that the number had reduced to 4200 and that the 2015 target to bring empty properties into use should be achieved by 2020.

Councillor Andrew Gardner asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member Housing and Planning regarding Government guidance on housing numbers did not represent a mandatory target, and was simply a starting point for local authorities to work within its boundaries and other constraints such as green belt.

Councillor G Davies responded that he was aware of this, and Wirral's housing figures had been based on the Office for National Statistics figure of 488 per year.

Councillor Tony Cox asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding the plans for significant investment and questioned why these funds were not being directed towards New Ferry.

Councillor P Davies responded that the development had received support from Conservative Members, but Government cuts meant that the Council needed to raise additional income from alternate funding streams such as the development of Hoylake Golf Course.

Councillor Joe Walsh asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member Finance and Resources, regarding New Ferry and how the Government had been dragging its feet to support the people affected by the explosion.

Councillor Williamson responded that the Government had completely ignored New Ferry and in addition to the £300,000 already spent by Wirral Council to help deal with this tragedy, it had been agreed in principal to establish a hardship fund for those victims of the blast.

Councillor Pat Cleary asked a question of Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member Environment, regarding the recent reports of insulting and disrespectful behaviour of Kingdom employees (this Council's contractor) that had resulted in Liverpool Council's cancelling of their contract.

Councillor Leech responded that she was disappointed by the alleged comments and had asked Kingdom to investigate. She added that Wirral's

team was now under new management and Council officers were working with the company using robust contractual arrangements to investigate when things went wrong.

Councillor Cherry Povall asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore, Cabinet Member Leisure and Recreation, as to why the Brackenwood Golf Course had been excluded from the recently announced plans for Wirral Golf Courses.

Councillor Brightmore responded that Brackenwood was part of the Green Space review and any decisions would be made once this had concluded.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member Housing and Planning, regarding the actual numbers for Wirral Waters Housing used in the local plan.

Councillor G Davies responded that he too had been bewildered by promises made by the developer, but at present 1100 units were scheduled to be delivered as part of a planning application expected for decision in the next two weeks. He added that he had written to the company and the Government Minister regarding past promises on this matter.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth, regarding social media comments with regards to Birkenhead's shipyards, support of skilled workers and cessation of existing partnerships.

Councillor A Davies responded that she was proud to support the shipyard's workers and pleased to say that redundancy notices had been withdrawn.

Councillor Jeff Green asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member Highways and Transport, regarding why Members had not been invited to submit suggestions to the structural maintenance programme.

Councillor Whittingham responded that this had been answered in his earlier response to Councillor Gilchrist.

Councillor Brian Kenny asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth, to provide an update on progress for Birkenhead Commercial District.

Councillor A Davies responded that regeneration was central to the Council's 2020 pledges, and that the Council had entered a joint venture arrangement with the company 'Muse' and that Cabinet had recently approved public consultation to hear views on the proposed masterplan. She added that the Commercial District would provide benefits of centralisation for both Council and other workers, acting as a catalyst for business and providing job opportunities.

Councillor Wendy Clements asked a question of Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member Adult Care and Health, regarding the current proposals for Walk-In Centres and Urgent Care Treatment.

Councillor C Jones responded that the Clinical Commissioning Group's consultation was ongoing and that she had submitted her views and would await the outcome.

Councillor Gerry Ellis asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore, Cabinet Member Leisure and Recreation, regarding the recent felling of trees in the Borough and lack of consultation with residents and Ward Councillors.

Councillor Brightmore responded that the matter was one of public safety, surveys had been undertaken and that the Council had a duty of care with regard to public safety and he was satisfied that the work was necessary.

Councillor David Elderton asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member Housing and Planning, regarding bringing back empty properties into use, offsetting the requirement for new builds as part of the local plan.

Councillor G Davies responded that he hoped that as many such properties could be utilised, possibly as many as 3500.

Councillor Pat Hackett asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding the status of funding bids for the regeneration of New Ferry and Liscard.

Councillor P Davies responded that work was taking place and a bid for £1 million had been submitted to the LCR Mayor. He added that the matter was subject to due diligence but hoped that a 50/50 split between the two centres would be agreed.

Councillor Andrew Hodson asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding a Social Media comment linking Peel Holdings to the local Tories.

Councillor P Davies responded, referring to an earlier answer and added that as a developer of brownfield sites the company had a responsibility to deliver on their earlier promise of 13,500 properties.

Councillor Adam Sykes asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore, Cabinet Member Leisure and Recreation, regarding his plans for the review of local Library Services.

Councillor Brightmore responded that the proposals were being drafted and would be presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Councillor Steve Williams asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member Highways and Transport, regarding how much Government funding had been allocated for the works set out in his report.

Councillor Whittingham responded that he would provide a written response.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore, Cabinet Member Leisure and Recreation, querying that despite the Council's commitment to inclusive growth, the proposal for Hoylake Golf Course was 'exclusive'. He added that given the search for an alternative specialist provider for the Council's golf courses and that usage of golf facilities was down / in decline, why had the Council not considered a wildlife park centre instead.

Councillor Brightmore responded that despite recent dwindling numbers, golf was still enjoyed by thousands both across the Borough and Nationally. The arrangement to outsource the operation of the Council's golf courses would provide additional investment and attract new comers to the sport.

Councillor George Davies asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member Finance and Resources, regarding savings made from restructuring senior management.

Councillor Williamson responded that this focussed on staff not in a frontline role, and included back office staffing. The exercise was undertaken in November and was taking into account views whether or not posts could be deleted, avoiding indiscriminate removal of staff as had happened in the past.

Councillor Les Rowlands asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member Finance and Resources, regarding outstanding debt and monies owed to/by the NHS.

Councillor Williamson responded that she would provide a written response.

Councillor Lesley Rennie asked a question of Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member Environment, regarding the current status of the Public Space Protection Order and whether she had had the opportunity to meet with any group representatives opposing the proposals.

Councillor Leech responded that since her appointment she had been looking into the detail of this matter and the matter would be the subject of pre-decision scrutiny by Members in January.

Councillor Chris Carubia asked a question of Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member Adult Care and Health, regarding the Constitutional issues that prevented Members of the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee voting on recent matters of Call-In.

Councillor C Jones responded that the matter had been of concern to all Members and requested that this be addressed.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member Finance and Resources, regarding removal of revenue support grant funding from Government and that he hoped the Cabinet Member would be taking part in the fair funding review currently underway.

Councillor Williamson responded that removal of the grant was placing significant pressures on local authorities and the need for Council to generate income was vital, with many Council's in the North of England being left to sink or swim.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth, regarding recently reported figures for jobs at the Celtic Manor Hotel.

Councillor A Davies responded that the figures represented more than just the hotel itself, but would include construction, supply chain and other services associated with the resort.

68 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor Steve Williams asked a question of the Cabinet Member for Environment concerning the spending of Wirral Council's £6.7 million share of Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority's Waste Development Fund. Councillor Anita Leech responded accordingly.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of the Cabinet Member for Environment in relation to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement that promised £10 million funding (2019-20 to 2022-23) for local community street trees and urban trees. Councillor Anita Leech responded accordingly.

69 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES OR OTHER COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Chris Carubia seconded the following Motion as contained within the Council Supplement Item 9 - Matters referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Call-In of the decision taken by the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board (Cabinet Committee) - Standing Order 8(r) applied:

"Council understands and endorses the views expressed by the Adult Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In so doing, Council appreciates...

- i. the need to secure open and transparent working arrangements with the commissioners of local health and related services;

- ii. the views expressed by the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health and Chair of the Commissioning Group;
- iii. the urgency of ensuring that services are in place during 2018/19.

As a result, Council will not cause further delay in developing arrangements to enter into the s75 agreement.

Notwithstanding these comments, Council endorses the calls made for improved and early dissemination of information to elected Members, especially the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees most closely involved.

Thus Council requests that members of the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board Cabinet Committee ensure that a meaningful dialogue is established with Councillors and that the mechanisms requested be established”.

Following a debate conducted in accordance with Standing Order 12, and Councillor Gilchrist having replied, a number of Members rose to request a ‘card vote’.

A recorded vote was then taken on the motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (45) R Abbey, B Berry, C Blakeley, A Brame, P Brightmore, C Carubia, W Clements, T Cox, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, S Foulkes, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, J Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, AER Jones, C Jones, S Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Povall, L Rennie, L Rowlands, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, A Sykes, T Usher, S Whittingham, S Williams, J Williamson and G Wood.

Against the motion (13) J Bird, K Cannon, P Cleary, T Cottier, P Hackett, T Jones, C Muspratt, T Norbury, PA (Tony) Smith, C Spriggs, J Walsh, I Williams, and KJ Williams.

Four abstentions – Councillors S Frost, E Grey, J Robinson and Councillor G Watt (Civic Mayor).

Resolved (45:13) (four abstentions) – That the motion be approved.

70 PROCEDURAL ITEM

It was moved by Councillor Ron Abbey and seconded by Councillor Phil Davies that Standing Order 9(1) be suspended to introduce a guillotine on the business of Council at 8:30pm and Motions 1, 2 and 3 at agenda item 12 be debated with the guillotine coming into effect after that.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Gilchrist and seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary that the guillotine come into effect at 9:30pm.

Upon being put to the vote, it was -

Resolved (32:29) (no abstentions) – That Standing Order 9(1) be suspended at 9:30pm with the guillotine coming into effect after that.

71 **VACANCIES**

The Council considered a report of the Director of Governance and Assurance on the revision to committee places in light of the resignation of a member of the Labour Group to become an Independent Member.

The Council was asked to receive nominations in accordance with Standing Order 25(6) for any proposed changes to membership of Committees and outside organisations and to agree the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs where appropriate.

On motions by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved –

(1) (56:0) (One abstention) – That Councillor Sharon Jones be appointed Vice Chair of the Adult Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(2) (55:1) (One abstention) – That Councillor Elizabeth Grey be appointed Vice Chair of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(3) (40:17) (One abstention) – That Councillor Bernie Mooney be appointed Chair of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee.

(4) (38:19) (One abstention) – That Councillor Angela Davies be appointed Vice Chair of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee.

(5) (59:0) (One abstention) - That the revised constitution and membership of committees for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year (including deputies), having regard to the political proportionality requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 and relevant case law, be agreed, with the Committee places allocation as set out below:

Committee	Places	Lab	Con	L/Dem	Green	Ind
Audit and Risk Management	9	5	3	1		
Employment and Appointments	8	5	2	1		
Licensing Act 2003	15	9	4	1		1
Licensing, Health & Safety and General Purposes	9	5	3	1		
Pensions	10	6	3	0	1	
Planning	13	7	4	1	1	
Standards & Constitutional Oversight	9	5	3	1		
Overview & Scrutiny: Business	15	8	5	1		1
Overview & Scrutiny: Environment	15	9	5	1		
Overview & Scrutiny: Adult Social Care	15	8	5	1		1
Overview & Scrutiny: Children and Families	15	8	5	1		1
Total	133	75	42	10	2	4

(59:0) (One abstention) - That Council agrees that names of appointees to Committees and outside bodies be provided to the Director of Governance and Assurance following the meeting.

