

COUNCIL

Monday, 29 July 2024

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Cherry Povall, JP) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Brian Kenny)

Councillors	C Baldwin	B Hall	A Onwuemene
	G Bennett	A Hodson	R Pitt
	S Bennett	K Hodson	H Raymond
	J Bird	P Jobson	L Rennie
	M Booth	G Jenkinson	M Redfern
	A Brame	J Johnson	K Stuart
	H Cameron	T Jones	P Stuart
	C Carubia	M Jordan	M Sullivan
	G Cooper	S Kelly	E Tomeny
	T Cox	T Laing	C Walsh-McDonald
	A Davies	I Lewis	J Walsh-McDonald
	GJ Davies	L Luxon-Kewley	J Williams
	S Foulkes	P Martin	J Williamson
	P Gilchrist	R Molyneux	V Wilson
	JE Green	S Mountney	
	J Grier	T Murphy	

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Paul Martin declared an interest in relation to motion 3 and excused himself from the chamber for the debate.

13 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Head of Legal Services advised Members that there were technical issues with the webcasting equipment within the Council Chamber therefore the meeting could not be webcast.

Apologies had been received from Councillors Grahame McManus, Sue Powell-Wilde, Graham Davies, Andrew Gardner, Naomi Graham, Chris Cooke, Ed Lamb, Pat Cleary, Jean Robinson, Liz Grey, Mark Skillicorn, Julie McManus, Ann Ainsworth, James Stewart Laing, Kieran Murphy, Harry Gorman, Gill Wood, Paula Basnett.

The Civic Mayor requested that Members stood for a minutes silence in support of those involved in the tragic incident at Southport.

The Civic Mayor then welcomed Members back to Wallasey Town Hall and congratulated the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Brian Kenny on his recent marriage.

The Civic Mayor advised Members that Councillors Julie McManus and Mary Jordan were undertaking a sponsored walk in behalf of Dementia Charities and wished them good luck. Members were informed that the Civic Mayor and Mayor's consort had undertaken a total of 91 engagements to date, with one notable event, which was held at 8am on the beach in New Brighton alongside a lone piper, marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

14 **MINUTES**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 15 and 22 May 2024 be approved as a correct record.

15 **PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

15.1 **Public Questions**

The Civic Mayor reported that two public questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting.

Mr Alan Featherstone asked a question to the Leader of the Council as Chair of Policy and Resources Committee. Mr Featherstone asked why he was unable to ask 2 public questions on behalf of his business when he had been previously allowed to do so. In response the Leader of the Council agreed to refer the matter to the Governance Working Group for consideration.

Mr Alan Featherstone, on behalf of the Big Flower Shop, asked a question to the Chair of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee. Mr Featherstone asked for an update on a Freedom of Information request made requesting all documents relating to 'wider consultation that has been undertaken with existing market traders concerning to the Argos market proposals.

In response, the Chair reported that the responsibility for information governance requests were for the Information Governance team and would be responded to as soon as practically possible. In addition, the Chair reported that several one-to-one discussions between a third party on behalf of The Council and with traders had taken place and sessions with the Birkenhead Market Traders Association continued to take place monthly. Further engagement with traders on the RIBA 2 design to provide feedback to support in finalising the design into the RIBA 3 design process was planned.

Mr Featherstone asked a supplementary question seeking clarification on whether the documents referred to would be made available to councillors as

part of the regeneration process. In response that it was a consideration of committee on whether the information would be brought to the next Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee.

15.2 **Statements and Petitions**

The Civic Mayor reported that two petitions had been submitted to Full Council.

Tony Norbury presented a petition regarding the felling of Healthy Trees in Birkenhead. Mr Norbury noted that the trees provided ornamental and wellbeing benefits to the centre of Birkenhead, and asked why they had been removed since the Council had previously announced a Climate emergency and delivered a tree strategy. Mr Norbury's petition asked the Council why these trees had been felled and requested an investigation.

The petition was referred to the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

Councillor Mary Jordan presented a petition of the behalf of the residents of Spital. Our communities in Spital, Bromborough, and Bebington, Wirral, are increasingly experiencing neglected green spaces, specifically grass verges, leading to an unsightly state and adverse impacts on quality of life. Cllr Jordan noted that the verges were not maintained to the high standards that they once had been, and do not contain any wild flowers. Cllr Jordan noted that she had been informed that they were classed as fields, but the Council Map on the Members portal shows them as amenity areas. Councillor Jordan's petition requested that they be returned to their previous condition.

