



# Council

Town Hall  
Wallasey

15 October, 2021

Dear Councillor

This supplement for the Council meeting to be held at **6.00 p.m. on Monday, 18 October 2021** in the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, should be read in conjunction with the Council Summons dated 8 October, 2021.

Members of the public are encouraged to view the meeting via the webcast (see below), but for anyone who would like to attend in person, seating is limited therefore please contact us in advance of the meeting if you would like to reserve a seat. All those attending will be asked to wear a face covering (unless exempt) and are encouraged to take a Lateral Flow Test before attending. You should not attend if you have tested positive for Coronavirus or if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus.

Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact [committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)

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

**Contact Officer:** Andrew Mossop  
**Tel:** 0151 691 8501  
**e-mail:** [andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk)  
**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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## AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

### 3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 19)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 September, 2021.

## **6. REPORTS AND DECISIONS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATIONS**

To receive reports about and receive questions and answers on decisions made by Committees since the last meeting of Council.

### **A. DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING (Pages 21 - 44)**

Minutes of Committees

- Children, Young People and Education Committee – 13 September, 2021 **(Pages 21 - 29)**
- Decision Review Committee – 29 July and 10 August, 2021 **(Pages 31 - 44)**

## **7. MOTIONS ON NOTICE (Pages 45 - 56)**

The Council is requested to consider amendments to Motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3.

- List of amendments **(Pages 45 - 47)**
- Motions listed complete with effect of proposed amendments incorporated **(Pages 49 - 55)**



Director of Law and Governance

## **TIMINGS AND GUILLOTINE**

Members are reminded of the following:

Item 2 - under Standing Order 2(iv) Mayor's announcements normally limited to up to 5 minutes.

Item 4A. – under Standing Order 10.7, public questions, up to 2 minutes allowed to put a question and up to 2 minutes for a response. Up to 30 minutes in total allowed for public questions (Standing Order 2(v)).

Item 4B. - under Standing Order 11.1, representations (statements) up to 3 minutes, with public speaking on any one item not exceeding 10 minutes. Up to 20 minutes in total allowed to receive representations (Standing Order 2(vi)).  
Petitions – under Standing Order 11.2, present and speak to a petition for up to 1 minute.

Item 4C. – under Standing Order 12.8, questions on notice from Members will not exceed 1 minute and up to 2 minutes for a response.

Item 6 – under Standing Order 2(xii) the total time allowed for questions and answers on decisions of committees is up to 45 minute.

Item 7 – under Standing Order 15.4 the proposer (mover) of a motion may speak for up to 5 minutes; all other speeches shall not exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor.

Under Standing Order 9 of the Council Procedure Rules:

The Mayor will adjourn the meeting for a period of ten minutes at a convenient time after one and a half hours.

Where three hours have elapsed after the commencement of any meeting (and in the case of an extraordinary meeting of Council when two hours have elapsed since commencement of the meeting) the Mayor shall interrupt the meeting and the Member speaking must immediately cease doing so and sit down. The meeting shall then dispose of the item then under consideration as if the motion '*That the question be now put*' had been carried (i.e. the debate shall be concluded by the seconder and by the Member who has the right of reply and the vote will then be taken without any further discussion). This rule will not apply to meetings of a quasi-judicial or regulatory nature.

### ***Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings***

*Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using non-disruptive methods. For particular meetings we may identify a 'designated area' for you to record from. If you have any questions about this please contact Committee and Civic Services (members of the press please*

*contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted.*

*Persons making recordings are requested not to put undue restrictions on the material produced so that it can be reused and edited by all local people and organisations on a non-commercial basis.*

## COUNCIL

Monday, 6 September 2021

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor George Davies) in the Chair  
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Jeff Green)

Councillors	T Anderson	A Gardner	D Mitchell
	B Berry	P Gilchrist	S Mountney
	J Bird	E Gleaves	Y Nolan
	M Booth	K Greaney	C O'Hagan
	A Brame	EA Grey	L Rennie
	D Brennan	P Hayes	J Robinson
	D Burgess-Joyce	S Hayes	L Rowlands
	H Cameron	A Hodson	T Smith
	I Camphor	K Hodson	C Spriggs
	K Cannon	AER Jones	P Stuart
	C Carubia	C Jones	Jason Walsh
	P Cleary	T Jones	Joe Walsh
	W Clements	M Jordan	S Whittingham
	M Collins	S Kelly	I Williams
	H Collinson	B Kenny	KJ Williams
	C Cooke	I Lewis	S Williams
	T Cox	M McLaughlin	J Williamson
	S Foulkes	J McManus	G Wood
	S Frost	P Martin	A Wright

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	A Corkhill	J Johnson
		T Cottier	S Jones
		H Gorman	C Povall

### 17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked 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.

No such declarations were made.

### 18 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor announced that he would be hosting a Charity Ball on 15<sup>th</sup> October at Thornton Hall and that all Members of the Council were invited.

The Civic Mayor announced that apologies had been received from Councillor Andy Corkhill, Councillor Jenny Johnson, Councillor Harry Gorman, Councillor Sharon Jones, Councillor Cherry Povall and Councillor Tony Cottier.

Members were also reminded that a supplementary agenda pack had been published and was available to Members to refer to during discussion of any amendments or motions to be discussed

## 19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 and 26 May 2021 (Annual Meetings) and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 11 August, 2021 had been circulated to Members.

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

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

## 20 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor announced that no questions had been received

## 21 **STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

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

Phil Spencer then introduced a petition from Bromborough Village Community Association regarding Car Parking Charges. Mr Spencer advised that 2,000 signatures had been collected online and 500 from shoppers and residents.

Councillor Mary Jordan then presented a petition regarding Car Parking Charges in Bebington.

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

## 22 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of the Chair of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee regarding the combined effect of sweeping every three months, the timing of weed treatment and the build-up of dirt and grit leading to poor conditions on and around traffic islands and kerbsides in various parts of Wirral. Councillor Gilchrist asked if officers and contractors could be brought together to tackle this issue.

Councillor Liz Grey responded accordingly and confirmed she would speak to officers and that she would wish to convene a working group on this.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Gilchrist asked for assurance on timescales and was advised by Councillor Liz Grey that this would be convened as soon as possible

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of the Leader of the Council commending her on her swift response to the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and asked if the Afghans who would be settling in Wirral under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy were, in fact, classed as ex-service personnel and would be covered by the United Kingdom Armed Forces Covenant and Wirral's own local Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Councillor Janette Williamson responded accordingly and confirmed that Wirral had committed to support through the placement of Afghans through this policy

Councillor Kelly then asked a supplementary question of the Leader asking for assurance that Wirral would continue to be a welcoming place for people escaping tyranny. Councillor Williamson confirmed that this would be the case.

Cllr Alan Brame asked a question of the Chair of the Partnerships Committee regarding the waiting times for GP appointments in the Wirral and further asked that the Chair of Partnerships agree to make representations to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. Councillor Robinson responded accordingly and confirmed that the Partnerships Committee would be looking at integrated care services as part of the work programme and also suggested that the Partnerships Committee could invite the Merseyside Consortium of GPs prior to writing to the Health Secretary

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

In accordance with Standing Order 2 (x) ten matters had been submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 24 to 33 post)

24 **WIRRAL PLAN 2021-26 - REFERRAL FROM P&R CTTEE**

The first item requiring approval was in relation to the Wirral Plan. This had previously been to Council in October 2019, but had been refreshed to reflect the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of this in the borough.

Several Councillors spoke to this item with Councillor Liz Grey wanting to thank the officers who produced it.

On the motion moved by Cllr Janette Williamson it was then,

**Resolved – The recommendation contained within minute extract 34 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 28 July 2021 be agreed as follows:**

**(1) further engagement and discussion with relevant Committees takes place to shape the underpinning delivery plans and work programmes required to implement the Wirral Plan; and**

**(2) the approach for the development of delivery planning and corporate change programme to support implementation, be approved.**

The first item requiring approval was in relation to the Wirral Plan as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting of 28 July, 2021.

On a motion moved by Councillor Janette Williamson it was -

**Resolved – That the Wirral Plan 2021-26 be approved.**

## 25 **WIRRAL PLAN 2021-2026 - DRAFT DELIVERY PLANS**

The second item requiring approval was in relation to a report of the Chief Executive, which presented The Wirral Plan 2021-26 Draft Delivery Plans. These had been developed during the summer, with Group Leaders considering the draft Plans on Friday 20 August 2021.

The motion was formally moved by Councillor Janette Williamson and seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan

Before moving to debate the Civic Mayor made Council aware of an amendment moved by Councillor Cleary and seconded by Councillor Grey,

*'Delivering a robust Active Travel strategy and Road Safety plan at pace for all of Wirral is fundamental to achieving our policy objectives on climate, air quality and health. These issues cut across various aspects of council activities. Successful outcomes will rely on active engagement across several committees. However, it is the view of council, taking on board the amount of work done to date in advancing our net zero carbon and road safety ambitions, that these areas sit best within the Sustainable Environment brief.*

*Council notes that at its meeting of 30 June the Policy and Resources Committee asked "that the Constitution and Standards Committee consider whether existing provision within the Council's Constitution with respect to the planning for and implementation of active travel schemes are sufficiently clear*

*and appropriate and if necessary to make recommendations to Council on any necessary changes to the Constitution.”*

*Moreover, given the work already undertaken by members of the Environment Climate Emergency & Transport committee on the development of the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy and the promotion of carbon literacy, Council believes that section 2 from the Safe and Pleasant Communities section of the draft Wirral Plan should be moved and placed within the Sustainable Environment section.*

**Accordingly, Council agrees to:**

*Add an additional category 3 – Safer, Sustainable Transport – to the Sustainable Environment section*

*Amend the Summary for item 5 in Inclusive Economy to read “Embedding active travel solutions and local cycling and walking infrastructure across all of Wirral”. Move this item to the new section 3 under Sustainable Environment*

*Move “Deliver new Road Safety Action Plan” from section 4 in Safe and Pleasant Communities to the new section 3 under Sustainable Environment.*

*Remove section 2 from Safe and Pleasant Communities and place the items clearly within the Sustainable Environment part of the Delivery Plan.’*

After a debate Councillor Janette Williamson spoke to the amendment to confirm she had no particular issue with it, however was concerned around some of the language used by Councillor Cleary when speaking to the amendment about it being outdated.

The amendment was then put and carried **(42:18)**.