72 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL

In accordance with Standing Order 5(2) seven matters had been submitted for approval or consideration by the Council (see minutes 73 to 79 post).

73 REVISED PENSION BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE

The first matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the recommendation of the Pensions Committee of 16 July 2018 such that the Council's Constitution be updated to include the revisions to the Pension Board's terms of reference (minute 10 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Paul Doughty, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 10 of the Pensions Committee, be approved.

74 **DRAFT STATEMENT OF POLICY - GAMBLING ACT 2005**

The second matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the recommendation of the Licensing Act 2003 Committee of 17 October 2018 such that the Draft Statement of Policy – Gambling Act 2005 be recommended for approval by Council (minute 9 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Tony Norbury, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 9 of the Licensing Act 2003 Committee, be approved.

75 **CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The third matter requiring consideration was in relations to a request to approve the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Management Committee of 19 November 2018 such that the Council's Constitution be updated to include the revised Code of Corporate Governance and new governance framework (minute 36 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Adrian Jones, seconded by Councillor Ron Abbey, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 36 of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, be approved.

76 **QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - REVENUE**

The fourth matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve that Capital Receipts funding for the Children's Services transformation programme be brought forward from 2017/18 in the amount of £1.1 million, as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 November, 2018 (minute 35 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 35 of Cabinet, be approved.

77 **QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - CAPITAL**

The fifth matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the revised Capital Programme of £60.9 million for 2018/19, as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 November, 2018 (minute 36 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 36 of Cabinet, be approved.

78 **COUNCIL TAX 2019/20 (TAXBASE, DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME)**

The sixth matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the Council Tax 2019/20 (Taxbase, Discounts and Exemptions and Council Tax Support Scheme), as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 November, 2018 (minute 39 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 39 of Cabinet, be approved.

79 **WIRRAL TOGETHER: GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT - A NEW MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The seventh matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve that the provisions relating to Constituency Committees be removed from the Council's Constitution (Council's executive arrangements) as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 26 November, 2018 (minute 41 refers).

Moved by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies.

Amendment

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Chris Carubia seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9):

“That the matter be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration of the following aspects as Council does not accept that the revised arrangements fully meet the needs of Members or their communities. Members who have faced tough questioning on Hoylake Golf Resort and other issues at the Constituency Committees should not close down this means of access for the public.

The Constituency Committees replaced a system of neighbourhood-based and area committees which were also undermined and abolished. Whilst the potential for members to work together exists across ward boundaries, it is not clear how this will be facilitated or serviced.

The ability of Members to hold cross-ward meetings on issues of common concern is not fully set out. The Leader has suggested that there is a lot of room for manoeuvre but the deletion of the Constituency Committees from the Constitution, without a clear formula for replacing local democratic arrangements, should not take place.

It should be noted that the Wirral South Committee has, across party, become an important forum for debating issues - like bus and walk in services - affecting all wards. The Constituency Committee ward representatives do not appear to have been asked for views on the new arrangements.

The prospect of funding for Members to assist their communities is welcomed. The ability of Members to engage with organisations and encourage applications for funding is undermined by the proposed financial checks and balances which contain no right of appeal. The ability of Members to use local funding for simple projects like 'dropped kerbs' is also removed and there is, as yet, no indication of how these might be secured through a dedicated local budget."

The amendment was put and lost (6:52) (Two abstentions).

The original motion was put and carried (56:4) (One abstention).

Resolved (56:4) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 41 of Cabinet, be approved.

80 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Notices of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1) were reported to Council. The Civic Mayor having considered each motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) had decided that they would each be debated and they were determined as detailed in Minutes 81 to 90 below.

81 **MOTION - ON-GOING IMPACT OF NEW FERRY EXPLOSION**

Councillor Jo Bird moved and Councillor Joe Walsh seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

(1) "Council notes that the impact of the gas explosion in New Ferry is not over. Some families are facing their second Christmas in temporary accommodation. Some businesses have had to shut up shop.

- (2) Council is disappointed the Government has failed to provide any direct financial support to help deal with the disruption and damage caused in the New Ferry explosion.
- (3) Council notes that 12 months have passed since Wirral Council on behalf of residents and businesses submitted a full Regeneration Plan to the Secretary of State and have not received any direct support for the rebuilding of New Ferry town centre.
- (4) Council notes that James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, has written to Alison McGovern MP more than two months after she led a delegation to Westminster to demand action.
- (5) Council is concerned that James Brokenshire's letter incorrectly claims that Wirral Council has never requested funding support.
- (6) Council notes that the Leader of the Council wrote to the minister on 7th July 2017 asking for £500,000 to help with the costs of emergency help, and the minister replied on 17th July 2017 declining support saying: "for an incident of this size and impact we would expect these costs to be covered using existing local resources."
- (7) Council further notes that following the Grenfell Tower fire, the Salisbury attack, the Belfast City Centre fire, and the shop fire in Hinckley Leicestershire, the Government quickly mobilised support for those communities and is disappointed a similar response wasn't made for the people of New Ferry.
- (8) Council requests the Leader and Cabinet to:
 - (i). Write to James Brokenshire to set the record straight and call upon the Government to support the New Ferry Regeneration Plan.
 - (ii). Continue to work with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to access the £500,000 available through the Mayor's Town Centre Fund.
 - (iii). Encourage applications from the Local Welfare Assistance Fund from people directly affected by the blast.
 - (iv). Submit a formal application for funding under the Bellwin scheme as soon as possible.
 - (v). Work with Alison McGovern MP, local ward members, New Ferry Town Team, local residents, traders and other partners to ensure plans are delivered to support a thriving and regenerated New Ferry."

Following a debate on the matter, the motion was put and carried (59:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (59:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

82 MOTION - POST OFFICE SERVICES

Having previously declared a pecuniary interest in the item, Councillor Phillip Brightmore vacated the Chamber and did not take part in the voting thereon, as did Councillor Brian Kenny who had declared a personal and prejudicial interest (Minute No. 61 refers).

Prior to consideration of the motion, the Civic Mayor sought Council's consent for the acceptance of a corrected amendment recently circulated to Members.

Following a challenge on procedural grounds from Councillor Chris Blakeley, acceptance of the corrected amendment was put and carried (56:0) (Two abstentions).

Councillor Paul Hayes then moved and Councillor Ian Lewis seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council welcomes the government investment of more than £2 billion since 2010 and notes the Post Office now has:

- a stable network of around 11,600 branches
- modernised more than 7,500 branches with new technology
- extended opening hours on weekdays and at weekends
- become the UK's largest Sunday retailer with more than 4,400 branches open
- ensured 93% of people now live within one mile of their nearest branch.

Council however regrets that Post Office branches in Wallasey Village, New Brighton and Upton are among those currently closed, due to national 'audit' and system irregularities and requests the Chief Executive writes to the Post Office to relay these concerns and request urgent and speedy resolution to enable all Wirral residents to have access to a local Post Office, serving their communities.”

Amendment

Councillor Stuart Whittingham moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to the following amendments –

Paragraph 1 and bullet points:

Delete the words:

“welcomes the government investment of more than £2 billion since 2010 and notes the Post Office now has:

- a stable network of around 11,600 branches
- modernised more than 7,500 branches with new technology
- extended opening hours on weekdays and at weekends
- become the UK’s largest Sunday retailer with more than 4,400 branches open
- ensured 93% of people now live within one mile of their nearest branch.”

Replace with:

“congratulates the Communication Workers Union on their campaign to protect the vital services provided by the Post Office in contrast to the Government owned network being decimated”

Paragraph 2:

Delete the words “however regrets”, and insert “believes”

Delete the words “due to national ‘audit’ and system irregularities”

Delete the words “and request urgent and speedy...” and insert “ and requests urgently that the Post Office ends its programme of Crown Office closures and moves to implement a speedy...”

Delete “,serving their communities.” and insert “,that not only serve our community but provides secure well paid employment that is vital to generating a thriving local economy”.

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and carried (54:3) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was put and carried (56:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (56:0) (One abstention) –

Council congratulates the Communication Workers Union on their campaign to protect the vital services provided by the Post Office in contrast to the Government owned network being decimated.

Council believes that Post Office branches in Wallasey Village, New Brighton and Upton are among those currently closed, and requests that the Chief Executive writes to the Post Office to relay our concerns and requests urgently that the Post Office ends its programme of Crown Office closures and moves to implement a speedy resolution to enable all Wirral residents to have access to a local Post Office, that not only

serves our community but provides secure well paid employment that is vital to generating a thriving local economy.

83 **MOTION - TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Chris Carubia seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“This Council welcomes the work on the difficulties facing recipients of Universal Credit undertaken by the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Council notes that the work continued under the Chairmanship of Councillor Hackett and concluded in July and September this year.

Council notes that the introduction, roll out and operation of Universal Credit has remained an issue of considerable public concern. Council notes that Wirral’s MPs raised concerns about the operation of Universal Credit in the Commons on 17 October 2018

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-10-17/debates/CD3131AC-C7F0-4DB6-A4EF-05191F92642F/UniversalCredit#contribution-D8EA2220-AB8D-4499-AA45-687AED39EED6>

Opportunities to address and correct the financial injustices were taken by two Wirral Members of Parliament, the Rt Hon Frank Field and the Member for Wirral South, Alison McGovern, who supported an Amendment put forward by the Liberal Democrats. It is regrettable that the Amendment was not more widely supported.

Following the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s Budget in October, some changes are expected to be made in the financing and operation of the system. The financial effects of the system led Iain Duncan Smith, the former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, to resign in March 2016. In his resignation letter, he stated...

“Too often my team and I will have been pressured in the immediate run-up to a budget or fiscal event to deliver yet more reductions to the working age benefit bill. There has been too much emphasis on money saving exercises and not enough awareness from the Treasury, in particular, that the government’s vision of a new welfare-to-work system could not repeatedly be salami-sliced.”

Whilst some changes have been made, the resignation of the Secretary of State, Esther McVey, has presented an opportunity for the new Secretary of State, Amber Rudd, to be pressed to take a fresh look at the changes needed to Universal Credit.

Council, therefore, wishes to work through the Local Government Association and support Wirral’s Members of Parliament in continued approaches to deal with the problems causing hardship to recipients.”