The petition was referred to the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

15.3 **Members' Questions**

Councillor Amanda Onwuemene asked a member question to the Vice-Chair (in the absence of the Chair) of the Children, Young People and Education Committee. Councillor Onwuemene asked, given recent safeguarding concerns, what lessons the Council had learned regarding the efficacy of its own child safeguarding procedures and what changes have been made to mitigate the risks of safeguarding issues occurring in childcare settings that are funded by the Council.

In response, the Vice-Chair stated that the events that were portrayed in the Panorama Documentary were unacceptable, and the Local Safeguarding Partnership with Merseyside Police, Education and Health Services, had been working together to support all involved and that the complex abuse protocol had been initiated. It was reported that the local partnership had completed a rapid review and a made a recommendation to the national panel, resulting in the initiation of a child Safeguarding Practice Review. It was anticipated the

national panel would support that recommendation and an independent reviewer would be appointed to complete the review. In addition, alongside liaising directly with the Department for Education (DFE), it was further reported that the Council had increased its quality assurance check-ins with settings, parents and young people and had also supported the SENDIASS offer (Send information and advice service) and Parent Carer Forum with additional support to ensure additional capacity was available if parents/carers wished to raise any concerns.

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

16.1 **CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023-24**

The First Matter for approval was a report which detailed the Capital Outturn for 2024/24 and the resources used to fund the Programme. It recommended that Committee agreed the virements of budget identified since the Capital Programme was formally agreed on 26th February 2024

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was,

Resolved – that,

- 1. the financing of the Programme for 2023/24 be noted.**
- 2. the additional year-end net re-profiling of £24.9m from 2023/24 to 2024/25 be noted.**
- 3. the changes to the outturn attributable to movement in the Programme that occurred after the previous monitoring report to P&R on 26 February be noted.**
- 4. the funding of capital expenditure in 2023/24 including the use of £38.4m Grants and Contributions, £5.4m capital receipts and £34.3m of borrowing be noted.**
- 5. That the virements of budget referred to in Appendix 6 of the report be approved.**

16.2 **CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 1 2024/25**

The second Matter for approval was a report which updated on the progress of the Capital Programme 2024/25 at the end of June 2024. It recommends that Committee agree the revised 2024/25 Capital Programme of £100.996 million which took account of re-profiling, virements, additional funding requirements and grant variations identified since the Capital Programme was formally agreed on 26th February 2024.

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was.

Resolved – that,

- 1. the revised Capital Programme of £100.996 million for 2024/25, including the virements of budget referred to in Appendix 3 of the report be approved.**
- 2. additional funding for Capitalisation of Regeneration Salaries, to be funded by new borrowing, as referred to in section 3.7 in this report.**

16.3 REVISION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The third item requiring approval was the revision to the appointment of Committee Chairs. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the constitution, Council was requested to appoint a new Chair of Children, Young, Peoples and Education Committee for the remainder of the municipal year and make any further consequential appointments of Committee Chairs as may be appropriate.

It was then moved by Councillor Paul Stuart and seconded by Councillor Angie Davies that,

1. Cllr Stephen Bennett be appointed as Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee
2. Cllr Brenda Hall be appointed as Chair of Pensions in place of Cllr Stephen Bennett
3. The Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership and substitute membership of any affected committees as a result of the change in Committee Chairs with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

The Civic Mayor then advised that an amendment had been received by the Green Group and it was then moved by Councillor Jo Bird, Seconded by Councillor Gail Jenkinson that,

1. Cllr Stephen Bennett be appointed as Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee
2. Cllr **Pat Cleary** be appointed as Chair of Pensions in place of Cllr Stephen Bennett
3. The Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership and substitute membership of any affected committees as a result of the change in Committee Chairs with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

Several Members then spoke to the amendments, before the Civic Mayor announced that she would take the vote in parts.

The first item to be voted on was recommendation one, the appointment of a new Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee. It was therefore –

Resolved that Cllr Stephen Bennett be appointed as Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee.

Members were then invited to vote on the Green Group amendment to recommendation 2. The amendment was then put to the vote and lost (8:39: 1 Abstention).