The Civic Major then asked members to debate the substantive motion. After a lengthy debate the motion, as amended was then put and it was –

**Resolved (39:21) -**

**Having considered the additional contents within the draft Delivery Plans set out in Appendix 1 to the report, Council agrees that further engagement and discussion with relevant Committees takes place to further shape the underpinning delivery plans and work programmes required to implement the Wirral Plan.**

**Delivering a robust Active Travel strategy and Road Safety plan at pace for all of Wirral is fundamental to achieving our policy objectives on climate, air quality and health. These issues cut across various aspects of council activities. Successful outcomes will rely on active engagement across several committees. However, it is the view of council, taking on board the amount of work done to date in advancing our net zero carbon and road safety ambitions, that these areas sit best within the Sustainable Environment brief.**

**Council notes that at its meeting of 30 June the Policy and Resources Committee asked “that the Constitution and Standards Committee consider whether existing provision within the Council’s Constitution with respect to the planning for and implementation of active travel schemes are sufficiently clear and appropriate and if necessary to make recommendations to Council on any necessary changes to the Constitution.”**

**Moreover, given the work already undertaken by members of the Environment Climate Emergency & Transport committee on the development of the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan, the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy and the promotion of carbon literacy, Council believes that section 2 from the Safe and Pleasant Communities section of the draft Wirral Plan should be moved and placed within the Sustainable Environment section.**

**Accordingly, Council agrees to:**

**Add an additional category 3 – Safer, Sustainable Transport – to the Sustainable Environment section**

**Amend the Summary for item 5 in Inclusive Economy to read “Embedding active travel solutions and local cycling and walking infrastructure across all of Wirral”. Move this item to the new section 3 under Sustainable Environment**

**Move “Deliver new Road Safety Action Plan” from section 4 in Safe and Pleasant Communities to the new section 3 under Sustainable Environment.**

**Remove section 2 from Safe and Pleasant Communities and place the items clearly within the Sustainable Environment part of the Delivery Plan.’**

## **26 REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21**

The third item requiring approval was in relation to the Revenue Outturn Report 2020/21.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan it was -

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 23 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 June 2021 be agreed in that:**

- 1. Council approve the 2020/21 budget of £46.574m in relation to Covid-19 funding for Council use and note the additional £22.963m of funds that is to be made available to the Council for onward relay to other organisations as passported funding. This recommendation follows on from the recommendation made by**

**Policy & Resources Committee on 17th February 2021, following the recent notification of additional funding; and**

- 2. the debts in excess of £10,000 included within Appendix 2 be approved for write off against the Provision for Bad Debts.**

**27 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21**

The fourth item requiring approval was in relation to the Capital Outturn Report 2020/21

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan it was,

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 24 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 June 2021 be agreed in that:**

- (1) the additional year end re-profiling of £27.4m from 2020/21 to 2021/22 be noted;**
- (2) the financing of the Programme for 2020/21 be noted;**
- (3) the approval of the virements referred to in Appendix 3 of the report;**
- (4) the Programme for 2021/22 and beyond be kept under review to ensure it is realistic, deliverable and affordable.**

**28 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

The fifth item requiring approval was in relation to the Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee, at its meeting of 28 July, 2021.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan it was,

**Resolved - That the Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21 be approved.**

**29 COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY - REFERRAL FROM TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE**

The sixth item requiring approval was in relation to the Community Safety Strategy as endorsed by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee, at its meeting on 27 July, 2021.

Councillor Helen Cameron was asked by the Civic Mayor to move this item and she chose to speak to this confirming she was happy to work alongside other committees regarding cross cutting themes. This was seconded by Councillor Chris Spriggs.

After a debate, Councillor Liz Grey moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes:

**‘That the Road Safety section includes explicit reference to the adoption of a “Vision Zero” approach.’**

This was in addition to the 2 recommendations on the original report.

A further debate took place, during which Councillor Tom Anderson moved a procedural motion which was seconded by Councillor Leslie Rennie asking that the matter be referred back to the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee for further consideration.

The Monitoring officer, Mr Philip McCourt spoke to advise Council that a procedural motion was voted on without debate. Mr McCourt reminded Council that if passed the whole matter would be referred to the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee.

Council then voted on this and it was then -

**Resolved – 31:28 (1 abstention) that the matter would continue to be discussed by Council.**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Janette Williamson then requested an adjournment. At 18:30pm pm, the Civic Mayor then adjourned the meeting for 15 minutes.

The meeting resumed at 18:45pm.

The Civic Mayor then opened a debate on the amendment. On the amendment moved by Councillor Liz Grey and seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes it was then -

**Resolved – 53:3 (4 abstentions)**

**That the Road Safety section includes explicit reference to the adoption of a “Vision Zero” approach.**

The Civic Mayor then opened a debate on the substantive motion. Councillor Janette Williamson spoke to commend the report, especially the inclusion of domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, transphobia and the ‘prevent strategy’ tackling extremism. Councillor Helen Cameron then spoke to commend the contents of the report after which the Civic Mayor asked Members to vote.

**Resolved – 59:0 (1 abstention) that – The Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (Community Safety Strategy) be approved, with the addition, that the Road Safety section includes explicit reference to the adoption of a “Vision Zero” approach.**

**30 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - REFERRAL FROM CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The seventh item requiring approval was in relation to an amendment to the Councillor's Code of Conduct, as recommended by the Constitution and Standards Committee at its meeting on 23 June, 2021.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart it was -

**Resolved - That the revised Members' Code of Conduct, be adopted**

**31 REPORT ON VACANT COMMITTEE PLACE ON REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The eighth item requiring approval was in relation to a report of the Director of Law and Governance and the appointment of a Member to a vacant Committee place following the decision of the Independent Group to forgo that place on the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee and to disapply the requirement for political proportionality of Regulatory Licensing Panels.

On a motion by Councillor Andrew Hodson, seconded by Councillor Chris Jones it was,

**Resolved - That:**

**(1) The vacant position on the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee be:**

**(a) allocated to the Conservative Group; and**

**(b) the monitoring officer as proper officer be authorised to carry out the wishes of the Leader of that Group in allocating a Member to membership of the Committee with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the name of that Member**

**(2) The terms of reference of the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee be amended so as to provide that the sub-committees forming Licensing Panels (Regulatory) will be:**

**(a) exempt from political balance requirements; but**

(b) not formed solely by members of one Group, so as to read at Part 3(b) of the Constitution: 11.4 Licensing Panels (Regulatory) Page 141 Agenda Item 5h Sub-Committees of between three (3) and five (5) members of the Regulatory and General Purposes Committee, which shall consist of members of more than one political group but shall otherwise not be subject to political balance (Council minute [30] 2021/22 refers), with responsibility for the Council's functions to deal with applications, determinations and reviews of licences or registrations, and any related matter, in respect of any licensed activity that is the responsibility of the Authority (other than under the Licensing Act 2003 or the Gambling Act 2005).

32 **OUTSIDE BODY - NORTH WESTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY - REPLACEMENT OF MEMBER**

In respect of the ninth item requiring approval, the Civic Mayor advised Council that Councillor Liz Grey wished to step down from this body and the Council was required to appoint another Member. Councillor Anderson spoke to move that this appointment be considered at the Regulatory and General Purpose Committee.

On a motion by Councillor Tom Anderson, seconded by Councillor Janette Williamson it was,

**Resolved – This appointment be referred to the next Regulatory and General Purpose Committee.**

33 **SIX MONTH ATTENDANCE RULE S85 (1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

With regard to the tenth item requiring approval, the Council considered a report of the Director of Law and governance which requested Council to agree that Councillor Andrew Corkhill was granted permission to be absent from Council meetings for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia it was,

**Resolved - That the absence of Councillor Andy Corkhill from all Council and Committee Meetings, be authorised and approved for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year, pursuant to Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972**

**DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

The Civic Mayor introduced the minutes of the various Committees which had met since 8 March, 2021. He drew Members' attention to one minute in particular, in accordance with Part 4, Section 4, paragraph 9 of the Constitution, in that a decision was taken, which was regarded as urgent by the Committee, as follows:

Minute 109 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 24 March, 2021 – Proposed Grant Agreement with LCR Combined Authority for the Costs of the Acquisition of 92 Grange Road, Birkenhead, as formal acceptance of the offer was required by 31 March, 2021.

Two urgent officer decisions had also been taken and were also reported to the Council in accordance with part 4 of the Constitution, as referred to above. One on 8 July, 2021 by the Director of Neighbourhood Services, 'Covid Local Support Grant – Extension No.2'; and a decision on 5 August, 2021 by the Director of Regeneration and Place, 'A Town Deal for Birkenhead – Acceptance of Head of Terms'.

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

Councillor Andrew Gardner asked a question of Councillor Julie McManus in respect of minute 6 of the Housing Committee, 10 March 2021 referencing government plans for affordable housing and whether the housing needs of the most deprived people in the Borough were being met. Councillor McManus agreed that some of the housing needs were not being met and agreed that the matter would be on the agenda for the next Housing Committee.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in respect of Minute 84 of the Policy and Resource Committee, 17 March 2021 and in light of the capitalisation directive issued by MHGLC and whether the use of up to £5m on a community bank was a good use of Council resources. Councillor Janette Williamson responded to say that the money had been set aside as part of the capital programme and she still thought it was.

Councillor Tony Cox asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey in respect of minute 8 of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee 14 June 2021 in relation to car parking charges and if she was aware that a traffic regulation order process could take up to 9 months, putting at risk the budget saving options, and was it discussed with the officers. Councillor Liz Grey responded to confirm that she was aware of this and had discussed it with officers and had been assured that it was part of the initial budget proposal.

Councillor Leslie Rennie asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey in respect of minute 34 of the Policy and Resource Committee 28 July 2021 where it laid out the remit for her committees to include unauthorised encampments and how many had the council dealt with this municipal year and how much it had cost the authority.

Councillor Rennie also referred to comments from members of the public on social media whereby it had been alluded to that the Council had paid fuel costs to remove an encampment. Councillor Grey responded to confirm she was not aware of these comments but shared the concerns raised about the fuel costs and would provide a written response as soon as possible.

Councillor Max Booth asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in regard to Minute 34 of the Policy and Resources Committee 28 July 2021 and referred to the Government accelerator fund and 10 Local Authorities were awarded a share of £7.9m, to ensure vulnerable people across the country received earlier and better support through early data sharing, and asked if the Council Applied for this. Councillor Williamson advised that she did not have this information to hand but would respond as soon as possible.