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The motion was put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

84 **MOTION - CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Councillor Pat Cleary moved and Councillor Stuart Kelly seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council notes the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report ‘Global warming of 1.5°’ published on 8 October 2018, in particular:

that human activities are estimated to have already caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels;

that if we continue at the current rate, we are likely to surpass the Paris Agreement target of 1.5°C as early as 2030;

that, at the current level of commitments, the world is on course for at least 3°C of warming with irreversible and catastrophic consequences for humans and the natural world.

Council believes that:

the impacts of global temperature rise above 1.5°C, are so severe that governments at all levels must work together and make this their top priority.

as well as large-scale improvements in health and wellbeing around the world, bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities.

Therefore, Council requests that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee working group, with a remit to

- (i). Seek advice from experts to develop a robust carbon budget and set a challenging target date for carbon neutrality in Wirral;
- (ii). Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council’s activities;
- (iii). Make recommendations and set an ambitious timescale for reducing these impacts;

- (iv). Report to full Council with the actions the Council needs to take to address this emergency.

In addition, Council further requests that the Leader & Cabinet:

- require all report risk assessments should include Carbon Emission Appraisals, including presenting alternative approaches which reduce emissions wherever possible.
- task a director level officer with responsibility for reducing as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities.
- writes to inform the Prime Minister that Wirral has declared a climate emergency."

First Amendment

Councillor Adam Sykes moved and Councillor Andrew Gardner seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to –

Delete "establish an Overview and Scrutiny Committee working group, with a remit to

- (i). Seek advice from experts to develop a robust carbon budget and set a challenging target date for carbon neutrality in Wirral;
- (ii). Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities;
- (iii). Make recommendations and set an ambitious timescale for reducing these impacts;
- (iv). Report to full Council with the actions the Council needs to take to address this emergency."

And insert "continues to actively scrutinise the work of the Cool Wirral Partnership and the Climate Change Action Plan, taking into account the recent warnings, and look for opportunities to supplement this work, through scrutiny reviews, where applicable."

Delete: "task a director level officer with responsibility for reducing as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities.

writes to inform the Prime Minister that Wirral has declared a climate emergency."

And insert: "ensure that all avenues of additional funding are made use of, including the £4.5 million pot, made available by the government, to help local authorities to install electric car charging points.

In addition, analyse, by way of a low carbon report and audit, the Council's real estate portfolio and implement improvement opportunities via a new low carbon facilities management strategy."

Second Amendment

Councillor Anita Leech moved and Councillor Stuart Whittingham seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to –

"Delete all after paragraph 5 ('Council believes that:') and replace with.

Council notes the recent Government publication 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' which intends to make 2019 a Year of Action for the environment. It notes work in the city region to promote a Liverpool City Region Year of Environment 2019.

Council notes that the present climate change strategy for Wirral runs to 2019 and that work has commenced to develop a new strategy.

Council notes that promoting sustainability appraisal tools to improve decision making is a priority identified in the latest report of the Cool Wirral Partnership (formerly Wirral Climate Change Group).

Council recognises climate change as a significant issue and believes that we need to make changes for the benefit of residents of Wirral and for future generations. Council is committed to act on climate change.

- Council is a signatory to the Local Government's Association's Climate Local initiative and has pledged its support for the UN's Paris Agreement on climate change
- Council endorsed the present climate change strategy for Wirral (Cool) in 2014 – which covers the period to 2019.
- Council supports a partnership to champion local climate action in support of the strategy in recognition that widespread action is necessary.
- Council has a corporate target to cut council emissions by 60% by 2025.
- Council produces a public greenhouse gas emissions report.
- Officers present an annual report on climate change to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Council recognises there are links between work to cut climate emissions and work to improve local air quality.

Council notes that in support of local climate commitments many actions are being taken, including but not limited to:

- Work to educate our young people to encourage positive behaviour change
- Statements opposing fracking.
- Plans for better facilities for our own workforce in more energy efficient buildings
- Work to mark Clean Air Day
- A quarterly Air Quality meeting of senior representatives from within the Council including Planning, Strategy, Sustainability, Environmental Health, Public Health, Transportation and Licensing
- Work to bring together experts including politicians over the next 12-months to assist the Combined Authority to look at Air Quality.

Council believes:

- The creation of a new climate change strategy for Wirral presents an important opportunity to consider the latest scientific evidence and develop a suitable response locally.
- The upcoming Year of the Environment 2019 presents an opportunity to convey the scale of the challenge and to engage people with this issue
- That the emergency action required on climate change is bigger than the requirement for a Task and Finish group for an individual scrutiny committee and requires work in partnership with others.

Therefore, Council requests that:

- Representatives on the Cool Wirral Partnership be asked to ensure the new climate change strategy for Wirral include a challenging target for emissions reduction in line with the latest scientific guidance, along with ambitious recommendations to address this challenge.
- Officers are asked to make regular reports to Cabinet during the 2019 Year of the Environment on local climate action.
- Officers are asked to make recommendations to Cabinet on tools to assist the council consider the impacts of climate change as part of its decision making processes
- Officers are asked to look at new progressive innovative solutions and alternatives, such as the use of renewables, maximising the use of recycled materials, encouraging cycling and walking as the travel mode of choice, promoting and encouraging the use of ultra-low carbon vehicles.
- Officers are requested to monitor the 2020 pledges for the Environment Committee.
- Officers continue to prepare an annual report on climate change and that this report continues to be taken first to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to enable the work to be scrutinised prior to consideration by Cabinet
- The leader of the council be asked to write to the Prime Minister expressing our concerns around Climate Change and the desire for

political pressures to make rapid change, in a time when we need to be guided by ethics not cost.”

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The first amendment was put and lost (17:42) (One abstention).

The second amendment was put and carried (58:1) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was put and carried (58:1) (One abstention).

Resolved (58:1) (One abstention) –

Council notes the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report ‘Global warming of 1.5°’ published on 8 October 2018, in particular:

that human activities are estimated to have already caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels;

that if we continue at the current rate, we are likely to surpass the Paris Agreement target of 1.5°C as early as 2030;

that, at the current level of commitments, the world is on course for at least 3°C of warming with irreversible and catastrophic consequences for humans and the natural world.

Council notes the recent Government publication ‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’ which intends to make 2019 a Year of Action for the environment. It notes work in the city region to promote a Liverpool City Region Year of Environment 2019.

Council notes that the present climate change strategy for Wirral runs to 2019 and that work has commenced to develop a new strategy.

Council notes that promoting sustainability appraisal tools to improve decision making is a priority identified in the latest report of the Cool Wirral Partnership (formerly Wirral Climate Change Group).

Council recognises climate change as a significant issue and believes that we need to make changes for the benefit of residents of Wirral and for future generations. Council is committed to act on climate change.

- **Council is a signatory to the Local Government’s Association’s Climate Local initiative and has pledged its support for the UN’s Paris Agreement on climate change**
- **Council endorsed the present climate change strategy for Wirral (Cool) in 2014 – which covers the period to 2019.**

- Council supports a partnership to champion local climate action in support of the strategy in recognition that widespread action is necessary.
- Council has a corporate target to cut council emissions by 60% by 2025.
- Council produces a public greenhouse gas emissions report.
- Officers present an annual report on climate change to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Council recognises there are links between work to cut climate emissions and work to improve local air quality.

Council notes that in support of local climate commitments many actions are being taken, including but not limited to:

- Work to educate our young people to encourage positive behaviour change
- Statements opposing fracking.
- Plans for better facilities for our own workforce in more energy efficient buildings
- Work to mark Clean Air Day
- A quarterly Air Quality meeting of senior representatives from within the Council including Planning, Strategy, Sustainability, Environmental Health, Public Health, Transportation and Licensing
- Work to bring together experts including politicians over the next 12-months to assist the Combined Authority to look at Air Quality.

Council believes:

- The creation of a new climate change strategy for Wirral presents an important opportunity to consider the latest scientific evidence and develop a suitable response locally.
- The upcoming Year of the Environment 2019 presents an opportunity to convey the scale of the challenge and to engage people with this issue
- That the emergency action required on climate change is bigger than the requirement for a Task and Finish group for an individual scrutiny committee and requires work in partnership with others.

Therefore, Council requests that:

- Representatives on the Cool Wirral Partnership be asked to ensure the new climate change strategy for Wirral include a challenging target for emissions reduction in line with the latest scientific guidance, along with ambitious recommendations to address this challenge.
- Officers are asked to make regular reports to Cabinet during the 2019 Year of the Environment on local climate action.

- **Officers are asked to make recommendations to Cabinet on tools to assist the council consider the impacts of climate change as part of its decision making processes**
- **Officers are asked to look at new progressive innovative solutions and alternatives, such as the use of renewables, maximising the use of recycled materials, encouraging cycling and walking as the travel mode of choice, promoting and encouraging the use of ultra-low carbon vehicles.**
- **Officers are requested to monitor the 2020 pledges for the Environment Committee.**
- **Officers continue to prepare an annual report on climate change and that this report continues to be taken first to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee to enable the work to be scrutinised prior to consideration by Cabinet**

The leader of the council be asked to write to the Prime Minister expressing our concerns around Climate Change and the desire for political pressures to make rapid change, in a time when we need to be guided by ethics not cost.

85 MOTION - CUTS TO MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Councillor Brian Kenny moved and Councillor Chris Meaden seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

This Wirral Council believes that the cuts imposed by Government on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) have gone too far and should be reversed to ensure public safety is protected. To this end the Council will work in collaboration with MFRA, Merseyside's constituent District Councils, Mayors Anderson and Rotherham, MP's the FBU and all trade unions to jointly lobby Government to demand assurances that, the cuts imposed on the Authority be reversed and that the case for increased funding for MFRA will be fully considered on the basis of public safety.

This Council also supports the Fire & Rescue Authority's position when demanding assurances that, as an absolute minimum, Government commit to ensuring that there will be no further grant reductions applied to MFRA and that the Authority will be fully protected in relation to any new financial burdens.

Finally, the Council demands the removal of the government imposed 'cap' on the Council Tax flexibility thereby allowing local application of Council Tax arrangements in order to fully protect the public.

Amendment

With the agreement of the Proposer and Seconder of the original motion inclusion of an amendment proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by

Stuart Kelly submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) was agreed, to:

Insert after paragraph 1...

Council again wishes to draw attention to the number of COMAH sites within the Borough and their proximity to long-established areas of dense housing. This is especially the case with the installations in Rock Ferry and Eastham associated with chemical storage, petroleum products and refinery installations.

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The substantive motion as amended was put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) –

This Wirral Council believes that the cuts imposed by Government on Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority (MFRA) have gone too far and should be reversed to ensure public safety is protected. To this end the Council will work in collaboration with MFRA, Merseyside's constituent District Councils, Mayors Anderson and Rotherham, MP's the FBU and all trade unions to jointly lobby Government to demand assurances that, the cuts imposed on the Authority be reversed and that the case for increased funding for MFRA will be fully considered on the basis of public safety.