The original Motion was then put to the vote and was carried, It was therefore–

Resolved (39:8: 1 Abstentions)– that Cllr Brenda Hall be appointed as Chair of Pensions in place of Cllr Stephen Bennett

The third recommendation was then put to the vote and it was therefore -

Resolved that the Monitoring Officer be authorised as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership and substitute membership of any affected committees as a result of the change in Committee Chairs with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

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

The fourth item requiring approval was in relation to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 which required a Member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, unless permission for the absence is granted by the Authority in advance, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor. Without advance permission to be absent, loss of office is automatic, and permission cannot be granted retrospectively. The report requested that Councillor Graham Davies was granted permission to be absent from Council meetings for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year.

On a motion by Councillor Jeff Green, seconded by Councillor Leslie Rennie, it was,

Resolved – that,

The absence of Councillor Graham Davies from all Council and Committee Meetings be authorised and approved for the remainder of the 2024/25 municipal year, pursuant to Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972

17 **REPORTS AND DECISIONS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATIONS**

17.1 **DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

The Civic Mayor invited members to ask questions in relation to the minutes of Committee meetings held since the last Council meeting. The Civic Mayor indicated that due to the Council Meeting being re-arranged due to the General Election, several Committee Chairs were absent due to pre-arranged leave.

Councillor Tony Murphy asked a question of Councillor Julie McManus as Chair of Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in relation to the minute 85 regarding Tobacco Control including vapes as an important aspect of public health in Wirral, Councillor Murphy asked if the Chair would be willing to promote the lung health check to detect lung cancers in Wirral residents. In the Chair's absence the question was referred for a written response.

Councillor Vida Wilson asked a question of Councillor Ian Lewis as Chair of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in relation to 7 March, agenda item 9) Summer Reading Challenge which is to read at least six books over the summer holidays. Cllr Wilson asked the Chair if he would help work to improve Morton Library and Youth Club.

Councillor Lewis confirmed that libraries provide a supporting role in the Communities noting that Moreton Library and Youth Club is supported in this. A sum of £900k and £300k had been spent as he has requested a breakdown of the spend. Councillor Lewis thanked Library Staff for their hard work and advised that Councillors would be undertaking a series of visits over the coming month.

Councillor Mary Jordan also asked a question of Councillor Ian Lewis as Chair of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee in relation to minute 75 which made no reference to the public toilets in Thornton Hough asking when the review would be considered by Committee and if they will agree to meet with ward Members.

Councillor Lewis responded that the issue had been raised and added to the work programme and a report would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Councillor Gail Jenkinson referred to two sets of Minutes regarding public questions and the removal of cherry trees outside the Wallasey Town Hall Annexes and that it had been stated that it would not be possible for them to be moved and replanted. A Question was asked of both Councillor Stuart Kelly as chair of planning and Councillor Liz Grey as chair of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee regarding any special training and understanding on the subject of tree removal during the summer.

Councillor Kelly responded to state that all Members of the planning Committee must undertake mandatory training. The tree and hedgerow strategy does not prevent the removal of trees but mandates a ration. Cllr Kelly reported that more trees would be planted in Birkenhead to meet the ration. A Written response would be provided by Councillor Liz Grey who had given apologies.

Councillor Mary Jordan asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey in regard to Minute 79 of the transport plan programme, junction improvements (check location). Cllr Jordan welcomed the 750K investment and queried when these works would commence. the Chair's absence the question was referred for a written response.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor Paul Stuart as Leader of the Council in regard to the Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of 20 March 2024, Minute 124. Cllr Kelly quired the improvement project fund and how the additional investment had improved services.

Councillor Paul Stuart advised he would get a response from the service noting that the project fund was additional investment, not business as usual.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of the Leader of the Council in relation to Policy and Resources Committee Minutes of 20 March 2024, Minute 180 about the allocation capitalisation of salaries querying how Members could be informed better about the recruitment of resources into that service area and how this can assist with economy and regeneration in the borough minute 125. Councillor Paul Stuart would respond in writing.

17.2 JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Steve Foulkes as Chair of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Committee. Councillor Gilchrist noted that whilst all councillors were looking forward to the time when it will become possible to plan Wirral's bus services, that questions had been asked about the reasoning behind changing the name of Merseytravel 'metro' brand across the network's trains, buses and facilities. Councillor Gilchrist asked what was the cost of this and whether the rebrand was entirely justified when given there were many issues and priorities competing for investment?