Councillor Ivan Camphor asked a question of Councillor Yvonne Nolan in regard to minute 5 of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee 7 June 2021 over what steps the committee had taken to consult with user groups in regard to any proposed change in Governance Arrangements for Wirral Evolutions. Councillor Nolan responded to confirm that officers had worked very closely with patient, staff and parents' groups and had significant correspondence with all these groups.

Councillor Andrew Hodson asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in regard to minute 15 of the Policy and Resource Committee 9 June 2021. Councillor Hodson expressed that he was truly sorry to hear the abuse Councillor Williamson had received on social media in relation to the announcement that Wirral would be welcoming Afghan refugees. Councillor Hodson asked if there were any plans to consult other groups or set up a cross party committee to ensure that Wirral could give a warm welcome to those who had been through so much. Councillor Williamson responded to confirm that her statement was an initial response to the changing situation, but as the situation moved on she would be consulting with Members across parties.

Councillor Andrew Hodson asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in regards to minute 15 of the Policy and Resource Committee 9 June 2021. Councillor Hodson expressed that he was truly sorry to hear the abuse Councillor Williamson had received on social media in relation to the announcement that Wirral would be welcoming Afghan refugees. Councillor

Hodson asked if there were any – do you have any plans to consult other groups or set up a cross party committee to ensure that Wirral can give a warm welcome to those who have been through so much. Cllr Williamson responded to confirm that her statement was an initial response to the changing situation, but as the situating moves on she would be consulting with Members across parties.

35 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Motions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.1 and were determined as below in minutes 36 to 39 below.

36 **MOTION - PLANNING SYSTEM REFORM**

Councillor Steve Foulkes moved and Councillor Brian Kenny seconded a motion submitted in accordance with standing order 13:

*‘Wirral Council notes that the Government has published highly controversial proposals to reform the Planning system. One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents’ right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood if the area is zoned for growth or renewal.*

*Council believes that the Planning system works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes. Wirral Council therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.’*

Councillor Stuart Kelly moved and Councillor Alan Brame Seconded the following amendment in accordance with Standing order 13.3

*‘Insert after second paragraph: Council notes that paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2021) states: ‘Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.’ Council therefore urges developers to engage with local residents and amenity groups at the earliest possible opportunity as their plans develop and preferably before any formal planning application is submitted. Council requests that Planning Committee gives consideration to amending the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Applications Sub-Committee for it to act as a forum to enable informal pre-application discussion between community groups, Ward Councillors, developers and officers to take place as plans are developed. Council further considers that the Council’s planning website pages should be made more user-friendly and requests the Director of Regeneration and Place to further develop the web pages and, as a start, to ensure that uploaded*

*plans, drawings and documents are given readily understandable titles and that comments submitted by local residents are readily visible for interested parties to view'*

Following a debate in accordance with standing order 15, the amendment was put and carried (34:26).

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

**Resolved (60:0) - That -**

**Wirral Council notes that the Government has published highly controversial proposals to reform the Planning system. One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents' right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood if the area is zoned for growth or renewal.**

**Council believes that the Planning system works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes. Wirral Council therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.**

**Council notes that paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2021) states: 'Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.'**

**Council therefore urges developers to engage with local residents and amenity groups at the earliest possible opportunity as their plans develop and preferably before any formal planning application is submitted.**

**Council requests that Planning Committee gives consideration to amending the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Applications Sub-Committee for it to act as a forum to enable informal pre-application discussion between community groups, Ward Councillors, developers and officers to take place as plans are developed. Council further considers that the Council's planning website pages should be made more user-friendly and requests the Director of Regeneration and Place to further develop the web pages and, as a start, to ensure that uploaded plans, drawings and documents are given readily understandable titles and that comments submitted by local residents are readily visible for interested parties to view.**

37 **MOTION - INQUIRY INTO THE NICKLAUS JOINT VENTURE GROUP (NJVG) DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT**

Councillor Tom Anderson moved and Councillor Kathy Hodson seconded a motion submitted in accordance with standing order 13:

*'Council seeks confirmation of the full extent of the agreement with Nicklaus Joint Venture Group to develop a 'Hoylake Golf Resort', including risks and associated costs to date. Council therefore requests the Audit and Risk Management Committee to investigate the governance and financial arrangements associated with this project, including evidence from those involved in the original decision; a timeline of key points; a full breakdown of costs and who authorised those costs. Further, Council seeks assurances that any other similar agreements which may have been entered into are assessed for risk exposure.'*

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded an amendment in accordance with standing order 13.3:

*'Insert at end of second paragraph: and scrutiny of relevant and significant events, both political and financial, up to, and including the date of settlement'*

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

The amendment was then put and carried (60:0)

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

**Resolved (60:0) - That,**

**Council seeks confirmation of the full extent of the agreement with Nicklaus Joint Venture Group to develop a 'Hoylake Golf Resort', including risks and associated costs to date.**

**Council therefore requests the Audit and Risk Management Committee to investigate the governance and financial arrangements associated with this project, including evidence from those involved in the original decision; a timeline of key points; a full breakdown of costs and who authorised those costs and scrutiny of relevant and significant events, both political and financial, up to, and including the date of settlement.**

**Further, Council seeks assurances that any other similar agreements which may have been entered into are assessed for risk exposure.**

38 **MOTION - SCHOOLS NEED ADEQUATE FUNDING TO ENSURE OUR CHILDREN CATCH UP**

Councillor Chris Carubia moved and Councillor Phil Gilchrist seconded a motion in accordance with standing order 13.

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

**Resolved – 39:21 (no abstentions) – That,**

**Council congratulates Wirral’s young people on their GCSE and A level results. Council recognises, respects and appreciates that these results reflect the hard work put in by students, supported by their teachers, teaching assistants and parents, despite the considerable disruption to their education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**Council looks forward to better understanding how well Wirral’s young people have been able to come through such difficult times and remains concerned that the crisis has had a severe impact on the mental health of young people.**

**Council recalls, in February 2021, that Sir Kevan Collins was appointed as Education Recovery Commissioner. It is noted that, at the time, the Prime Minister stated:- "his experience and expertise will help ensure every young person is supported to catch up on their education and gain the skills and knowledge they need to be able to seize opportunities in future." (Press release, 03.02.21)**

**Council considers the fact that Sir Kevan felt he had little alternative but to resign in June 2021 is a warning sign that the clear long-term recovery programme he proposed is not likely to be forthcoming from the Government in the way he recommended or at the scale needed to undo the disruption caused by COVID-19.**

**Council strongly supports the view expressed by Sir Kevan in his resignation letter to the Prime Minister in which he stated:- “I hope that you are able to allocate the additional resources that are likely to be needed for a successful recovery through the forthcoming Spending Review.” Council, therefore, asks that the Group Leaders and Spokespersons for Children, Young People & Education sign a letter to the Secretary of State for Education endorsing Sir Kevan’s views and calling for adequate resources for catch-up programmes, designed for**

**all age groups, that will enable Wirral's young people to recover this lost ground.**

39 **MOTION - CREATING LOW TRAFFIC STREETS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACROSS WIRRAL**

Councillor Harry Gorman moved and Councillor Chris Cooke seconded a motion submitted in accordance with standing order 13:

*'Council notes: the negative effects of air pollution on public health and the widespread problems associated with 'rat-running' on minor roads.*

*The benefits of active travel both in reducing carbon emissions and improving health.*

*The effectiveness of modal filters, chicanes and other traffic calming measures in creating low traffic neighbourhoods by removing through traffic from residential areas and from outside schools. This enables local people to take more and safer journeys on foot, bike or by other active modes.*

*That there are successful modal filters already installed in Wirral (e.g. Highcroft Avenue, Bebington and Lansdowne Road, Birkenhead).*

*The greater affordability and versatility of wooden planters compared with other modal filter and chicane designs and the benefits that more plants can bring to a street scene. These can be upgraded with more permanent structures when funding allows.*

*Best practice case studies that have created high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars using design features such as modal filters, school streets, footway improvements, seating, tree planting, pocket parks, cycle parking and signage and waymarking.*

*Low traffic neighbourhoods deter traffic from cutting through residential side streets to avoid main roads whilst still allowing vehicle access for residents. Scheme outcomes can be a reduction in travel speeds and the creation of safer environments for those walking, cycling or using mobility scooters.*

*The council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency and safer streets and support by all parties for a residential 20mph speed limit.*

*That 20mph limits are often ignored without physical traffic calming measures being in place.*

*That speed enforcement is dependent on police resource and can't be present on all streets, all the time.*

*Council instructs: The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee as part of its work programme:*

- *To undertake an assessment of the suitability of streets for planter-based traffic calming solutions to help quickly create low traffic neighbourhoods throughout Wirral.*

- *To work with stakeholders to identify issues and co-develop effective solutions in order to assess the feasibility of delivering a low traffic neighbourhood.*

- *To seek to ensure traffic calming measures are always considered whenever a road is up for resurfacing'*

Councillor Alan Brame moved and Councillor Stuart Kelly seconded an amendment in accordance with standing order 13.3,

*'Insert after third bullet point:*

- *To consider the wider use of environmental weight restrictions where appropriate to deter Heavy Goods Vehicles from using residential roads as short cuts'*

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

The amendment was put and carried (39:21)

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

**Resolved 39:21 (no abstentions) – That**

**'Council notes: the negative effects of air pollution on public health and the widespread problems associated with 'rat-running' on minor roads.**

**The benefits of active travel both in reducing carbon emissions and improving health.**

**The effectiveness of modal filters, chicanes and other traffic calming measures in creating low traffic neighbourhoods by removing through traffic from residential areas and from outside schools. This enables local people to take more and safer journeys on foot, bike or by other active modes.**

**That there are successful modal filters already installed in Wirral (e.g. Highcroft Avenue, Bebington and Lansdowne Road, Birkenhead).**

**The greater affordability and versatility of wooden planters compared with other modal filter and chicane designs and the benefits that more plants can bring to a street scene. These can be upgraded with more permanent structures when funding allows.**

**Best practice case studies that have created high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars using design features such as modal filters, school streets, footway improvements, seating, tree planting, pocket parks, cycle parking and signage and waymarking.**

**Low traffic neighbourhoods deter traffic from cutting through residential side streets to avoid main roads whilst still allowing vehicle access for residents. Scheme outcomes can be a reduction in travel speeds and the creation of safer environments for those walking, cycling or using mobility scooters.**

**The council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency and safer streets and support by all parties for a residential 20mph speed limit.**

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## CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 September 2021

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors K Cannon H Collinson  
C Cooke C Povall  
C Carubia P Stuart  
M Booth Y Nolan (In place of  
D Brennan S Frost)  
S Williams (In place  
of A Wright)

### 18 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed Members, Officers and members of the public to the meeting.