Council again wishes to draw attention to the number of COMAH sites within the Borough and their proximity to long-established areas of dense housing. This is especially the case with the installations in Rock Ferry and Eastham associated with chemical storage, petroleum products and refinery installations.

This Council also supports the Fire & Rescue Authority's position when demanding assurances that, as an absolute minimum, Government commit to ensuring that there will be no further grant reductions applied to MFRA and that the Authority will be fully protected in relation to any new financial burdens.

Finally, the Council demands the removal of the government imposed 'cap' on the Council Tax flexibility thereby allowing local application of Council Tax arrangements in order to fully protect the public.

86 **MOTION - A FREE SCHOOL FOR WIRRAL**

Councillor Jeff Green moved and Councillor Cherry Povall seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council welcomes the submission of an application by the Frank Field Education Trust to open a Free School in the Borough. Council expresses its support to the Trust in its application and requests that the Leader and Cabinet and officers help support this exciting new addition to education and learning in the Borough to extend parental choice, raise aspiration and improve outcomes.”

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The motion was put and lost (18:40) (Two abstentions).

87 **MOTION - TIME TO END THE HOYLAKE GOLF COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

Councillor Alan Brame moved and Councillor Pat Cleary seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council notes that a recent report to Cabinet on the ‘Future Provision of Golf Courses’ included these comments:

- (1) “...with the national trend in golf usage being generally down, (not just for municipal golf courses but also for the majority of private golf clubs)...”
- (2) “Participation in municipal golf in Wirral is in decline and follows a national trend in that people tend to have less disposable leisure time to spend on playing a five or six hour round of golf. Those people that would have traditionally played golf in the past have migrated to a more ‘time determined’ sport (such as cycling, running, fitness) to fulfil their leisure time demands.”

Given this gloomy assessment of current and future demand for golf facilities, Council recognises that the proposed Celtic Manor development of Hoylake Golf Course looks increasingly unviable.

Council now concludes that the access to prudential borrowing of £26 million agreed in December 2017 poses an unacceptable risk to public funds is no longer tenable or appropriate and therefore requests that the Leader and Cabinet end all further use of Council taxpayers’ money to support this scheme.”

Amendments

Councillor Phil Davies informed Council that the Labour amendment on this item was being withdrawn.

Councillor Andrew Gardner moved and Councillor Gerry Ellis seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to –

Delete from paragraph 4 'looks increasingly unviable.' and insert 'is best left to private sector financiers.'

Alter the final paragraph after 'Leader and Cabinet'

to:

(1) end all further use of Council taxpayer's money to support this scheme.

(2) investigate alternative uses for this borrowing which could be the kick-start to truly transformational regeneration in the areas of most need.

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (17:42) (One abstention).

The original motion was put and lost (22:36) (One abstention).

88 MOTION - PAID LEAVE FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS

Councillor Paul Stuart moved and Councillor Anita Leech seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council welcomes the recent review of Wirral Council's domestic abuse policy, guaranteeing employees of Wirral Borough Council who are victims of domestic abuse and coercive control, a minimum of one week paid leave in addition to the council special leave policy.

Wirral Council also calls on its partner agencies and local businesses to adopt similar policies.

Wirral Council welcomes the government's consultation and preparation of a draft bill on domestic abuse; endorses the Home Affairs Select Committee's report and recommendations; and calls on the government to adopt them in full.

Council calls on the UK government to bring legislation into the Domestic Abuse Bill that will give victims of domestic abuse guaranteed paid leave.”

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The motion was put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

89 MOTION - POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONERS TO RETHINK POLICING PRIORITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF WIRRAL RESIDENTS

Councillor Tony Cox moved and Councillor Andrew Gardner seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“As the person with sole responsibility for policing priority in Merseyside, Council recognises that the position of PCC is an onerous role.

Council also recognises the fact that, nationally, there are now more police officers per capita than there were in the 1960s. In fact, in 1961 it was 807 people for every officer and now it is just 462 people for every officer.

Council believes that there is far too much focus placed on monitoring minor ‘online offences’, many which are dismissed with few prosecutions brought, and not enough on ‘real world’ crime.

With notable people such as Chief Constable Sara Thornton, head of the new National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), saying, ‘I want us to solve more burglaries and bear down on violence before we make more records of incidents that are not crimes,’ It would seem that senior police officials are finally breaking rank and calling out the current, ridiculous state of affairs.

With a noticeable upturn in crime in the West Kirby area – from criminal damage, sexual acts in public, assault and even a knife attack – Council believes that Wirral residents deserve the same level of policing focus as the rest of Merseyside.

Therefore, Council calls upon the PCC, Jane Kennedy, to review the priorities she sets her Police Force in order to deal with the crimes that really hurt people. The crimes that have people fearful in their own home and in their communities – criminal damage, burglary, theft and violent crime – and to bring some perspective and common sense back to policing.”

Amendment

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Stuart Kelly seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to –

Delete paragraphs 2,3,4,5 & 6 - all after "...onerous role." and insert...

“Council requests that a meeting should be arranged with Merseyside’s Police and Crime Commissioner so that Councillors can consider...

- i. how the progress with the Merseyside Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 meets the objectives set out in that document
- ii. how the PCC and Chief Constable interpret and implement the key priorities set out in the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan, as
 - Prevent Crime and Anti-social Behaviour;

- Provide a Visible and Accessible Neighbourhood Policing Style;
 - Tackle Serious and Organised Crime; and
 - Support Victims, Protect Vulnerable People and Maintain Public Safety.
- iii. how the Police service responds to the issues of hate and cyber crime
 - iv. the concerns of Members about the level of policing in Wirral
 - v. the budgetary issues facing the force so that Members can discuss the level of precept the Commissioner might wish to set for the next financial year”.

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and carried (42:17) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was put and carried (59:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (59:0) (One abstention) –

As the person with sole responsibility for policing priority in Merseyside, Council recognises that the position of PCC is an onerous role.

Council requests that a meeting should be arranged with Merseyside’s Police and Crime Commissioner so that Councillors can consider...

- i. **how the progress with the Merseyside Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 meets the objectives set out in that document**
- ii. **how the PCC and Chief Constable interpret and implement the key priorities set out in the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan, as**
 - **Prevent Crime and Anti-social Behaviour;**
 - **Provide a Visible and Accessible Neighbourhood Policing Style;**
 - **Tackle Serious and Organised Crime; and**
 - **Support Victims, Protect Vulnerable People and Maintain Public Safety.**
- iii. **how the Police service responds to the issues of hate and cyber crime**
- iv. **the concerns of Members about the level of policing in Wirral**

- v. **the budgetary issues facing the force so that Members can discuss the level of precept the Commissioner might wish to set for the next financial year.**

90 **MOTION - TAKING BACK CONTROL OF OUR BUSES**

Councillor Stuart Kelly moved and Councillor Alan Brame seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“This Council notes that the decision of Avon Bus Services to cease trading at short notice on 5 October left huge gaps in Wirral’s bus service provision, including school buses.

Council places on record its thanks to members of Merseytravel’s Bus Services team for the work they have done to expedite the process for re-providing services and notes the positives that resulted from that exercise, including a reintroduced 91 bus service to Oxton Village and the introduction of replacement bus services, such as the 16/17, from South Wirral to Arrowe Park Hospital.

Council expresses its concern that there remain gaps in bus service provision, notably the loss of the 492/495 evening and Sunday service that linked Oxton / Noctorum / Beechwood to Arrowe Park Hospital.

Council further notes that bus operator decisions since the tendering exercise have resulted in further routes being withdrawn, notably...

1. The 10A service linking Oxton / Arrowe Park Hospital / Claughton Village (6th Form College) and New Brighton
2. The 83A from Birkenhead to West Kirby

Council considers that Wirral’s bus network has undergone significant detrimental change since the review of services undertaken by Merseytravel in September 2017 and welcomes the current consultation being carried out by Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, ‘The Big Bus Debate’.

Council further considers that the proposal by the CCG to relocate Minor Injury and Walk-in health services at Arrowe Park Hospital fails to take account of the poor bus connections from many parts of Wirral.

Council considers that the privatisation of bus services has failed outside London and that the current model of bus provision on Merseyside, (the so called ‘Bus Alliance’), is failing too many parts of the Wirral.

Council therefore calls on Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram to exercise powers devolved under the Bus Services Act 2017 and move towards a fully franchised bus network for LCR and Wirral.”

Amendment

Councillor Ron Abbey moved and Councillor Steve Foulkes seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to –

Delete all after "...London" and insert...

"Council welcomes the new devolved powers of the Buses Act 2017, however Council is frustrated by the very complex nature of the legislation that has meant these powers cannot be used as quickly as is needed. Council also condemns the Tory Government for banning local authorities from setting up new publicly owned companies as this could be a key means to improve local buses services and flies in the face of devolution".

Having applied the guillotine the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and carried (36:21) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was put and carried (57:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (57:0) (One abstention) –

This Council notes that the decision of Avon Bus Services to cease trading at short notice on 5 October left huge gaps in Wirral's bus service provision, including school buses.

Council places on record its thanks to members of Merseytravel's Bus Services team for the work they have done to expedite the process for reproviding services and notes the positives that resulted from that exercise, including a reintroduced 91 bus service to Oxton Village and the introduction of replacement bus services, such as the 16/17, from South Wirral to Arrowe Park Hospital.

Council expresses its concern that there remain gaps in bus service provision, notably the loss of the 492/495 evening and Sunday service that linked Oxton / Noctorum / Beechwood to Arrowe Park Hospital.

Council further notes that bus operator decisions since the tendering exercise have resulted in further routes being withdrawn, notably...

- 1. The 10A service linking Oxton / Arrowe Park Hospital / Claughton Village (6th Form College) and New Brighton**
- 2. The 83A from Birkenhead to West Kirby**

Council considers that Wirral's bus network has undergone significant detrimental change since the review of services undertaken by

Merseytravel in September 2017 and welcomes the current consultation being carried out by Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, 'The Big Bus Debate'.

Council further considers that the proposal by the CCG to relocate Minor Injury and Walk-in health services at Arrowe Park Hospital fails to take account of the poor bus connections from many parts of Wirral.

Council considers that the privatisation of bus services has failed outside London.

Council welcomes the new devolved powers of the Buses Act 2017, however Council is frustrated by the very complex nature of the legislation that has meant these powers cannot be used as quickly as is needed. Council also condemns the Tory Government for banning local authorities from setting up new publicly owned companies as this could be a key means to improve local buses services and flies in the face of devolution.