In response, Councillor Foulkes reported that the rebrand was clear in the Metro Mayor's manifesto, and that the direction of travel was clear for the six local authorities affected. Councillor Foulkes added that an integrated Metro transport network would provide a whole region approach which would promote mobility with increased linkage between all public transport. The new branding showed the key principles of the approach.

18 **BY-ELECTION RESULT - 4 JULY 2024**

The Civic Mayor asked the Council to note the outcome of the by-election on 4 July 2024, in that Councillor Graham Cooper was elected as Councillor for Liscard ward. The Civic Mayor congratulated Councillor Cooper and welcomed him to the Council.

Resolved – That the outcomes of the by-election be noted.

19 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

19.1 **MOTION 1 - WORKING WITH THE NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT**

Councillor Paul Stuart moved and Councillor Angie Davies seconded the motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Jeff Green moved and Councillor Lesley Rennie seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

Delete struck through words and add as follows,

Council *notes* ~~congratulates~~ the new Labour Government *has achieved a* ~~on their resounding and~~ decisive victory in the recent *G*eneral Election.

~~This is an immense milestone for our nation~~ and people of Great Britain clearly voted for 'cChange'.

Council extends *special* congratulations to the four elected Members of Parliament who will serve Wirral going forward:

Dame Angela Eagle MP – Elected for the Wallasey constituency.

Alison McGovern MP – Elected for the Birkenhead constituency.

Matthew Patrick MP – Elected for the Wirral West constituency.

Justin Madders MP – Elected for the Ellesmere Port & Bromborough constituency.

~~Council notes Their successful campaigns and subsequent election as Members of Parliament are a testament to the hard work, dedication, and the trust their constituents have placed in them and the our new Labour government.~~

Council recognises and appreciates the commitment and efforts of Wirral candidates from all political parties who participated in a positive campaign, as well as their campaign teams.

~~Council further recognises It is also important that we recognise and thanks all the council staff who worked so hard to make the process of the General Election things run smoothly throughout the General Election process. and acknowledges the importance of this contribution to a flourishing and vibrant democracy.~~

Council requests that the Leader of the Council and all Party Leaders write to all four MPs to give our heartfelt congratulations on their election and confirm our commitment to working collaboratively with our MPs, when in the best interests of Wirral, and the nNew Labour Government, to improve the lives of Wirral residents, communities and businesses.

Councillor Amanda Onwuemene moved and Councillor Judith Grier seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

Insert additional paragraphs after paragraph 8,

Council also notes that, according to the Electoral Reform Society the 2024 general election was “the most disproportional in British electoral history” 1 with Labour winning 64% of seats on less than 34% of the overall vote and, nationally, the votes required to elect one MP per party were: Labour: 23,615 Conservative: 56,422 Liberal Democrat: 48,877 Green Party: 485,814 Reform UK: 821,322 Proportional representation is the national policy of the Labour Party, Liberal Democrats, Green Party and Reform UK along with a host of Trade Unions and prodemocracy organisations. Council therefore agrees that the scandal of wasted votes must end and asks all Group Leaders to write to the Prime Minister calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws and to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK general elections.

Council debated the motion and amendments, and the Green Group amendment was then put to the vote and was lost (14:33) (1 abstention).

The Conservative amendment was therefore put to the vote and was carried (28:19) (1 Abstention).

The substantive Motion as amended was then put to the vote and it was,

Resolved (47:00)(1 Abstention) – That

Council notes the new Labour Government has achieved a decisive victory in the recent General Election and people of Great Britain clearly voted for 'change'.

Council extends congratulations to the four elected Members of Parliament who will serve Wirral going forward:

**Dame Angela Eagle MP – Elected for the Wallasey constituency.
Alison McGovern MP – Elected for the Birkenhead constituency.
Matthew Patrick MP – Elected for the Wirral West constituency.
Justin Madders MP – Elected for the Ellesmere Port & Bromborough constituency.**

Council notes the trust their constituents have placed in them and the new Labour government.

Council recognises and appreciates the commitment and efforts of Wirral candidates from all political parties who participated in a positive campaign, as well as their campaign teams.