### 19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alison Wright and Councillor Sam Frost.

### 20 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and, if so, declare and state what they were.

No declarations were made.

### 21 MINUTES

The Chair invited members to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021. It was raised that a member raised a query relating to the number of early years children categorised as having Special Education Needs and Disabilities and officers had undertaken to provide a response. The Assistant Director for Education undertook to provide the response. It was further noted that the Minutes detailed the removal of the Healthy Weight agenda from the work programme and this needed to be actioned.

**Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 be agreed.**

22 **PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions, requests to make a statement or petitions submitted.

23 **WIRRAL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-22**

Tony Kirk, Head of Contextual Safeguarding introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided an introduction to the Wirral Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2021-22. The statutory requirement to have a Youth Justice Service under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was outlined. This sought to ensure co-operation with statutory partners such as Police and Health, and the requirement included producing an annual plan which was before members for consideration.

The details of the plan were outlined to the Committee, where it was reported that the priorities within the plan included a combination of both locally and nationally set priorities, with issues like Harmful Sexual Behaviour receiving significant national media attention whilst other issues such as Child to Adult Violence had been identified for local development of the service. The governance of the Youth Justice Services was outlined, with the Youth Justice Management Board having an operation plan that supported the overarching strategic plan.

Members welcomed the adoption of a preventative approach and sought further information on the prevalence of anti-social behaviour on the cusp of the criminal system in the context of the Youth Justice Service preventative services. Participation and engagement was discussed as a priority, where it was hoped co-production of plans with young people, parents and victims could be further explored.

**Resolved – That**

- 1) the Wirral Youth Justice Service’s Strategic Plan 2021-22 be endorsed and Council be recommended to approve it.**
- 2) the approach and ongoing development work within the Youth Justice Service and across the Youth Justice Management Board be noted.**

24 **WIRRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2021-2024**

James Backhouse, Assistant Director for Education introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education which presented to the Committee the School Improvement Strategy 2021-24, which set out the Council’s vision and ambition around school improvement. It forms part of a

wider multi-factorial Education Strategy which will provide a new transformational and holistic approach to education across all areas, including early years, social care, early help and beyond. The report detailed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to schools and education in Wirral, and the importance of working collaboratively with schools to support children and improve attainment in response to Covid-19 was outlined to the Committee. The strategy focused on five key themes, namely:

- Leadership and Governance
- High Support, High Challenge
- Self-improving School System
- Learning and Innovation
- School Improvement Wirral

It was anticipated that the strategy would take three years to deliver and to allow for new systems and activity to be embedded. To support this, it was reported that the capacity in the School Improvement Service had been increased.

Members welcomed the aspiration of school improvement but sought further detail on how this would be achieved and whether resources would be required to fully recover from Covid. It was reported that significant work had been undertaken with headteachers in Wirral to capture the main challenges and to adopt the quality assurance process detailed within the strategy, but that there was still further work to be done to develop those documents that sit within the strategy which would be reported back to members. Following further comments, officers undertook to report back on performance measurements and benchmarking.

It was moved by Councillor Wendy Clements, seconded by Councillor Steve Williams, that officer recommendation 3 be changed from 12 months to 6 months.

It was then moved by Councillor David Brennan, seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia, that –

“the School Improvement Strategy is identified in the Council’s Corporate Risk Register as the mitigation of educational under attainment caused by the pandemic, the Committee therefore agrees that alongside the three year strategy, it is necessary to develop an 18-month Covid-19 Education Catch Up Plan, to identify key actions, resources, target groups and key performance indicators to ensure that the adverse impact on our children’s life chances that may be caused by the pandemic are minimised, with the plan being reviewed by this Committee in 2022.”

In response, officers undertook to bring the plan for review in January 2022.

The motion, with the additional recommendation from Councillor David Brennan was then put and agreed by assent. It was therefore –

**Resolved – That**

- 1) the School Improvement Strategy 2021-2024 be endorsed.**
- 2) the approach taken and ongoing support given to the school system by Wirral Council be noted.**
- 3) an update on progress towards implementation of the strategy be reported back to the Children, Young People and Education Committee in 6 months.**
- 4) the School Improvement Strategy is identified in the Council's Corporate Risk Register as the mitigation of educational under attainment caused by the pandemic, the Committee therefore agrees that alongside the three year strategy, it is necessary to develop an 18-month Covid-19 Education Catch Up Plan, to identify key actions, resources, target groups and key performance indicators to ensure that the adverse impact on our children's life chances that may be caused by the pandemic are minimised, with the plan being reviewed by this Committee in 2022.**

**25 BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 1**

Nicholas Ajaegbu, Senior Finance Officer introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which set out the financial monitoring information for the Children, Young People & Education Committee as at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22, with an overview of budget performance to enable Committee to take ownership of their specific budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

The Committee was advised that as at the end of June 2021 (Quarter 1), the forecast year end position for Children, Families and Education showed a balanced forecast position. It was reported that the service continued to manage demand with financial pressures being mitigated by in-year cost savings and use of specific related reserves. In-year employee cost savings across the service had mitigated contractual cost pressures and contributed to the overall balanced position. Members' attention was brought to the schools core, where there was an adverse variance of £0.223m due to the on-going annual costs that are being incurred in relation to the non-operational status of the Kingsway School building, but that this had been partly mitigated by an underspend in historic teacher's pension costs.

The steps being taken to manage demand for services were queried, where it was reported that demand management was based on a range of preventative strategies, with one example being preventative measures in relation to Children Looked After which meant the numbers requiring care had not increased as in other authorities thus keeping costs down. Following a request, officers undertook to consider whether the profiled and actual expenditure could be included in future reports to provide members greater assurance that the reported forecasts would be reflected in the year-end position.

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the forecast year-end revenue position balanced forecast, as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted.**
- (2) the progress on the achievement of approved savings and the year-end forecast position at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted.**
- (3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for future commitments be noted.**
- (4) the forecast year-end capital position of £4.970m favourable as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted.**

26 **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Tricia Thomas, Performance & Improvement Manager introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education which provided a summary of progress made to date on the development of a new performance reporting framework for Members of the Children, Young People & Education Committee. The background to performance monitoring was outlined, with the development of a Power BI Dashboard for members as well as the development of a supplementary performance report to Committee. Members were given a summary of the data provided in the performance report, which included data on 8 priority groups as agreed by members, each of which contained a set of performance indicators.

Members sought further information on SEND where it was reported that further work was underway to cleanse the data and develop the SEND reports within PowerBI. In relation to Free School Meals further information was sought on the reasons behind the significant increase in demand in 2018/19. Officers then outlined that the Q2 performance report was due in November 2021, therefore there was scope for a focused performance report for the October Committee meeting and suggestions were sought from Members. It was proposed that reports on children's social work workforce and post-16

participation in employment, education and training following the pandemic be brought to the next meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Kate Cannon, seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia, that the recommendations within the report alongside the inclusion of the two additional items for the next scheduled meeting be agreed. The motion was agreed by assent. It was therefore –

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the progress made to date and the next steps involved in developing and rolling out a new performance monitoring framework be noted.**
- (2) the content of the Performance Report (Appendix A) and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action be noted.**
- (3) performance reports in relation to children’s social work workforce and post-16 participation in employment, education and training following the pandemic be brought to the next meeting.**

27 **OVERVIEW OF 2019/20 COUNCIL LIFELONG LEARNING SERVICE ADULT EDUCATION DELIVERY**

Paul Smith, Head of Integrated Learning, Skills and Employment introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education which set out the Lifelong Learning Service’s developments, summary of delivery and learner achievements in the 2019/20 academic year as its first full academic year funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The service sought to actively engage and support local residents aged 19+ who were furthest from the labour market and provide learners with the confidence to take the next steps back into education and employment.

The report was based on the 2019/20 academic year, and it was anticipated that a report on 2020/21 would be reported back to Committee in early 2022. It was reported that 2019/20 was a challenging year for the service, with a move to online delivery as a result of the pandemic which presented further challenges when engaging with the most vulnerable people in deprived wards, and the work of the team to continue to deliver the service during this period was praised.

It was queried whether the service would work with Syrian refugees, where it was confirmed that notification of the first three families arriving had been received and Liverpool City Region would inform the service if the Lifelong Learning Service was required. Information was sought on the working arrangements with Wirral Met College where members were advised that although there was no formal agreement, the service was closely aligned to

the College and data on referrals could be provided in the future. The results from the Test and Learn Pilots were also sought for at a future date. It was further reported that whilst the service would be returning to face to face, the value of online delivery was recognised and an online learning platform was being developed.

#### **Resolved – That**

**(1) the report be noted.**

**(2) the services' planned improvements be supported and the contribution to improving the lives of adults in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2019/20 be recognised.**

#### 28 **EDSENTIAL UPDATE**

Simone White, Director for Children, Families and Education introduced the report which provided an update on the work of Edsential, a community interest company (CiC) co-owned by Wirral Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council which provided high quality, ethical and innovative services to schools and families across the Northwest. The report detailed Edsential's achievements during 2020-21 including the delivery of the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF), Edsential at home service and free school meal parcels. It also outlined the current challenges being faced specifically the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation's financial position, as well as the strategic business plan priorities for 2021–2022. Mark Parkinson, Chair of Edsential Board and Ian McGrady, Managing Director were in attendance to answer questions from members.

The criteria for eligibility for holiday activity programmes was queried due to residents just over the threshold for eligibility for Free School Meals having to pay full price, where it was noted that the eligibility was set by Department for Education and that because Edsential overachieved on forecast places, demand was high. A further query was raised in relation to the losses the company had incurred and whether it was able to access any covid money for recovery. In response, the Committee was advised that £1.85m had been received in government funding the majority of which had been used for furlough, with rate relief and grants also being received mainly attached to the residential centre in Anglesey. It was reported that there was a robust recovery plan in place and it was expected that income would recover to pre-Pandemic rates.

A further discussion was had around the decision to close the Oaklands residential centre and move existing bookings to the centre in Anglesey. It was felt that the quality of the provision was superior at the Anglesey site, with significantly more activities all of which were accessible on foot, unlike the Oaklands site which required minibus travel and therefore extra cost. It was

reported that rates to attend both sites as well as the travelling time to both were equal. A number of queries were then raised in relation to the status of the company in terms of profit, as well the liability for the loss of income during Covid-19 and the anticipated recovery. The status of the company as a CIC was outlined, as well as the use of any profits where it reported that the £100k of profits were reinvested into 12 Wirral schools through grant funding. It was further reported that to the credit of the staff the company avoided cash flow issues during Covid-19 and the Board was confident that it could comfortably pay back the debt it had incurred whilst running the company efficiently.