COUNCIL

Monday, 25 February 2019

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Geoffrey Watt) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Tony Smith)

Councillors	T Anderson	S Frost	B Mooney
	B Berry	A Gardner	C Muspratt
	J Bird	P Gilchrist	T Norbury
	C Blakeley	JE Green	C Povall
	A Brame	EA Grey	L Rennie
	P Brightmore	P Hayes	J Robinson
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Hodson	L Rowlands
	K Cannon	K Hodson	C Spriggs
	C Carubia	AER Jones	J Stapleton
	P Cleary	C Jones	P Stuart
	W Clements	S Jones	M Sullivan
	T Cottier	T Jones	A Sykes
	T Cox	M Jordan	T Usher
	A Davies	S Kelly	J Walsh
	G Davies	B Kenny	S Whittingham
	P Davies	A Leech	I Williams
	WJ Davies	I Lewis	KJ Williams
	P Doughty	C Meaden	S Williams
	D Elderton	M McLaughlin	J Williamson
	G Ellis	J McManus	
	S Foulkes	D Mitchell	

Apologies Councillors RL Abbey G Wood
P Hackett

91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Name	Item No. and Nature of Declaration
Councillor Geoffrey Watt (Mayor)	Item No. 3 – Celtic Manor Resort (Minute No. 93 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being a Council appointed Trustee of West Kirby Charities which owns land in the area. Councillor Watt formally resigned with immediate effect as a Trustee to enable him to vote on this matter.

Item No. 3 – Celtic Manor Resort (Minute No. 93 refers).
Councillor Personal – by virtue of him being a Council appointed
David Elderton Trustee of West Kirby Charities which owns land in the
area. Councillor Elderton formally resigned with immediate
effect as a Trustee to enable him to vote on this matter.

Councillor Ian Lewis questioned whether if Members' had been in receipt of hospitality, would that be classed as a declarable interest. The Director of Governance and Assurance informed that if Members' had received direct expenses e.g. in the form of sponsorship that would need to be declared, however hospitality in the course of ordinary business would not.

92 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Ron Abbey, Pat Hackett, Gill Wood and the Civic Mayor's Chaplain, Rev David Chester.

The Civic Mayor informed that as per the last meeting of Council the current Standing Order 18 referred to the '...normal method of voting at meetings of the Council shall be by show of hands...' and that the Council therefore needed to determine if they wished to use the electronic voting system.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the electronic voting system be used for all votes at this meeting.

The Civic Mayor then invited Councillor Chris Meaden to make a short personal statement.

Councillor Chris Meaden addressed the Council stating that after 28 years serving as a Labour Councillor, it was with great sadness that she had resigned the Labour Whip. She thanked her family for their support during this difficult period and also thanked Members across the Chamber for their kind words of support. She added that she would be putting herself forward for re-election in Rock Ferry Ward in May 2019, a Ward she had represented since becoming a Councillor.

93 **CELTIC MANOR RESORT**

The Civic Mayor introduced the item on the Celtic Manor Resort for which three motions had been submitted. He suggested that the Council debate all

three motions as one and on a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved – That in accordance with Standing Order 12(2) all three motions be debated in one debate with separate votes on each.

Councillor Chris Blakeley moved and Councillor Gerry Ellis seconded the following Motion –

“Council notes that in excess of £1 million of Council taxpayers’ money has, so far, been utilised to support this project, as well as Council Officers’ and consultants’ time, while Cabinet itself has stated that golf in Wirral is in decline.

Council also notes that the Celtic Manor Resort, formerly known as the Hoylake Golf Resort, is dependent on 160 higher-band houses and 40 apartments being built on a location within Wirral’s precious Green Belt with further Council support suggested at up to £26 million.

Council recognises the widespread concern at this proposal, including the opposition voiced recently by Local Campaign Forum of the Labour Party.

Council is advised by the Director of Governance and Assurance that, under the Leader and Cabinet system (as operated by Labour in Wirral), it does not have the power to demand or force the Cabinet to drop this unwanted scheme in its entirety.

However, given the uncertainty, the massive public opposition, the financial risks to the taxpayer and the harm that would be caused to Wirral’s Green Belt, Council strongly recommends that Cabinet listen to the people of Wirral and withdraws from this scheme in its entirety and notify all stakeholders of its intention not to proceed.”

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Alan Brame seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

“Council remains concerned that this speculative development is still being put forward based on assumptions that no longer appear relevant at a time of economic uncertainty, growing concern about development in the Green Belt and greater recognition of the importance of ensuring future food supply in a period of climate change.

In this context, the National Planning Policy Framework states...
‘Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified (para 136)’, albeit offering potential exceptions (para 145b) on a case by case basis.

Without prejudging these issues, Council recognises that the planning considerations covering the special circumstances of this case would take considerable time and effort to justify and resolve. Council observes that the Hulton Park project in Bolton was called in by the Secretary of State after a lengthy period of preparation.

Council believes that it is no longer reasonable to put stretched managerial and officer capacity into this Golf Resort project. Wirral's key priority should be to bring together a Local Plan that protects agricultural land, makes a strong case against intrusions into the Green Belt and creates the conditions for urban regeneration and re-use of brownfield sites.

In this context, Council notes that the National Planning Policy Framework includes this guidance:

'Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.' (para 117)

'Planning policies and decisions should ... give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land;' (para 118c)

Council notes that Cabinet, on 18 December 2017 (Minutes 72 and 76 refer), agreed to the use of prudential borrowing up to a maximum of £26 million subject to conditions, based on the contents of a study that has been exempted from publication.

Council now wishes to advise Cabinet that:

- i. it believes that the use of prudential borrowing would be better directed to dealing with the housing market failure identified in deprived parts of Wirral as part of a considered plan;
- ii. a programme of regeneration should be brought forward that would assist in the assembly and development of brownfield sites;
- iii. this programme should involve working with housing associations to provide key elements of affordable and social housing to meet Wirral's assessed needs."

Councillor Phil Davies moved and Councillor Angela Davies seconded the following motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 –

"Council notes the concerns which have been expressed about the proposed Celtic Manor Resort in Hoylake.

Council also notes the potential financial and economic benefits of the proposed scheme: including 300 jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, up to £40

million in one-off payments and £1 million to the Council in increased revenue every year to be invested in public services.

Council notes the wider potential benefits of the scheme, including revitalising the Hoylake high-street and providing a huge boost to the visitor economy throughout the borough.

Council further notes the support which local businesses have expressed for the scheme.

Council believes it would be inappropriate to make a decision on this scheme before we have the full facts. We have only recently – within days – received the funding proposal from the developer, which is now under review.

Council further believes it is important to review the details of the various feasibility studies which will assess the environmental and economic impact of the scheme and believes residents should be consulted on these details as part of a robust planning application.

Council therefore agrees to ask for the relevant Scrutiny Committee to hold a special meeting to consider all aspects of the scheme once negotiations have reached a point where a clear proposition can be placed before Members.

The Scrutiny Committee will then be able to make informed representations to the Cabinet.”

A debate ensued on the three motions before Council that included specific reference to the proposed development on the Green Belt, the need for affordable homes in Wirral and the expected economic benefits arising from the Celtic Manor Resort. Members debated matters relating to environmental, development and visitor economy aspects of the proposal, and further noted that planning approvals would be required in order for the proposal to progress.

During the course of debate Councillors Ian Lewis and Phil Davies paid tribute to Councillor Chris Meaden for her hard work as an Elected Member representing the New Ferry Ward and her efforts and selfless commitment to the Borough. Councillor Davies also expressed thanks to Councillor Gerry Ellis, whose experience and expertise serving on the Council would be sorely missed after the May Elections.

Following the debate and Councillors Chris Blakeley, Phil Gilchrist and Phil Davies having replied, the Civic Mayor then moved to the voting on each of the three motions.

Councillor Chris Blakeley moved, seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis, that electronic voting on the motions be suspended. On a show of hands the vote was then put and lost (30:33) (No abstentions).

Prior to the vote on the Conservative motion, a number of Members rose to request a 'card vote'. A recorded vote was then taken on the motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (31) – Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, A Brame, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, JE Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Jordan, S Kelly, I Lewis, C Meaden, M McLaughlin, D Mitchell, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, M Sullivan, A Sykes, G Watt, S Williams.

Against the motion (32) – Councillors J Bird, P Brightmore, K Cannon, T Cottier, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, WJ Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, S Frost, EA Grey, AER Jones, C Jones, S Jones, T Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, J McManus, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, T Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, T Usher, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson.

The Conservative motion was therefore lost (31:32) (No abstentions).

The Liberal Democrat Motion having been moved by Councillor Phil Gilchrist was then put and lost (30:33) (No abstentions).

Prior to the vote on the Labour motion, a number of Members rose to request a 'card vote'. A recorded vote was then taken on the motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (32) – Councillors J Bird, P Brightmore, K Cannon, T Cottier, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, WJ Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, S Frost, EA Grey, AER Jones, C Jones, S Jones, T Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, J McManus, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, T Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, T Usher, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson.

Against the motion (29) – Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, A Brame, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, JE Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Jordan, S Kelly, I Lewis, C Meaden, M McLaughlin, D Mitchell, C Povall, L Rennie, L Rowlands, M Sullivan, A Sykes, S Williams.

Two abstentions – Councillors J Robinson and G Watt (Civic Mayor)

Resolved (32:29) (Two abstentions) –

Council notes the concerns which have been expressed about the proposed Celtic Manor Resort in Hoylake.

Council also notes the potential financial and economic benefits of the proposed scheme: including 300 jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, up to £40 million in one-off payments and £1 million to the Council in increased revenue every year to be invested in public services.

Council notes the wider potential benefits of the scheme, including revitalising the Hoylake high-street and providing a huge boost to the visitor economy throughout the borough.

Council further notes the support which local businesses have expressed for the scheme.

Council believes it would be inappropriate to make a decision on this scheme before we have the full facts. We have only recently – within days – received the funding proposal from the developer, which is now under review.

Council further believes it is important to review the details of the various feasibility studies which will assess the environmental and economic impact of the scheme and believes residents should be consulted on these details as part of a robust planning application.

Council therefore agrees to ask for the relevant Scrutiny Committee to hold a special meeting to consider all aspects of the scheme once negotiations have reached a point where a clear proposition can be placed before Members.

The Scrutiny Committee will then be able to make informed representations to the Cabinet.

94 **REVISION TO THE APPOINTMENTS AND CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES 2018/19**

The Civic Mayor informed that notice had been given under Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 that three Councillors wished to be treated as a political group – Councillors Moira McLaughlin, Chris Meaden and Michael Sullivan.