Council further recognises and thanks all the council staff who worked so hard to make the process of the General Election run smoothly and acknowledges the importance of this contribution to a flourishing and vibrant democracy.

Council requests that the Leader of the Council and all Party Leaders write to all four MPs to give our congratulations on their election and confirm our commitment to working collaboratively with our MPs and, when in the best interests of Wirral, the new Labour Government, to improve the lives of Wirral residents, communities and businesses.

19.2 MOTION 2 - PROTECTING WIRRAL'S PRECIOUS GREEN BELT

Councillor Jeff Green moved, and Councillor Lesley Rennie seconded the motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Steve Foulkes moved and Councillor Paul Jobson seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

Delete final bullet point in final paragraph,

- ~~• Request that all Group Leaders write to Wirral's four MPs to invite support for retention of Wirral's Green Belt, regardless of any previous positions they may have taken, and to share their responses with all councillors.~~*

And insert as follows:

- *Council congratulates the Leader of the Council for prioritising the protection of Wirral's greenbelt and writing with urgency on 13th July to all of the Wirral MPs notifying them that Wirral's housing need will be met by the brownfield only plan and obtaining their assurances of support for this approach.*
- *Council further thanks the Chief Executive for raising this issue at the earliest possible opportunity on 19th July with Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, raising the profile of Wirral's Brownfield only plan and the need to support this approach at the highest levels of Government.*

Councillor Jo Bird moved and Councillor Gail Jenkinson seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

Insert additional paragraphs after paragraph 5,

Council also recognises that successful place making and regeneration is fundamental to the protection of our precious green belt. Council acknowledges the achievements by officers in securing large sums of public finance for regeneration and the work to date on delivery. Council reaffirms its commitment to the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and its vision for the transformation of Birkenhead and the wider left bank of the Mersey and restates its desire to deliver on the promise and potential contained in the 2040 Framework.

However, Council has a number of concerns including the progress of the regeneration programme, in particular the transformation of Birkenhead and the absence of regular and clear, RAG-rated progress reports on regeneration projects to the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee.

Insert additional resolution in paragraph 6,

- *Request that the Chief Executive, brings a RAG-rated progress report to the next Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee to update Members in relation to the regeneration programme, in particular relating to the regeneration of Birkenhead and how that supports the Local Plan process.*

Councillor Green confirmed he was happy to accept the amendment proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group, as follows:

Add words to paragraph 2,

Council recognises that with 5,691 on the waiting list for housing, it must be a priority for the Council to increase housing supply and affordability, but this

must not be at the expense of the Borough's precious natural environment *and agricultural land*.

Add words to paragraph 4,

Following Labour's landslide victory on July 4th, the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government, will be writing to local planning authorities instructing them to 'review *where necessary*' Green Belt boundaries with a view to releasing land for development.

Delete struck through word and add as follows to paragraph 5,

Having undertaken the work required to reach this stage of the Local Plan process and to comply with the 2004 Act, Council does not believe that any land designated as Green Belt or Local Green Space in Wirral is ~~appropriate~~ *required* for development.

Add additional paragraph after paragraph 5,

Council notes that Wirral's planners have used the standard method to calculate housing need in line with previous mandatory housing targets; that the local plan properly identified sufficient brown field land to meet mandatory housing targets as part of regeneration within Wirral; and believes recent government announcements will not affect the progress of the regeneration led local plan.

Add wording to first bullet point in final paragraph,

Council therefore resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to respond accordingly to any correspondence received including the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was used to prepare our local plan in consultation with group leaders.*

Council debated the motion and amendments, and the Labour Group amendment was then put to the vote and was carried (26:21)(1 abstention).

The Green Group amendment was therefore then put to the vote and was lost (13:33)(2 Abstentions).

The substantive motion was then put to the vote. It was therefore

Resolved (47:0) (1 abstention) – that,

Council thanks all those involved in the preparation, submission and appraisal of our long-delayed draft Local Plan, including:

- Council Officers, in planning, regeneration and housing
- Councillors, including former Councillor Anita Leech
- Campaigners, including Wirral Green Space Alliance
- The local media
- Inspectors Mike Worden BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI and Tom Bristow BA MSc MRTPI AssocRICS

Council recognises that with 5,691 on the waiting list for housing, it must be a priority for the Council to increase housing supply and affordability, but this must not be at the expense of the Borough's precious natural environment and agricultural land.