It was moved by Councillor Wendy Clements, seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon that the Committee places on record its thanks to Edsential for its work during Covid-19. The motion was unanimously agreed. It was therefore

–

**Resolved – That**

**(1) the report be noted.**

**(2) Edsential be thanked for their work during Covid-19.**

29 **THE PROVISION OF FOOD & ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN IN SCHOOL HOLIDAYS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services, introduced the report of the Director of Children, Families and Education, which provided an update further to the proposal agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee regarding the provision of free school meals (FSM) in school holidays during the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. The Working Group had met in July 2021 and decided that due to the extension of the funding, it wished to continue to meet and report back to Policy and Resources.

The Chair confirmed that the members of the Committee serving on the Working Group were content with the proposal.

**Resolved – That**

**(1) The progress of the Provision of Food and Activities Working Group for Children in School Holidays during the Covid-19 Pandemic be noted.**

**(2) a report be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in the new year.**

30 **CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance, which provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

It was proposed that the item in relation to learning from Covid could be embedded into the reports for other issues as part of a working agenda, but members felt that it warranted a specific discussion. It was proposed that the Child Poverty Strategy should be timetabled in and the Director of Children, Families and Education undertook to consider the timescales and review the overall timetable of items. It was further proposed that the SEND Strategy Update be brought to the next meeting and that the Pupil Place Planning Strategy be added to the work programme.

The recommendations within the report with the inclusion of the proposals suggested by the Committee were moved by Councillor Wendy Clements, seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia. It was therefore –

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the report be noted.**
- (2) the Child Poverty Strategy be scheduled in for consideration at a future meeting.**
- (3) the SEND Strategy Update be presented to the next scheduled meeting.**
- (4) Pupil Place Planning Strategy be added to the work programme.**

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# DECISION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday, 29 July 2021

Present: Councillor P Hayes (Chair)

Councillors T Anderson A Gardner  
K Cannon Joe Walsh  
C Carubia S Frost (In place of  
P Cleary S Jones)  
T Cox K Greaney (In place  
of I Williams)  
J Robinson (In  
place of KJ  
Williams)

## 1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/ PARTY WHIP

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

There were no declarations of interest, and the Chair emphasised that there was no party whip applied to this meeting.

## 2 DECISION REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Chair talked through the procedure to be followed.

## 3 DECISION REVIEW - CAR PARKING CHARGING OPTIONS

Councillor Simon Mountney introduced the reviewed decision notice on which he was lead signatory. He stated that the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee had failed to carry out a car parking review and this had led to a poor and wasteful decision. He asked the Committee to look at:

- 1) Information on car parking usage which had been lacking and therefore had not been used to come to the decision, and could cause a 30% reduction in footfall.
- 2) Displaced parking which was not considered as some areas would be affected more than others.
- 3) Lack of discussion on town centre development plans which would heavily influence car parking in some areas, including the fact that some car parks could be removed as part of developments.

He explained that businesses were in a difficult financial position because of the pandemic and that introducing car parking charges would have a detrimental effect on them.

Councillor Simon Mountney answered Members questions which established:

- Over 8,500 residents had indicated opposition to the charges, and their views would be presented to a future Council meeting
- There had been no discussion about carbon footprints of setting up the infrastructure required to implement the decision, and there had been only limited discussion about the cost
- The budget savings which the Committee were called to find should be achieved both through charges and the review of car parking charges
- The budget saving was for the 2021/22 budget and the review of car parking was not scheduled to be complete until Autumn 2021
- The 30% reduction in business footfall was mentioned in the report
- The Council was in a dire situation but businesses had not changed since the last review in 2017 and their situation had deteriorated since 2017
- There were ways to achieve more sustainable travel such as electric vehicle use

Councillor Phil Gilchrist then introduced the reviewed decision notice in which he was a lead signatory and presented a slide show focussed on Bromborough village showing how it had changed, the effects on the high street of parking restrictions and nearby free parking. His conclusion was that parking charges would kill the village and would dissuade people from using shops and other services.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist answered Members questions which established:

- there were approximately 70 staff using car parking places who may choose to park elsewhere in the community.

Councillor Chris Cooke then spoke as a decision maker and stated that the decision to increase charges was to be set in the context of the parking review and the budget emergency. All groups came together to support the budget which included £10.7 million borrowed from central Government if the Council could prove competent to make savings. The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee was tasked to find £1 million savings from car parking, with any excess income paying for road management, safety and maintenance. He believed that the least well off, through their Council Tax, had been subsidising the better off who had free car parking. The review notice stated that charges will reduce demand by 30% but this was a misquote and did not appear anywhere else. It assumed that shoppers would defer shopping rather than try other modes of transport. The Climate Emergency required using parking charges to encourage people to use other modes of travel.

Councillor Liz Grey then spoke as a decision maker. She stated that the Council had lost hundreds of thousands of pounds in 2020 and £30,000 in 2021 because of this decision review and it showed a contempt for fiscal responsibility, breaking a promise made at full Council where all parties agreed to increase charges. She outlined potential alternatives to finding savings including closing leisure centres, closing public toilets, dismissing school crossing people, closing art galleries, closing golf courses and compulsory staff redundancies. She reminded Members that Environment Committee had not been tasked with deciding if charges were increased, as that had previously been decided by all parties at Council. Parking charges were supported by residents in the budget consultation and there was only anecdotal evidence of detrimental effects. She felt that Car parking should pay for itself and she stated that Wirral's charges remained lower than our neighbouring authorities even if these changes were implemented.

Councillors Chris Cooke and Liz Grey then answered Members questions which established:

- Although the point of the process was financial there could be environmental and social justice implications as affluent areas had free parking.
- Car parking had been loss making and subsidised from other budgets
- Surplus income was restricted in its use under the Road Traffic Act 1984 and the Government had issued guidance in April 2020 regarding permitted use of funds
- There could be wear and tear costs on car parks where there was no charging
- There was not a consensus amongst Members about whether it would be detrimental to businesses because of a lack of precise evidence
- Consultation would form part of the review of car parking
- The funds from central Government were to cover Council costs arising from the pandemic. Money provided for businesses had been distributed
- There had been an opportunity cost for car parks as the land could have been used for alternative purposes.
- Air quality changes may be balanced once a modal shift took place
- There were issues where people parked outside Country Parks to avoid charges such as at Eastham Country Park
- There was initial capital investment required for some options

The witnesses then made statements.

**Witnesses for Councillor Simon Mountney**

Mr Simon Trout and Mrs Ruth Trout, West Kirby residents spoke. They had been involved in 2018 in an action group against the introduction of car parking charges in coastal towns, and their reasons had not changed, in fact they had strengthened during Covid because of the influx of new leisure visitors and increased use of the coastal areas, encouraged by social media and apps, including by motor homes. There was little off-street parking in the

area, including on new developments, and many streets had restricted on-street parking which displaced residents parking and caused traffic congestion. They felt that a comprehensive car parking charge policy should take into account the differences between towns. They recalled that a 2018 review noted that visitors, the disabled and elderly used the waterfront for their mental and physical health.

Mr and Mrs Trout then answered Members questions which established:

- Using side streets for parking could cause more accidents and less ability for residents to park
- A consultation would enable an organised objection to proposals similar to the leaflet drop done in 2018
- The installation of electric charging points on streets caused concern as well

David Wooley, Secretary of New Brighton Marine Lake users, and Mike Ellis, Model Boat Society, talked about the history of the Marine Lake where people come to watch model craft which were brought from all over the country to be sailed. The user group of 31 people took a role in cleaning the surroundings, treating the water and salvaging sunk models rather than have the Council do it. There were 30 parking spaces adjacent to the lake. if the proposal was agreed there would be a loss of attendance to the lake and reduced membership of the Model Boat Society, affecting people's well-being and being detrimental to the area.

Mr Wooley then answered Members questions which established:

- Volunteers can have an exemption of parking charges
- In one hour recently, 380 people watched the craft

Kathy Morgan, manager of the Little Gift House in Bebington spoke of feeling defeated and demoralized as Bebington had suffered during her 10 years working there with the opening of a supermarket and closure of the civic centre and town hall. The temporary closure of the library had disrupted classes and services it had provided. The major issue was the lack of short stay parking allowance on the high street, which caused stress and anxiety for business owners. She also noted that staff would have to pay parking fees. Shops faced challenges from out-of-town retail centres, garden centres and online shopping, and parking charges appeared to be a tariff for buying local. She asked the Council to recognise the benefits of local shops.

Ms Morgan then answered Members questions which established:

- The planned approach showed no recognition of what small businesses had gone through
- The uncertainty does require consideration of mitigation plans
- Customers included parents with prams on the school run and fewer elderly since the lockdowns began
- There was nowhere to park bikes near her shop

- Takings had reduced to about 57% of the required amounts as costs had continued to increase
- Displacement parking could destroy businesses
- A consultation and fine tuning of policy was required without assumptions

Sue Ramsey, a representative of a community group aiming to regenerate West Kirby, spoke next and was aware of the serious concerns of the impact of charges. She highlighted issues including the impact on residents of displaced parking into residential areas and the effect on local businesses, especially service-related ones such as hairdressers, who only needed short term parking. She believed it would send people to other areas and deter lower income families using the prom as a cheap day out. She pointed out that there had also been no consultation on the proposed parking issue. She believed a consultation would have the same opposition campaign as the 2018 proposals, and she would prefer the Council to wait for the review.

Ms Ramsey then answered Members questions which established:

- Many people would try and get free parking where possible.
- Public transport as an alternative added a higher cost for most visitors and may be difficult for families, the elderly or those with equipment for their day out
- Blue badge holders had unlimited free parking, although not everyone with a disability had a blue badge.

Dawn Wormell, a shift worker, then related that there seemed to be no consideration for displacement of vehicles as they avoided parking charges, as if it happened residents may not be able to park outside their own houses after a shift and may spend a long time driving round to find a space in the area. She could also anticipate people fearing the inability to park on the seafront. The train was expensive for her with three children, and she couldn't get to hospital on public transport when required. She suggested having two hours free parking.

Ms Wormell then answered Members questions which established:

- A petition had been raised by West Kirby retailers around 2019 who felt car parking charges were affecting them and if removed would benefit them.
- It may become impossible for local residents to park on the side streets where they lived.