The Civic Mayor informed that as such Recommendation 2 as listed within the report no longer applied, and that Council was requested to:

“Agree the revised constitution and membership of committees having regard to political balance requirements:

Committee	Places	Lab	Con	L/Dem	Green	Ind
Audit and Risk Management	9	5	3	1		
Employment and Appointments	8	5	2	1		
Licensing Act 2003	15	8	4	1		2
Licensing, Health & Safety and General Purposes	9	5	3	1		
Pensions	10	6	3	0	1	
Planning	13	7	4	1	1	
Standards & Constitutional Oversight	9	5	3	1		
Overview & Scrutiny: Business	15	8	5	1		1
Overview & Scrutiny: Environment	15	8	5	1		1
Overview & Scrutiny: Adult Care and Health	15	8	5	1		1
Overview & Scrutiny: Children and Families	15	8	5	1		1
Total	133	73	42	10	2	6

and

Agree that the names of appointees to Committees as required from the above considerations be provided to the Director of Governance and Assurance following the meeting.”

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (61:1) (One abstention) – That the above recommendations be approved.

MINUTE EXTRACT BUDGET CABINET 18 FEBRUARY 2019

54 COUNCIL BUDGET 2019/20



Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:

“We have a responsibility to set a fair, sustainable and balanced budget. This is a challenge which gets more difficult every year, as austerity policies continue to bite.

Despite the continued reductions in our budget, we are determined we will deliver on what we promised. This budget, despite the ongoing reductions to our funding, is balanced, it protects key services, and ensures investment in the areas most important to residents. It also protects our workforce, and ensures once again we are able to deliver a fair, sustainable budget without making compulsory redundancies.”

Councillors Phil Davies, Janette Williamson and Bernie Mooney introduced reports on the following budgetary matters:

- (A) Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23 (Councillor Davies) – the report provided a technical update on the proposals to balance the budget for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy previously reported to Cabinet on 26 November 2018. It described the background to balancing the budget gap and the key elements contributing to the preparation of the budget, and set out the formal recommendations on the 2019/20 budget and council tax for Full Council. The report included the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Resilience Plan for 2019/20 – 2022/23. This also included the publication of the Corporate Risk Register for 2019/20. These documents were dynamic and subject to change. In light of the Government fair funding review and recent funding consultations there was no certainty of funding past April 2020. However, the MTFS had been prepared on the best of knowledge available at the time including known future pressures and plans already underway to change the way the Council provided its services.
- (B) Schools Budget and Funding Formula Changes 2019/20 (Councillor Mooney) - the report set out the Schools Budget for 2019/20 having been previously considered by the Schools Forum at their meeting on 16th January 2019. The Schools Budget covered education provision for all Wirral Pupils aged up to 18 in Early Years, Primary, Secondary and academy schools and for some pupils up to the age of 25 in Special Schools and High Needs providers. Most budgets were delegated to schools with some central provision for support services including school admissions and High Needs. The report proposed a number of changes to the local funding formula for Schools to allow a transitional transfer to the National Funding Formula. There were also changes proposed to High Needs. The Schools Budget provided resources to support all children and

young people pledges, and the proposals within result in an in-year deficit of £2,343,200 on the DSG budget.

- (C) Capital Programme and Financing 2019/23 (Councillor Phil Davies) – the report provided Cabinet with the draft Capital Programme 2019/23 for consideration and referral to Council for approval. It also included information regarding the revenue implications of this Programme and an update on the latest forecast for capital receipts. The 2019/23 Capital Programme represented a combination of schemes originally approved as part of the 2018/21 Programme, updated through the Capital Monitoring reports in 2018/19 and new bids for inclusion as detailed in the report.
- (D) Capital Financing Strategy 2019/20 (Councillor Janette Williamson) – the report stated that the Authority’s treasury management activity was underpinned by CIPFA’s 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), in which there was a new requirement for Council to approve an annual Capital Strategy. This report fulfilled the Authority’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- (E) Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/22 (Councillor Janette Williamson) – the report stated that The Authority’s treasury management activity was underpinned by CIPFA’s 2017 Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), which required the production of annual Treasury Management Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommended that Members were informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year. This report fulfilled the Authority’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- (F) Investment Strategy Statement 2019/20 (Councillor Janette Williamson) – the report stated that in February 2018 the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published updated ‘Guidance on Local Government Investments’. The previous edition covered only Treasury Management investments. In recent years local authorities have had an increasing focus on commercial activities including but not exclusive to property. Such activity had the potential to bring both increased returns and increased positive and negative risk. The revised Guidance on Local Authority Investments required that a separate Investment Strategy focusing on non-treasury investments was produced and approved annually by Council. The report fulfilled the requirement of the MHCLG to produce an investment strategy that covered non-treasury activities.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that the Council continued to face another year of challenge to its budget setting year arising from further cuts in funding imposed by the Government. This year’s budget had been structured in such a way that it contained three main elements i.e. the generation of income, providing services in a joined up fashion and the delivery of better services with greater efficiencies via the Council’s transformation programme. Councillor Davies further informed that these decisions had been, as in previous years, a direct result of the huge

pressures placed on Local Authorities by Government because of the loss of the Revenue Support Grant funding. The Leader concluded that despite the difficult circumstances faced by the Council, he was proud to be in a position to deliver a balanced, sustainable and legal budget. In conclusion, he added his thanks to residents who had taken part in the budget consultation process, Scrutiny Members for their role in examining the draft proposals, together with Cabinet colleagues, the Chief Executive, Strategic Leadership Team, and all staff who helped deliver good quality services day-in, day-out.

Cabinet Members each raised their own concerns about the continued financial pressures faced by Wirral from Government and the significant reduction of funds over time. Members commented that they were proud to have managed to retain front line services against the background of austerity, and that the Council remained committed to delivery of its 20 Wirral Plan Pledges and continued in its aim to help grow the Wirral economy through the development of more investment, jobs, businesses and improved income for Wirral residents and workers.

Councillor Paul Stuart stated his support of the proposed budget and the pressures placed on those involved in its preparation to create a balanced budget against the background of Central Government austerity. He added that the Council had done extremely well to deal with these pressures e.g. Extra-care Housing, Children's Services, Street Lighting and Highways and had still managed to invest in other areas such as improvements to leisure service facilities, additional funding for the regeneration of Rock Ferry, and support for those struggling financially via the introduction of a Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Councillor George Davies endorsed the budget, and added his condemnation of the nine years of austerity that had placed significant pressures on the Council. He stated that he wished to see the construction of more affordable, and quality, houses for the people of Wirral. Councillor Davies also made reference to the success of the private sector landlord accreditation scheme that helped to improve the standard of rental accommodation in four key areas of the borough. He fully endorsed the Leaders comment in relation to the significant achievement in delivery of a required £45million in savings, the result of Government austerity, and having produced a balanced budget without the need to resort to cutting services.

Councillor Bernie Mooney endorsed the comments that had been made, adding that the Council had been brave in its decisions over recent years, approaching issues in a different way (which had not always been easy) that had resulted in the Council being able to retain facilities and services, for example to retain its libraries, because once lost the cost of re-instatement could be prohibitive. Councillor Mooney stated that the budget was a testament to the leadership and the hard work of Council Officers, and that she was proud to support the budget recommendations.

Councillor Janette Williamson commented on how the Council had continued to make decisions in line with its priorities, but it was clear that the economy was not working well for many people on Wirral, and that Central Government's disdain for Local Government and the Public Sector was clear. She agreed with earlier speakers that it was a significant achievement to deliver the £45million demanded

in savings as a result of Government austerity. She was proud that this Council had made progressive and ethical decisions, and thanked the Finance Officers for all their support in helping preparation of the budget.

Councillor Angela Davies described how Wirral Council was ambitious in its targets for the borough and made no apology for this, she supported the Council's ethical growth and investment strategy and plans for income generation. She stated her support for existing and future plans for the Wirral Growth Company, job creation, apprentices, encouraging local wealth and development of the visitor economy. Councillor Davies added that she looked forward to building on past success of events such as the 'The Giants' and the 'Tall Ships', and welcomed with excitement Wirral's year as borough of culture and the hosting of events that included the Tour of Britain cycle event.

Councillor Anita Leech stated that she was pleased that despite austerity, the budget would help continue to develop the work Council had already undertaken on improvements to infrastructure, buildings and reducing its carbon footprint. She commented on the improvements to equipment in children's play areas and state of the art football facilities. She also highlighted ongoing work by the Council that continued to provide supportive aids and adaptations to people's accommodation that enabled them to stay in their own homes much longer.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham stated that preparation of the revenue budget had been challenging, but he was pleased that the Council was currently still in a position to maintain services. He thanked the staff for their hard work and welcomed the capital programme that would help deliver improvements to street lighting and provision of cycling infrastructure, assisting with the delivery of Council policy and public health improvements. Councillor Whittingham welcomed the additional funding allocated within the budget to help provide support to New Ferry town centre.

Councillor Chris Jones agreed with earlier speakers that it was a significant achievement to have steered the Council through the past few years of austerity and echoed Members' earlier comments regarding new ways of thinking and the use of innovative ideas to deliver services for the people of Wirral. She thanked frontline staff and Officers for their efforts, making particular reference to Social Workers and their colleagues and the unprecedented levels of demand on their service year on year. Councillor Jones further praised the integration of services with those of the NHS and welcomed that care packages were now being delivered much quicker than had been done in the past as a result of this innovation.

Councillor Phillip Brightmore expressed his discontent with the continued financial pressures faced by Wirral imposed by Central Government and the significant reduction of funds in all the time he had served as an Elected Member. He thanked staff, volunteers and Trade Unions who had all contributed to help the Council in maintaining services in such key areas of leisure and recreational services.

Prior to moving to a vote on the content of the Council Budget, the Leader called upon Councillor Bernie Mooney to speak specifically on the Schools Budget and Funding Formula Changes 2019/20. Councillor Mooney responded, highlighting

the testing circumstances face by schools in the borough, and commented on the efforts made by Head Teachers and their staff, often going beyond what was required when dealing with Central Government imposed cuts and changes to funding formulae. She added that she was also extremely pleased with the extensive consultations and dialogue undertaken via the schools forum.

It was moved by Councillor Mooney, and seconded in a number of places that a fifth recommendation be included under item 6B (Schools Budget and Funding Formula Changes 2019/20) that:

- (v) That Council calls upon the Government to stop cutting the DSG and move to start funding every child in Wirral appropriately giving them the start in life all children deserve'.

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

That the following Budget Resolution be agreed and recommended to the Budget Council:

BUDGET RESOLUTION 2019/20

NATIONAL CONTEXT

We are now entering our ninth year of austerity. We have suffered almost a decade of Tory cuts which have decimated local services.

This Tory austerity agenda has driven councils throughout the country to breaking point. Pay freezes, redundancies, cuts to benefits, public service closures and fears about the future of the NHS are the main outcomes from nine years of Conservative-led Government.

The Local Government Association estimates that Councils face an overall funding gap of £3.2 billion in 2019/20.

A recent report from independent thinktank Centre for Cities confirmed what we all already knew. Towns and cities in the north of England have borne the brunt of austerity. Our region was and continues to be targeted by this Government.