In his conference speech 2023, Sir Keir Starmer promised to 'bulldoze through' the restrictive planning system and to build 'the next generation of Labour new towns'.

Following Labour's landslide victory on July 4th, the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State of Housing, Communities and Local Government, will be writing to local planning authorities instructing them to 'review where necessary' Green Belt boundaries with a view to releasing land for development.

Having undertaken the work required to reach this stage of the Local Plan process and to comply with the 2004 Act, Council does not believe that any land designated as Green Belt or Local Green Space in Wirral is required for development.

Council notes that Wirral's planners have used the standard method to calculate housing need in line with previous mandatory housing targets; that the local plan properly identified sufficient brown field land to meet mandatory housing targets as part of regeneration within Wirral; and believes recent government announcements will not affect the progress of the regeneration led local plan.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to respond accordingly to any correspondence received including the consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was used to prepare our local plan in consultation with group leaders.
- Reassure residents of the Council's commitment to the Green Belt
- Seek assurance from the Secretary of State that funds previously allocated for brownfield development remain unaffected by the change of Government.
- Council congratulates the Leader of the Council for prioritising the protection of Wirral's greenbelt and writing with urgency on 13th July to all of the Wirral MPs notifying them that Wirral's

housing need will be met by the brownfield only plan and obtaining their assurances of support for this approach.

- Council further thanks the Chief Executive for raising this issue at the earliest possible opportunity on 19th July with the Deputy Prime Minister Angela Raynor raising the profile of Wirral's Brownfield only plan and the need to support this approach at the highest levels of Government.

19.3 MOTION 3 - SOCIAL HOUSING GROWTH NEEDS AN END TO RIGHT-TO-BUY

Councillor Judith Grier moved, and Councillor Ruth Molyneux seconded the motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Chris Carubia moved and Councillor Helen Raymond seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

Insert additional wording in recommendation 3) in final paragraph,

3) call on the Government to commit to ending right-to-buy *in its current form* as soon as possible

Council debated the motion and amendment. The Liberal Democrat amendment was then put to the vote and was lost (6:40) (1 abstention).

The Original Motion was then put to the vote and it was lost (13:32) (2 abstentions)

19.4 MOTION 4 - AN END TO SEWAGE DISCHARGES INTO OUR WATERS

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved, and Councillor Allan Brame seconded the motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Gail Jenkinson moved, and Councillor Jason Walsh-McDonald seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3

Insert additional paragraph after paragraph 4,

Council recognises that since its privatisation in 1989, when it was debt-free, United Utilities has accumulated debts amounting to £8.9 billion. This equates to an additional £2,503 per household, and servicing this debt contributes approximately 11% to everyone's bills. During the same period, United Utilities has paid out £9.5 Page 4 billion in dividends to shareholders, with only one of the top seven major shareholders currently based in the UK.

Insert additional paragraph after paragraph 5,

In addition, Council requests that the Council Leader and Group Leaders writes to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to request that instead of making minor adjustments to a regulatory system where private water companies have incorporated fines into their business models, the government bring United Utilities and other private water companies back into public ownership. This is a move supported by 82% of the British public.

Council debated the motion and amendments and the Green Group amendment was then put to the vote and was lost (8:39) (1 abstention).

The original motion was then put to the vote and was carried. It was therefore,

Resolved (47:0) (1 abstention) - That

Council recognises that forty years have passed since mounting public concern over water pollution led to creation of the Mersey Basin Campaign. The work of that body continued for a quarter of a century and secured conditions in which many fish returned to our river.

Council is concerned that this achievement has been and is being undermined by pollution from storm overflows. This had led to growing public frustration with the increased frequency of sewage entering our watercourses and ending up in our river.

Council notes that The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) have now put forward proposals requiring United Utilities to address the situation with appropriate levels of investment. Whilst these are the subject of challenge and review it is essential that progress is made with the overflows which threaten the water quality along our shores.

Council looks forward to the outcome of meetings being held between the regulator and the Secretary of State, to seek a fair outcome for Wirral's residents rather than unreasonable levels of profit to remote and unaccountable shareholders.

Council therefore requests that the Director for Neighbourhoods writes to the CEO of United Utilities to request information and to seek assurances on their planned programme of works to ensure an end to their sewage leaks and that the findings be shared with all members of the Council.