Andrew Cain of outfitters store Cain of Heswall, spoke of car parking always being a hot topic in Heswall with people abusing it by parking and taking the train to Liverpool. He knew that some consumers used out of town facilities then the internet. He felt that if more shops were occupied then rates revenue would increase. He was aware that people buying inexpensive items, such as

a newspaper, would not want to pay for parking, and that elderly people were less likely to bike or walk to shops.

Mr Cain then answered Members questions which established:

- The Business Association kept a list of vacant shops and listed 20 ground floor premises empty which was double the normal rate.

### **Witnesses for Councillor Phil Gilchrist**

Philip Spencer then spoke as a member of the Bromborough Village Community Association. He had two petitions, one from the shops and visitors with 5,000 names and one online with 2,000. He pleaded for an exemption from charges as The Croft Retail Park and Lidl supermarket were both nearby threats to the village with free parking, and parking charges in the village would only worsen that. Over one day, a survey showed 84 staff parking which included food tasters who came for only an hour and earned £10 so a charge would eat into that. He felt that the Council's income would come at a cost.

Mr Spencer then answered Members questions which established:

- Recent evidence for losses was partly anecdotal but he was aware that footfall had reduced. Two years prior there was a traffic count twice a day which was duplicated more recently. Previously the figures were 120 in the morning and 109 in the afternoon whilst recently it was 89 and 86 respectively.
- He was not aware of the budget consultation that took place last year.

### **Decision-makers witnesses**

Naomi Graham of the Wirral Environment Network spoke of the published material which she had presented to the Car Parking Working Group in November 2020, showing that transport contributed 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. The Council was to embed sustainable transport solutions and encouraging modal shift across the Borough, which should have a positive impact on the economy. She detailed how the top 10 most prosperous high streets in the country had a variety of car parking charges. The top had no free parking, and, statistically, pedestrian, bus users and cyclists returned more and spent more overall than car users, but shop owners overestimated car owner footfall. Displacement was location specific and there was no major change in parking patterns caused by parking charges.

Ms Graham then answered Members questions which established:

- Reports based on London identified it as a network of villages so were applicable to Wirral
- Having good local transport links was a benefit but it did need balancing with car use
- Data showed that parking charges encouraged more turnover in cars and therefore more visitors

- Evidence also showed that free parking allowed people to stay longer which prevented turnover
- Signage reduced displacement and consistent pricing encouraged car park usage
- A study in Warwickshire showed little evidence that there was any change in parking availability in residential streets once parking charges were introduced
- The reduction in footfall of 30% was anecdotal and she had not seen any published evidence of it
- There was statistical evidence across a wide range of situations
- On the Wirral 28% of people did not own cars, with 48% in the lowest 10% of incomes

Moira Gommon, an Oxton resident, then spoke to the Committee, stating that she was happy to pay to park and believed others would too, as they would prefer to buy things in their usual shops. She saw her spending on car parking as maintaining services to those living in low-income communities as well as spending on art galleries, lollipop people etc. She thought it would be awful to lose those.

Ms Gommon then answered Members questions which established:

- Shops may not be interchangeable, such as some shops offering no plastic wrapping, so required journeys rather than being able to buy the same in supermarkets
- Many people like her would make the same choice to pay for parking as their choices were less limited
- People less able to carry shopping were more likely to drive

### **Officers**

Officers were then asked to speak to the Committee. The first was Shaer Halewood, the Director of Resources and the Council's Section 151 Officer. Ms Halewood provided details of the process of the Council's current financial position and the fact that as the capitalisation directive offer was not guaranteed, there was still a budget gap for this year of £10.7m. She explained the process for receiving Government grants for specific Covid 19 costs and emphasised that car parking was not covered by the grants and had not been identified as a covid pressure when the budget was set. If car parking charges were not introduced, Policy and Resources Committee would need to find alternative funding. She reminded members that the budget vote and the identification of car parking to help bridge the budget gap was unanimously voted for at Council and as a result her advice was that the proposal should be implemented.

Ms Halewood then answered Members questions which established:

- Under the rules for Government providing money to cover Council expenses which were due to the pandemic, the Council had to cover the initial 5% of costs then could claim 75% of the remainder of costs

incurred during lockdown. Once out of lockdown, the lack of income is regarded as the Council's choice so could not be claimed

- There was money set aside for remobilisation of assets such as buildings including leisure centres which included ventilation
- Using provided funds for non-Covid purposes, such as providing free car parking as a direct support to high street businesses, would reduce the amount of funding the Council could claim so increasing the budget gap
- Assets such as buildings which were surplus to requirements were scheduled to be disposed of in a managed programme to take maximum advantage of the changing market, so they could not be liquidated quickly. The Council's external auditors had cautioned against using short term funding to cover a budget shortfall. Selling assets would impact on the capitalisation but not the budget or the sustainability of car parking
- There is no contingency plan as the decision was made by full Council
- Implementing the proposal would partly relieve the budget shortfall which would increase the gap for future years

As it was 11.30 pm, the Chair then proposed to adjourn the meeting to a future date to be agreed with the Chair and spokespersons to continue the decision review process.

This was seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon

**Resolved – that the decision review meeting on car parking charges be adjourned to a date to be agreed with the Chair and Spokespersons.**

# DECISION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 August 2021

Present:

Councillor	P Hayes (Chair)	
Councillors	KJ Williams	P Cleary
	K Cannon	S Frost (In place of S Jones)
	T Anderson	K Greaney (In place of Joe Walsh)
	A Gardner	J Robinson (In place of I Williams)
	C Carubia	L Rennie (In place of T Cox)

## 4 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

No declarations were made.

## 5 DECISION REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Chair outlined the Decision Review Procedure to the Committee. The Committee was reminded of the process that had taken place at its previous meeting on 29 July 2021, where it had heard from the two lead signatories who had submitted notices of referral for review, the decision makers and a number of other witnesses. The previous meeting ended at the point where the Committee had started to hear from officers, and the Chair therefore outlined that the Committee would continue from this point in the review process.

## 6 DECISION REVIEWED ITEM - CAR PARKING CHARGING OPTIONS

Following on from the previous meeting, members were invited to ask questions of the officers involved. The Director of Resources was asked to introduce the financial statement again, where it was outlined that the Council needed to ensure it could set a balanced budget without calling upon the capitalisation directive whilst also demonstrating its long-term sustainability. It was also reported that the budget proposals were agreed unanimously at Council on 1 March 2021, and that in the event car parking charges were not implemented at all in the current financial year, the Policy and Resources

Committee would need to recommend what other areas of the Council could achieve the £1m target. The Director of Resources was therefore of the view that the decision should be implemented as agreed.

A number of questions were raised by members of the Committee. It was queried whether the Council was running a deficit on car parking charges, where it was confirmed that the cost of delivering car parking including enforcement and other associated costs was approximately £2.8m, with the income generated in 2019 being £1.8m, with the shortfall having been subsidised from other budgets to date therefore the proposal was to standardise parking charges intended to generate an additional £1m to make up the shortfall.

A further concern was raised in relation to the displacement of vehicles and the potential impact on residential areas close to shops. Officers reported that there was a Traffic Regulation Order process with statutory consultation to be undertaken, and work would be completed to determine the appropriate mitigations to deal with displacement. Members sought further information on what the mitigation may be and were informed it would depend on the exact location but could include residents parking schemes. Further clarity was also sought on the consultation process, where the Director of Law and Governance informed the Committee that the standardisation of existing charges required no formal consultation, but the introduction of new measures would be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order and a mandatory consultation process with the responses to be reported back to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee before implementation.

The Committee discussed the timescales associated with Traffic Regulation Order consultation, where officers confirmed that without objections it would take 3-6 months, with objections adding a further 3 months onto the process. Members therefore queried whether the original timescale would have allowed the £1m to be generated in the 2021-22 financial year in any case. In response, the Director of Resources informed members that it was acknowledged that there would be a delay as part of the Traffic Regulation Order process, but that there were temporary mitigations in the 2021-22 budget through vacancies to mitigate that initial delay, however any further delay would result in the need for further savings proposals to be considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

### **Lead Signatory Summary – Councillor Simon Mountney**

Councillor Simon Mountney summed up his contribution. He raised concerns with the comments from Councillor Chris Cooke at the previous meeting relating to displacement of parking and the impact of businesses and argued that the decision to increase car parking charges would result in businesses closing and people losing employment which would impact the Council's revenue. He made the case that people should be able to park relatively close

to their home and that the decision would result in that being taken away from them. It was noted that the discussion was largely based around cost and that the value to residents and businesses should have been considered more widely. He argued that the decision would not generate the revenue required and that if the Council was currently operating car parking services at a loss, an increase to the number of fee-paying parking would result in extra losses, and therefore suggested the decision should be referred back for further consideration.

### **Lead Signatory Summary – Councillor Phil Gilchrist**

In the absence of Councillor Phil Gilchrist, a statement was read out on his behalf. The statement outlined the potential impact car parking charges would have on Bromborough village with the ease of access to the nearby retail park for those taking the journey by car. The statement also summarised the accounts of the witnesses from the earlier meeting, detailing accounts of a reduction in the number of people using the local car park in Bromborough and the consequential displacement of parking. The statement referred to the study detailed within the report 'Assessing the Impact of Car Parking Charges on Town Centre Footfall', which encouraged Local Authorities to engage with key stakeholders involved in the local economy when changing their car parking charges including business owners, shoppers and Council Members. The study focused on five towns in Wales and Councillor Gilchrist brought attention to the varied car parking charges in Ruthin, one of the towns from the study. Further attention was brought to Cheshire West and Chester's parking strategy, where charges in nearby Ellesmere Port are in place in the town centre but not in Neston, Little Sutton or Great Sutton. The statement urged the Committee to not only consider what is practicable and achievable, but also take full account of the unintended consequence of the decision to increase car parking charges.

### **Decision Maker Summary – Councillor Chris Cooke**

Councillor Chris Cooke then provided his summary. He outlined that the Council was facing a budgetary crisis and detailed the financial support agreed by Central Government based on the condition that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was satisfied that the Council was effectively led and financially responsible. He outlined that the report produced by Council Officers provided all of the justification needed for the decision to increase and extend car parking charges. Councillor Cooke outlined that alternative ways of raising the £1m were explored and that none had then or since been found. It was reported that failure to extend and increased car parking charges would result in the Council having to continue to subsidise the cost from other budgets. He argued that the consequence of this was less well off tax payers and those without cars effectively paying for services they don't use, and that introducing charges across the borough would address the imbalance. It was further outlined that Councillor Cooke

was of the view that the majority of car owners accepted the reasons for the increased charges, and that the increase in charges would have the potential to improve air quality, road safety and encourage people to exercise more.