In Wirral, these national policies have forced us into implementing £200 million in budget cuts. We have lost more than half of our national grant funding, and the rest will disappear in just 18 months.

It was only a few months ago that Theresa May promised an end to austerity. Sadly, like most of this Prime Minister's promises, the reality is far removed from the rhetoric.

Every year, as we face seemingly insurmountable challenges, we continue to deliver on our priorities in the Wirral Plan: Protecting Vulnerable People; Growing Our Economy; and Improving the Environment. We have found new ways to save money and generate additional income, while still providing the services residents need. And, somehow, every year we achieve it.

Despite this, the Conservatives locally refuse to acknowledge the damage done to local services by the policies of their government. They devote huge amounts of time to generating cheap headlines but remain largely silent when it comes to standing up for the residents of Wirral against the savage policies of their own ministers, or even suggesting constructive ideas to mitigate the impact of government cuts.

The decisions by their friends in Westminster, voting through more cuts to services in the House of Commons just weeks ago, should send a chill down their spines.

How can they stand by and do nothing whilst Wirral has been battered by austerity?

Once again, in what we know to be a forlorn hope, this Cabinet calls on the Conservative Group in Wirral to do what is right and join us in our fight to get a fair funding settlement for Wirral residents.

THE WIRRAL CHALLENGE

Wirral is forced to reduce its spending, or generate more income, by another £67 million by 2021/22. Our immediate challenge is to meet a £45 million funding shortfall for 2019/20.

These reductions are being made at the worst possible time. We have an ageing population, we're supporting deprived communities with complex needs, and more children than ever need our help.

Decimating our budgets when thousands of families need us most is, in the view of this Cabinet, unfair, unsustainable and irresponsible.

However, as residents know, we refuse to play the same game as this Government. We will not simply pass on the cuts to our budget with cuts to our services and our workforce. Our residents deserve better, and our staff deserve better.

We are a well-run Council. We have an established financial strategy, which focusses our energies on creating new income – to replace what has been taken from us – and delivering better services, with better value.

Our strategy is paying dividends.

Despite the best efforts of this Tory Government:

- We are again proposing a budget which is balanced, sustainable and legal.
- We are again closing no services.
- We are again protecting our workforce and making not a single compulsory redundancy.
- We have secured major investment for vulnerable children and families.
- We continue to challenge every pound which we spend to make sure it is delivering the best value.

This Cabinet rejects austerity. We believe in fairness and social justice. We believe that public services and support should be available to everyone.

Our overall budget strategy of focussing on ethical investing, to bring in the additional revenue our services need to survive, on improving services, so they are fit to meet modern needs and on delivering better value, to ensure we are as efficient and lean as possible, will continue.

This is our response to austerity, and it is working. Our performance analysis shows we are delivering for residents against the Pledges we set out at the start of this journey in the Wirral Plan.

ETHICAL INVESTING

The huge reductions in our funding from Government have left us with two choices: cut our cloth, and cut services, or make the money to pay for them ourselves. We have chosen the latter option. We will replace the money we have lost with money we have made ourselves, but we will do it with a Labour Stamp and with a social conscience.

We will invest our resources and our time in projects which bring a surplus, which we can reinvest into services, but which will also put money into the pockets of local businesses and people. Our Community Wealth Building initiative is a shining example, which will see the Council and other public institutions come together to make sure more public money is spent in Wirral, with Wirral companies, employing Wirral people. We think this work will boost our local economy by more than £10 million in the next year.

This is also why we have created the Wirral Growth Company. We are maximising the value from old, unused council assets to build prosperity and growth. It will create jobs and opportunities for local people and the developments brought forward will put money in the pockets of local businesses and people; creating the homes, offices, leisure and retail opportunities our borough so desperately needs.

The Growth Company will also bring money directly into this Council's coffers. This year, before a single brick has been laid, we will see a dividend of more than £5 million. This is money which we otherwise would not have had. Without this money, our budget gap would be £5 million bigger, and services would have had to be cut, rather than invested in.

We are calling this approach 'ethical investing.' It is about bringing growth to the borough, bringing revenue into the Council, with a Labour conscience – a private sector head, and a public sector heart. It is abundantly clear that only our Administration has the capability and ambition to bring prosperity to this borough.

We are now officially Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture for 2019, with a programme of events which will even outstrip our incredible achievements of last year. The centrepiece of our calendar will be the Tour of Britain events scheduled for May and September, which will be broadcast live throughout the world and will put Wirral firmly on the map. The evidence shows that culture can provide the rocket fuel for growth. And we are making our borough a more attractive place to invest, to work, to live in and to visit.

The Wirral Growth Company is an example of the importance we attach to adopting a more commercial approach. This will enable us to fund good quality public services by replacing government grant with new income streams. Going forward, if we are to avoid the fate of Councils such as Tory-led Northamptonshire County Council, we will need to identify further projects which will generate new income for the Council.

BETTER SERVICES

When budgets are tight, and demand is rising, making services better than they were before is an almost impossible task. The way we can improve them and make sure people get better support costing less money is to break down the barriers between services and public agencies. When we work together, we are stronger, and we can make our money go further.

Wirral's public services are now the most joined-up in the country. That is a huge statement, and one we should be proud of. We should be proud not because we have saved money by joining with our partners. We should be proud because we have improved our services and made people's lives better.

Through the Safer Wirral Hub, a unique collaboration between Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services and Wirral Council, we have seen a 30% reduction in youth offending. In just one year, that is almost unheard of.

Right now, we have the highest-ever level of disabled people in employment, thanks to our pioneering work through services like Wirral Evolutions and our partners in the local NHS.

The transfer of our Adult Social Care Social Workers to the NHS has meant that people no longer have to tell their story multiple times to multiple professionals. This integration is helping to mitigate pressures of £22 million in this service area.

We have also seen our Business Support service, delivered through our partnership with Wirral Chamber of Commerce, support local firms to create 3500 new jobs over the past three years.

Finding the best, most efficient, but crucially most effective way of providing services is vital. We will not rest until we have improved every one of our services, protecting them from Whitehall-cuts and making sure they are able to meet the modern needs of Wirral residents.

BETTER VALUE

Demand for our services is at an all-time high, while cuts to our budgets have gone deeper than ever before. Our services are in a perfect storm of unbelievable pressure.

Under these circumstances, to continue to deliver on our promises to residents and continue to deliver excellent services is nothing short of astounding. The Administration is grateful to our dedicated workforce for the excellent job they do in delivering high-quality public services.

Over the past nine years, our workforce has reduced by more than a third. Almost 2,000 people have left and not been replaced. We do not believe any organisation, in any sector, in this country could cope with this level of reduction and change as well as we have.

Rather than cutting vital services, we have transformed, instead. We have taken the terrible hand the Government has dealt us, but we have not folded. We found a different way to progress.

Because of this different approach, we continue to invest in those things most important to our residents. The £20 million we found to invest into our children's services last year – more than any other Council in the country – is working. Consistent praise from Ofsted, rapidly improving services and better outcomes for children is testament to that.

We have also focussed on managing demand by prioritising early help and intervention in services such as Children & Families. We have also promoted independence with a move away from the Council doing everything and encouraging self-help and community empowerment and resilience through the Wirral Together initiative. We are also devolving more power to communities by providing budgets to individual ward members to spend on local projects.

We will also continue to invest in our local infrastructure and the communities we live in. Over the coming year we will invest more than £8 million on a programme of highway improvements, pothole repairs and road resurfacing. Residents will also soon see our ambitious programme of replacing every streetlight in the borough with new energy efficient lights spring into action.

These huge investments are only possible thanks to our ambitious, entrepreneurial and innovative approach to managing Wirral's finances.

HELPING LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Because of this socially and fiscally responsible approach to budget management, we are in a much stronger position to deliver on Labour values and support the most vulnerable. This Cabinet is hugely proud to be launching a new and improved Council Tax reduction scheme.

This new programme will see more than 9,000 low income households get a better deal on their Council Tax. These are households who are struggling to get by, who are using foodbanks, who are working hard to keep their heads above water. It is right that we give them some help.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF

It is only because of the success of our financial strategy – bringing new revenue into the Council from ventures such as Wirral Growth Company, to replace the money taken from us by Government – that we have been able to deliver another balanced budget without any compulsory redundancies.

This year I am pleased to say we can go further and, after extensive and positive discussions with our Trade Union colleagues, we are able to reduce the amount of unpaid leave our workforce are required to take from four days down to three.

We know our staff are our most valuable resource. It is our workforce who have worked tirelessly to keep providing the services Wirral residents rely on every day. We understand the pressure they are under, we are immensely grateful for their efforts and we will continue to do all we can to support them.

NEW FERRY

New Ferry is a community we will never forget. The Government has shamefully turned their back on this town, denying them the support they deserve on no less than four separate occasions. This Cabinet remains firmly behind the regeneration of New Ferry and the support of this community.

We have done all we can to support every resident and business affected by the events of March 2017. We are purchasing properties, to make sure the rebuilding process happens at pace. We are creating new residential developments in the town, and now we are in a position to go further.

In addition to the £300,000 which the Council invested in the immediate aftermath of the gas explosion, we are setting aside a further £200,000 to help and support the residents and businesses of New Ferry. This money should be used to kick-start the rebirth of the town, helping businesses get back on their feet and residents to rebuild their lives. We will ask officers to report to Cabinet early in the new municipal year with a proposed methodology for allocating this funding.

A COLLABORATIVE BUDGET

Again, we remind residents we are here to work for them. We will never set a budget in isolation. Consultation, engagement, and conversations with residents will always underpin every decision we take. Almost 1,300 residents took the time to give us their views on our budget, our priorities and our plans and we pledge to use this valuable feedback as decisions are made.

Cabinet thanks Elected Members – of all parties – who took part in the comprehensive scrutiny process to look in detail at the budget proposals. The feedback from that process has been provided to Cabinet and has proved extremely helpful in making these decisions.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this is a balanced budget built around our Labour values of social justice, inclusive growth and delivering good quality public services for everyone. It supports the important work being done to deliver services our residents rely on. It invests in our economy, makes improvements to our environment and shares the burden fairly between all those who can afford to contribute and those who enjoy the services Wirral offers.

We are closing no services.

We are investing in what is most important to residents, those on low incomes and communities which have suffered recent tragedy.

We are protecting our workforce.