### **Decision Maker Summary – Councillor Liz Grey**

Councillor Liz Grey then provided her summary. She also outlined the financial situation the Council was in and made the case that the Council could not set parking charges to raise revenue for other services but could stop subsidising free parking and protect other services. It was outlined that there was no genuine data that parking charges have an adverse impact on local businesses, but that residents' concerns were appreciated and assurances were given that these concerns would be listened to and acted upon. Councillor Grey outlined that evidence suggested parking charges could manage the number of people travelling by car and could encourage active travel which would have a benefit of businesses and would assist to tackle the Environment and Climate Emergency and health crisis caused by lack of activity. It was reported that the budget alternatives to increased car parking charges were unwelcomed by members, and that the call-in had added financial pressure on Council services through loss of income. Councillor Grey further argued that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government would take a dim view on lending the Council money if it refused to raise revenue through legitimate means.

### **Committee Discussion**

Following the summing up of the lead signatories and decision makers, the Chair invited the Committee to consider and discuss the decision. Concerns were raised relating to the preparedness for additional costs for the enforcement of additional car parking charges and the financial impact of the potential extended timescale for the new charges to come into force due to the Traffic Regulation Order process. It was raised by another member that the Council was required to set a balanced budget and that objections to the principle of raising £1m in car parking charges should have been raised during the budget setting process.

Further discussions took place in relation to the reference to Cheshire West and Chester Council as raised by Cllr Phil Gilchrist as the lead signatory, where it was suggested that their analysis showed that parking charges and footfall were weakly related. In response, it was highlighted that increased car parking charges in Wirral would impact village centres as opposed to towns and cities as within Cheshire West and Chester. It was argued that the increased car parking charges would encourage people to walk or use public transport, thus addressing issues relating to inactivity and carbon emissions. In response it was queried how the Council could raise money from the proposal if it led to less parking. The impact on businesses was raised and evidence from an Environmental Economist as reported at the previous

meeting was relayed, where it was reported that evidence suggests car parking charges creates a better turnover of spaces as well as that those walking were likely to spend more.

### **Committee Decision**

The Chair brought the discussion to a close and invited the Committee to move a proposal.

It was moved by Councillor Tom Anderson, seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie, that –

‘After hearing the significant and detrimental impact the introduction of new car parking charges will have on local residents and business, and the distinct lack of preparation and consultation, committee resolves to defer all options back to Council, for the introduction of charges at 22 locations across the borough and 5 separate coastal areas and the standardisation of charges.’

The motion was put and lost (5:6).

It was moved by Councillor Kate, seconded by Councillor Samantha Frost, that –

‘The Decision Review Committee recognises that the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee was making the decision as a result of an instruction from within the Council’s budget. This was agreed unanimously by all members and sought to find a means to reduce the subsidy to car parking accounts to provide the £1m to this year and following years finances. This Committee has not heard any viable alternative during the process as to how that money could be found in any other way, other than implementing the original decision. This Committee feels that all other options it has explored would result in doing greater and long term financial harm to the Council and its communities. This Committee has also heard the fears and support of members of the public, businesses and voluntary groups regarding how they feel the decision will negatively impact them, and we hope that some of those initial fears have been alleviated by our officers and within the debate of this review committee. We also seek to assure residents that the consultation will be an essential part of establishing new car parking orders before final decisions are made. This Committee therefore resolves that the decision of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on car parking charges is implemented, but with the following recommendations:

- That all consultation on making new Traffic Regulation Orders for introducing car parking charges is reported back to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee before being implemented; and

- That the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee takes into consideration all of the comments and emails we have received to this Committee as part of the consultation response.'

The meeting was adjourned at 7.58pm.

The meeting resumed at 8.08pm.

The motion was then put and carried (7:4).

A further motion was moved by Councillor Tom Anderson, seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie, that –

'In light of the decision, this committee recommends that Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee considers implementing the first twenty minutes free in all of our high street car parks, and consider implementing a free pass for volunteers.'

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20pm.

The meeting resumed at 8.25pm.

The Committee discussed the motion and sought the views of officers on the feasibility of the proposal, where it was reported that a period of free parking would be difficult to enforce but that the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee could still consider it.

The motion was put and lost (5:6).

## **AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

The Council is requested to consider the following amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3

### **MOTION No. 1 – OPPOSE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEMS IN THE ENGLISH NHS**

#### **Amendment**

**Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist  
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell**

*Insert after point 7 (under 'Council notes -')...*

8. the Health and Care Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons with a substantial Conservative Majority on 14 July 2021 despite widespread concern over its contents.

9. the contents of the proposals have been under critical examination at sittings of the Commons Health and Care Committee in order to understand its full impact, with sittings planned through to 2 November 2021.

*Insert after point 5 (under 'Council believes -')...*

6. that in August and September Councils, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and many bodies were sent guidance on *'the development of place based partnerships as part of statutory integrated care systems'*.

The latter specifically states that, *'where decision making affects communities, groups or specific services, these arrangements...should fully engage those affected, including populations, people who use services and carers across health and social care'*

This Council pledges to make sure that will be the case.

*Insert after 'mean...' on the penultimate line in point (1) (under Council therefore resolves to)...*

(2) request that the guidance *"working together at scale"* issued in August which states that NHS Trusts, when seeking to *'reduce unwarranted variation'* and *'inequality in health outcomes'* is accompanied by clarity over the movement of resources;

(3) request that Wirral is given a clear explanation of the implications of the plans to *'ensure that specialisation and consolidation occur where this will provide better outcomes and value'*

(4) request a financial forecast of the full context that Wirral will face as Edward Argar MP has stated *'local systems will be informed of their resource envelope at the start of the year and will be required to agree a plan that matches, or is within, that envelope'*

## **MOTION No. 3 – PROTECTING RESIDENTS FROM FLOOD RISK**

### **Amendment**

**Proposed by Councillor Liz Grey**

**Seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes**

*In paragraph 2, delete last four words, and insert, ‘...improve flood risk management.’*

*In first bullet point, amend wording to read, ‘...2015 and subsequent Flood Investigation reports have been acted upon.’*

*In second bullet point delete the words, ‘(Council and United Utilities maintained)’ and delete, ‘...prone to...’ and replace with ‘.... at greater risk of...’*

*Delete the third bullet point.*

*In fifth bullet point, delete ‘.... necessary....’ and replace with ‘....Government grants are available....’*

*In fourth paragraph, first line, delete ‘...flood defences....’ and ‘.... should be’ and insert before ‘...designed...’ insert, ‘...was not....’*

*At the end of fourth paragraph, insert:*

‘Council notes that all new infrastructure should be as resilient as necessary to cope with expected future increased rainfall caused by climate change and that existing infrastructure should be improved wherever there is the means to do so, and that property owners should be reminded of their duties in this regard.’

*In the fifth paragraph, first line, insert after ‘.....programme...’, ‘... and any sources of outside funding available....’*

*In the fifth paragraph, delete all after, ‘...aimed at...’ and insert, ‘....reducing flood risk and adapting to climate change.’*

*After fifth paragraph, insert new paragraph:*

‘Council further requests that Planning and Communications officers review the need for greater levels of communication with and education of residents regarding the dangers of flooding and the precise requirements and recommendations regarding removal of front garden green spaces and extension/creation of driveways with a view to reducing the “urban creep” associated with this and the serious flood risk posed.’

*In the sixth paragraph, insert after ‘...risk...’, the word ‘...management...’ and after the word, ‘...therefore...’ insert, ‘... commits to following current Government guidance on nature-based solutions to flood defence and...’*

*Insert new paragraph after penultimate paragraph:*

Accordingly, Council asks Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to set up a working group to look at how Wirral can better implement the Tree Strategy pledges on tree protection, working with the Tree Strategy Advisory Board and Wirral Initiative on Trees before the end of this calendar year and also to urge the Government to undertake a review of the whole TPO system to better protect all trees with a new system that assumes protection for all mature trees unless permission is granted for works or removal.

## **MOTION No. 4 – EQUAL PAVEMENTS PLEDGE**

### **Amendment**

**Proposed by Councillor Liz Grey**

**Seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan**

*Add at end of the second bullet point, ‘.....and outline what is already happening in Wirral, for example, working with disability campaigners such as Ellis Palmer, to make real improvements to access for disabled residents and visitors to footpaths and cycle-paths across the borough.’*

*Add at end of the third bullet point, ‘...as part of a wider, co-produced programme to improve disabled access to all Council resources and services and how the Council could reduce pavement clutter and make them accessible.’*

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## **Council – 18 October, 2021**

### **Motions - with effect of proposed amendments incorporated**

#### **1. OPPOSE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEMS IN THE ENGLISH NHS**

**Proposed by Councillor Brian Kenny  
Seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon**

Council notes –

1. The NHS in England is rapidly being reorganised into 42 regional Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), while the Covid pandemic still rages. These ICSs may strengthen the role of private companies, including US health insurance corporations, in the health and care system.
2. Government is in the process of passing new legislation to make ICSs into statutory bodies.
3. ICSs are supposed to operate as partnerships between the NHS, local authorities and others, but the plans, which make ICS systems accountable nationally to the Secretary of State, may actually sideline local authorities, threatening the future integrity of social care and reducing local accountability. Meaning that health and care services in Wirral are controlled by Cheshire and Merseyside ICS
4. Despite claiming to ‘integrate’ health and social care services for the benefit of patients, ICSs are actually adapted from a model from the United States, which aims to reduce spending on health and care through increasing costs to people using the services
5. ICSs will operate with fixed annual budgets for a wide range of health and social care services, which could lead to a diminishing focus on place-based priorities for Wirral.
6. Some 83 corporations and businesses, including 22 from the US, are already getting heavily involved in developing ICSs and could even sit on their boards, thus putting profit making companies in a position to influence decisions on health and care at a Wirral and regional level.
7. ICSs will be accountable to the Secretary of State, and ICS plans will be binding. They could mean more private contracts, more down-skilling and outsourcing of NHS jobs, reduced services (partially replaced by ‘digital’ options and volunteers) and significant spending cuts.
8. **The Health and Care Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons with a substantial Conservative Majority on 14 July 2021 despite widespread concern over its contents.**

9. The contents of the proposals have been under critical examination at sittings of the Commons Health and Care Committee in order to understand its full impact, with sittings planned through to 2 November 2021.