This is a budget, against a harsh Conservative austerity agenda, our Labour Council can be proud of.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet, having had regard to the responses to the proposals announced at the 26 November 2018 meeting recommends to Budget Council for approval:-

Revenue Budget 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2022/23 (Agenda Item 6)

1. Cabinet recommends to Budget Council a Budget proposal for 2019/20 and MTFRS 2019/20-2022/23 based upon:
 - a) The updated Medium Term Financial Resilience Strategy (MTFRS) 2019/20 – 2022/23 as set out at Appendix 1
 - b) The consultation findings from the series of consultation events during December 2018 and January 2019 as detailed in Appendix 2
 - c) The fees and charges, as in Appendix 3, with delegated authority being:
 - i) given to the Section 151 Officer to update the Council's Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2019.
 - ii) given to the relevant Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer to vary existing fees and charges.
 - iii) Approval of the Pricing and Charging Policy.
 - d) Approval of the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2019/20 as in Appendix 4
 - e) The level of General Fund Balances being recommended, as set out paragraph 3.51, continuing to be based on a locally determined approach based on an assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future and that the Council maintains balances at, or above, this level.
 - f) The Chief Financial Officer Statement regarding the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Budget and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves at Appendix 5.
2. Cabinet recommends to Budget Council that a separate vote be taken in respect of Council Tax levels for 2019/20 and that:

- a) For Wirral Council Services the Council Tax be increased by 2.99% for 2019/20.
- b) The Wirral Council Tax will include the precepts from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service and from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Schools Budget and Funding Formula Changes 2019/20 (Agenda Item 6B)

Cabinet recommends the 2019-20 Schools Budget of £267,661,400 to Budget Council having taken account of the views and formula proposals from the Schools Forum that:

- i) That the 2019-20 schools funding formula should be a transition formula introducing some elements of the National Funding Formula including the minimum per pupil funding formula levels of £3,500 for primary schools and £4,800 for secondary schools.
- ii) That a Minimum Funding Guarantee of 0% for Wirral schools in 2019-20 is approved to provide additional protection and stability in funding, and to ensure that no school can lose pupil funding unless there is a reduction in pupil numbers ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged as a result of the change in formula.
- iii) That the continuing Contributions to Combined Budgets should be £875,600 in 2019-20.
- iv) That any remaining uncommitted Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves remaining at the end of 2018-19 are used as a contingency to support High Needs pressures in future years.
- v) That Council calls upon the Government to stop cutting the DSG and move to start funding every child in Wirral appropriately giving them the start in life all children deserve.

Capital Programme and Financing 2019/23 (Agenda Item 6C)

1. That the new bids as detailed in Appendix 2 requiring £30.4 million borrowing be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme.
2. That the bids referred to in paragraphs 6.4.1 to 6.4.5 are included in the programme but where specified, are deferred to a later commencement date, on an individual basis, in recognition of an ongoing review.
3. That any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority.
4. That Cabinet recommend to Council for approval the Capital Programme 2019/23(as detailed in Appendix 3).

5. That progress on delivering the Capital Programme is presented in accordance with the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements.

Capital Financing Strategy 2019/20 (Agenda Item 6D)

1. That Members approve the Capital Strategy for 2019/20.
2. That the associated Prudential Indicators be adopted.
3. That Members note the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy.
4. That Members note the flexible capital receipts policy.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/22 (Agenda Item 6E)

1. That Members approve the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2019/2022.
2. That the Treasury Management Indicators be adopted.
3. That Members approve the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy.
4. That the Council Officers listed within Appendix G, of the Strategy Statement, be authorised to approve payments from the Council's bank accounts for all treasury management activities.

Investment Strategy 2019/20 (Agenda Item 6F)

That Members approve the Investment Strategy for 2019/2020 which includes potential investment in the following activity areas:

- Commercial Property
- Service Investments: Loans
- Service Investment: Shares (non-currently held)
- Loan Commitments and financial Guarantees

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 26 November 2018 calculated the Council Tax Base 2019/20 for the whole of the properties in its area as 93,497.8 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ("the Act");

- a) £142,436,211 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2019/20 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:

- i) £853,640,211 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and
- ii) £711,204,000 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- b) £1,523.42 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2019/20. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as above).
- c) That in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band

A	B	C	D
£1,015.61	£1,184.88	£1,354.15	£1,523.42
E	F	G	H
£1,861.95	£2,200.49	£2,539.03	£3,046.84

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the Basic Amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2019/20 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 6% or above.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax Comparison for Referendum

	2018/19	2019/20	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Band D	£1,479.19	£1,523.42	£44.23	2.99

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area. This will be as indicated in the tables which when received will be included in updated tables to Council.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

A	B	C	D
£134.65	£157.09	£179.53	£201.97
E	F	G	H
£246.85	£291.73	£336.62	£403.94

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

A	B	C	D
£52.56	£61.32	£70.08	£78.84
E	F	G	H
£96.36	£113.88	£131.40	£157.68

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority –Mayoral Precept

A	B	C	D
£12.67	£14.78	£16.89	£19.00
E	F	G	H
£23.22	£27.44	£31.67	£38.00

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region – Mayoral Precept the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2019/20 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral

A	B	C	D
£1,215.49	£1,418.07	£1,620.65	£1,823.23
E	F	G	H
£2,228.38	£2,633.54	£3,038.72	£3,646.46

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CONSERVATIVE GROUP – BUDGET OBJECTION 2019/2020

Date of Budget Council: Monday 4th March 2019

Proposed by: Cllr. Ian Lewis

Seconded by: Cllr Lesley Rennie

The political rhetoric contained in the Cabinet's Budget resolution is, as usual, meaningless and nothing more than a weak and pathetic attempt to curry favour among the increasingly extreme elements within the ruling Labour Party.

The Labour Cabinet has, once again, taken the easier option of raising taxes, charges and fees while continuing to spend money on projects that have little public benefit.

Under Reg 3(1) of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), Wirral's 21 Conservative Councillors therefore submit the following objections to the Labour Cabinet's Budget Recommendations:

- Wirral's 21 Conservative Councillors believe the costs of the Chief Officer Team and Senior Directors are an excessive burden on the Taxpayer, costing £1,645,135 in 2018/19.
- The Cabinet has failed to ensure that highly paid management consultants, costing £2,270,670 in 2018/19, are appointed in a transparent and open manner.
- The Cabinet's Budget proposals, once again, fail to reflect the concerns of the public with ongoing, unquestioned support for vanity projects such as the failing Wirral View newspaper, costing £554,300 to date, the Hoylake Golf Resort and the speculative acquisition of assets of questionable value, most recently demonstrated by the purchase of the Vue Cinema.

Reducing these costs will enable revenue and capital to be released, instead, to support the following objectives:

- **Improve Road Safety:** by repairing more streetlights, fixing potholes and recruiting school crossing patrols.
- **Providing Cleaner Streets:** by increasing the frequency of street cleaning and dog fouling prevention, without resorting to the draconian and unacceptable measures of a PSPO which only helps Kingdom to generate fines and does nothing to tackle dog fouling near shops, schools or residential areas.
- **Supporting local businesses:** by working with businesses to develop a coherent plan to support them, and to attract business and trade to Wirral through enhanced cultural offers, while reversing punitive policies on car parking charges and Fixed Penalty Notices for shops and small businesses

We therefore seek to have the Cabinet's Budget Recommendations rejected and request Cabinet to submit fresh proposals reflecting these priorities to Council, within no more than five working days.

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LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP – BUDGET AMENDMENT 2019/20

Date of Budget Council: **Monday 4 March 2019**
Date submitted: **Wednesday 27 February 2019**
Proposed by: **Cllr Phil Gilchrist**
Seconded by: **Cllr Dave Mitchell**

The proposals for 2019/20 be approved subject to agreement that the following observations on financial management and in-year adjustments will be accepted and put in place.

Council recognises that the use of reserves and the proceeds of asset sales to bolster the Budget is regrettable but necessary in this period of economic and political uncertainty.

Council fully appreciates that these are short-term steps whilst work continues to build up the local economy and financial resilience.

Council fully supports and endorses:

- i) the work being undertaken through SIGOMA and the Local Government Association to press the Government to fund Councils fairly to deal with the crisis in children's services and social care.
- ii) representations being made by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to highlight the financial pressures and difficult decisions facing head teachers and governing bodies of Wirral's schools.
- iii) the increase in the Police and Crime Commissioner's precept and looks forward to the deployment of the extra resources in the fight against all forms of crime.

Nevertheless, Wirral still has to take further steps to get its own house in order. The public needs to be satisfied that the Council provides value for money. Members need more oversight of budget monitoring. This is required since:

- a) the Medium Term Financial and Resilience Strategy (pages 140 and 148 refer) regards this as essential and that communities need assurance that this is being done;
- b) the 'Vision for Wirral and its finances' refers to 'members and senior officials setting a tone that financial discipline is important'.

The Chief Financial Officer's Statement refers to 'ownership by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Senior Leadership team of proposed savings and their achievability' (page 201).

In the uncertain financial climate, new mechanisms must be brought in so that Scrutiny Chairs and Spokespersons can be included in this 'ownership'. Documents prepared for the monthly monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team should be available to them. Scrutiny Chairs and Spokespersons should be invited to take part in these reviews. A formal structure is necessary for this to be drawn up in consultation with Members, ensuring greater transparency.

Council has these further observations on current practices and calls on Cabinet to consider the issues and report back to Council:

1. Council believes that the level of expenditure on Wirralview and the number of officers employed in Communications and Engagement, along with the recent level of expenditure on consultant and interim posts, cannot be justified in this period of continued austerity. Based on the known numbers of officers in these posts, across all services, Council considers it not unreasonable that a target saving of £500,000 should be secured during the year on top of that already envisaged.

2. Council notes that the condition of Wirral's minor roads is now, finally, recognised as deteriorating after repeated requests by Councillors. Council calls for the publication of the Condition Survey in full so that Members can be informed on the progress that may be made and help plan the programme for future years.
3. Council notes that Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Mayor have now introduced a precept. Council calls on the City Region to set out how this precept can be justified. Council believes that the disparate structures of the Police and Crime Commissioner's office and that of the Mayor and Merseytravel should be examined and rationalised with a view to freeing up resources for front line services.
4. Council notes that this budget has been bolstered by the use of asset sales. Where the sale of an asset impacts on a local community, developers should pay a fair contribution towards the development of local infrastructure, schools and health services. Council regrets that the lack of a Local Plan has not enabled the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy, thereby losing revenue which might otherwise have been secured.
5. Council is concerned that the financial arrangements with Kingdom Services Group Ltd ensure that rewards for enforcement effectively take a share of fines income away from local services. An early exit from this contract is now essential to establish a fully accountable, cost effective and directly operated service.
6. Council notes the proposal to use one-off Public Health grant contractual efficiency savings to support the revenue budget. Council considers this to be ill-advised and, instead, calls on Cabinet to re-allocate £500,000 of these resources to support new Public Health commissioned projects.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 26 November 2018 calculated the Council Tax Base 2019/20 for the whole of the properties in its area as 93,497.8 (Item T in the statutory formula).

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