Council believes –

1. There has been little opportunity for adequate consultation or explanation of this legislation and its consequences for Wirral residents
2. The introduction of Integrated Care Systems could threaten patient care, jobs, working conditions and the integrity of the NHS as a public service.
3. After 30 years of marketisation, it is time to restore the NHS to a fully accountable public service, which is provided free to all at the point of use.
4. Government should commit to a separate, collaborative, publicly funded Social Care Service.
5. Genuinely integrated services should take into account the wider determinants of health, such as housing, employment and environment. This would involve *more* input from local authorities.
6. that in August and September Councils, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and many bodies were sent guidance on *'the development of place based partnerships as part of statutory integrated care systems'*.

The latter specifically states that, *'where decision making affects communities, groups or specific services, these arrangements...should fully engage those affected, including populations, people who use services and carers across health and social care'*

This Council pledges to make sure that will be the case.

Council therefore resolves to –

- (1) request the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care and ask for an extended and meaningful consultation with the public, so that the residents of Wirral are fully aware of what the changes will mean;
- (2) request that the guidance *"working together at scale"* issued in August states that NHS Trusts, when seeking to *'reduce unwarranted variation'* and *'inequality in health outcomes'* is accompanied by clarity over the movement of resources;
- (3) request that Wirral is given a clear explanation of the implications of the plans to *'ensure that specialisation and consolidation occur where this will provide better outcomes and value'*;
- (4) request a financial forecast of the full context that Wirral will face as Edward Argar MP has stated *'local systems will be informed of their resource envelope at the start of the year and will be required to agree a plan that matches, or is within, that envelope'*, and demand an immediate halt to the rollout of ICSs until such a consultation and explanation has taken place; and

(5) promote the introduction of legislation to bring about universal, comprehensive and publicly provided NHS and a Social Care System fit for the 21st century.

**(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP AMENDMENT)**

## **2. SPARTINA ANGLICA RISKS TO THE NORTH WIRRAL FORESHORE**

**Proposed by Councillor Tony Cox**  
**Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gardner**

Council recognises the current condition of Hoylake beach, but also recognises that the *Spartina anglica*, once isolated from the rest of the North Wirral Foreshore, has now spread to Meols beach.

Council is concerned that with the current speed of the spread of this invasive species, it is soon likely to be seen in Moreton and then Leasowe.

Further to correspondence with Natural England, Council understands that there has never been a moratorium on raking at the Hoylake beach location, rather that raking of ALL North Wirral Foreshore would not be supported, which is wholly different.

Furthermore, page 60 of Natural England's publication: *Spartina anglica and its management in estuarine Natura 2000 sites: an update of its status and monitoring future change in England (IPENS041)* contains a *Spartina anglica* management flowchart which should be followed when dealing with this species. Council is concerned that this guidance is not being adhered to.

Therefore, Council requests the Director of Neighbourhoods to engage with Natural England, as a matter of urgency, to ascertain whether the continued spread of *Spartina* grasses could jeopardise the SSSI status of the North Wirral Foreshore and to determine whether the spread of these invasive grasses could be detrimental to the wellbeing of migratory wading birds (as described in section 2.1 of *Spartina anglica and its management in estuarine Natura 2000 sites: an update of its status and monitoring future change in England (IPENS041)*).

Council instructs the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee, as part of its work programme, to consider the findings from the discussions with Natural England regarding the impact of the spread of *Spartina* grasses as soon as practicably possible and certainly no later than the Committee's first meeting in 2022 (17<sup>th</sup> January 2022).

### 3. PROTECTING RESIDENTS FROM FLOOD RISK

**Proposed by Councillor Allan Brame**  
**Seconded by Councillor Jason Walsh**

Council places on record its thanks to everyone involved in the response to 9 September 2021 flooding incident, including the emergency services, local businesses, Council officers and members of the community.

Council notes that work is currently underway by the Council to produce a Section 19 Flood Investigation Report as required by the Flood & Water Management Act 2010. Council appreciates that partners such as the Environment Agency, United Utilities and other agencies will have an important role in understanding why the flooding was so severe and what possible measures might be taken to ~~mitigate future flooding events~~ **improve flood risk management.**

Council recognises that the Flood Investigation Report will take time to prepare but seeks assurances from officers in particular with regard to:

- how lessons learned from the ~~2017~~ **2015 and subsequent** Flood Investigation reports ~~were~~ **have been** acted upon;
- the current schedules of gully and roadside drainage cleansing (~~Council and United Utilities maintained~~) and whether these need to be more proactive, especially in areas which may be ~~prone to~~ **at greater risk of** flooding;
- ~~the schedule of dredging and river maintenance by the Environment Agency to ensure the free flow of Wirral's various waterways;~~
- the steps needed to reduce the incidence of flooding on our key highway network;
- the provision, in partnership with other agencies, of practical advice and help, including hydrosacks and, where ~~necessary~~, **Government grants are available**, financial aid for businesses and residents to make their homes and premises more flood resilient;
- the way in which our roads are resurfaced and whether more appropriate methods need to be considered;
- the need to condition and enforce permeable/porous surfaces when homeowners are installing new driveways.

Council believes that Wirral's ~~flood defences and infrastructure should be~~ **was not** designed to cope with the much greater volumes of rainfall given the evidence of new volatility in weather conditions due to climate change. **Council notes that all new infrastructure should be as resilient as necessary to cope with expected future increased rainfall caused by climate change and that existing infrastructure should be improved wherever there is the means to do so, and that property owners should be reminded of their duties in this regard.**

Accordingly, Council requests a review of the capital programme **and any sources of outside funding available** by the Director of Resources to bring forward schemes to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee aimed at ~~improving drainage infrastructure and combatting climate change~~ **reducing flood risk and adapting to climate change.**

Council further requests that Planning and Communications officers review the need for greater levels of communication with and education of residents regarding the dangers of flooding and the precise requirements and recommendations regarding removal of front garden green spaces and extension/creation of driveways with a view to reducing the “urban creep” associated with this and the serious flood risk posed.

Council recognises that trees and green space should be at the heart of flood risk management and climate adaptation strategies and, therefore, commits to following current Government guidance on nature-based solutions to flood defence and restates its commitment to preserve our existing stock of healthy trees and for increased strategic tree planting as part of this infrastructure.

Accordingly, Council asks Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to set up a working group to look at how Wirral can better implement the Tree Strategy pledges on tree protection, working with the Tree Strategy Advisory Board and Wirral Initiative on Trees before the end of this calendar year and also to urge the Government to undertake a review of the whole TPO system to better protect all trees with a new system that assumes protection for all mature trees unless permission is granted for works or removal.

Council recognises that investment to prevent flooding in the first place is a better use of taxpayers’ money than the huge financial and human costs involved in dealing with the aftermath of flooding.

(DELETIONS AND INSERTIONS – LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT)

#### **4. EQUAL PAVEMENTS PLEDGE**

**Proposed by Councillor Harry Gorman**

**Seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary**

This Council notes:

- the campaign of Transport for All calling on councils and transport authorities to sign an Equal Pavements Pledge.
- the majority of disabled people polled recently by Transport for All are worried that streets remain inaccessible with many lacking dropped kerbs to enable level access along pavements or to cross the street.
- disabled people are concerned at the risk of further barriers being presented – either from the way in which changes to streets are delivered, or from al-fresco dining being delivered without consideration for the need for clear access on pavements.
- Wirral continues to need investment and progress in making pavements fully accessible

that the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge outlines a need to:

- listen to disabled people, and act
- keep pavements clear

- reduce pavement clutter
- acknowledge and act to reduce the impact of waste removal on pavements
- audit pavements and install dropped kerbs where they are missing
- protect blue badge parking, with relocation kept to a minimum
- work with disabled experts, committing to co-production of schemes

Council therefore resolves to:

- support the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge
- request the Leader of the Council writes to Transport for All to convey the Council's support **and outline what is already happening in Wirral, for example, working with disability campaigners such as Ellis Palmer, to make real improvements to access for disabled residents and visitors to footpaths and cycle-paths across the borough.**
- ask the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to add this matter to its work programme to help determine how the Council can deliver on the Equal Pavements Pledge **as part of a wider, co-produced programme to improve disabled access to all Council resources and services and how the Council could reduce pavement clutter and make them accessible.**
- engage directly with organisations representing people with accessibility requirements.
- call on Central Government to better fund our efforts to make Wirral's pavements people friendly

**(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT)**

## **5. FUNDING CARING SERVICES TO MEET WIRRAL'S NEEDS**

**Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist**

**Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell**

Council notes that the Government has published 'Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care' and has also committed to publishing a new Adult Social Care white paper by the end of the year.

Council observes that funding is expected to come from a new 1.25% Health and Social Care levy based on National Insurance contributions. This will be paid by Wirral's residents and businesses who earn above the various thresholds.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has questioned the adequacy of the Levy to fund all of the Plan's Adult Social Care commitments. It is anxious to know what proportion of the Levy will reach Adult Social Care beyond the three-year period covered in the Plan.

The briefing issued by the LGA on 17 September 2021 says:

- it is '*alarmed*' that the Government's solution for tackling social care's core pressures appears to be the use of council tax, the social care precept and

long-term efficiencies; later considering this ‘*deeply troubling*’ and ‘*wholly unrealistic*’

- it is ‘*concerned*’ that ‘while the NHS is receiving funding to sort out the challenges it has here and now as well as in the future, *there is no funding from the Levy to address the current issues facing social care.*’
- it has ‘*serious concerns*’ about what will happen to the funding beyond the three-year period’ and asks how ‘*likely and realistic*’ it is that funding for the NHS will be diverted to social care in future years.

Council, seeking the best long term solution for Wirral, endorses these concerns, observing that the Government’s plan states:

*“The Government will ensure local authorities have access to sustainable funding for core budgets at the Spending Review. We expect demographic and unit cost pressures will be met through council tax, social care precept, and long-term efficiencies; the overall level of local government funding, including council tax and social care precept, will be determined in the round at the Spending Review in the normal way.” (paragraph 36)*

Council tax (and therefore the precept) raises different amounts in different parts of the country and the banding of properties for Council Tax in Wirral limits the resources that can be raised by the social care precept.

Council recognises and appreciates that the LGA has concluded that:

*‘The Spending Review must inject genuinely new funding, direct to local government, to both stabilise the system in the short-term and enable progress to be made in tackling unmet and under-met need, investing more in prevention, improving care worker pay and better supporting unpaid carers’.*

In full recognition of all these issues, Council requests that the Group Leaders write to the Chairman of the Local Government Association to support the concerns expressed and that Wirral’s Members of Parliament are made aware of this stance.

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