

# COUNCIL

Tuesday, 1 March 2011

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Alan Jennings) in the Chair  
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Moira McLaughlin)

Councillors	T Anderson	K Hayes	C Povall
	C Blakeley	P Hayes	A Pritchard
	E Boulton	A Hodson	D Realey
	A Bridson	S Holbrook	P Reisdorf
	A Brighthouse	P Johnson	L Rennie
	S Clarke	M Johnston	D Roberts
	W Clements	AER Jones	L Rowlands
	J Crabtree	P Kearney	J Salter
	G Davies	J Keeley	H Smith
	P Davies	S Kelly	T Smith
	WJ Davies	B Kenny	W Smith
	D Dodd	D Knowles	J Stapleton
	D Elderton	I Lewis	S Taylor
	G Ellis	A McArdle	G Watt
	S Foulkes	D McCubbin	S Whittingham
	G Gardiner	AR McLachlan	R Wilkins
	P Gilchrist	C Meaden	I Williams
	P Glasman	D Mitchell	KJ Williams
	JE Green	R Moon	P Williams
	J Hale	S Mountney	S Williams
	T Harney	S Niblock	K Wood

Apologies Councillor RL Abbey

## 100 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and wished everyone a happy St David's day. He welcomed particularly a contingent of international students who were being hosted by Upton Hall School.

## 101 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at the meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest. The following declarations were made:

Councillor C Blakeley, L Rennie, D Mitchell and S Niblock declared personal interests in respect of the Labour amendment (1) to the Budget 2011-12 Cabinet minute 327, by virtue of them being in receipt of more than one Special Responsibility Allowance.

Councillor L Rowlands declared a personal interest in respect of item 3 and the petition on the respite care homes by virtue of the fact that he had spoken to the lead petitioner, Mr Donaldson, although he had not predetermined the matter.

Councillor K Wood declared a personal interest in item 5 (Budget Cabinet minute 327) by virtue of her being a pensioner householder.

Councillor S Whittingham declared a personal interest in respect of the Labour amendment (1) to the Budget 2011-12 Cabinet minute 327, by virtue of his employment.

Councillors W Clements, G Davies, J Green, A Jennings, B Kenny, A McLachlan, C Meaden and S Williams, each declared a personal interest in item 5 (Schools Budget Cabinet minute 328) by virtue of a family member's employment with the authority.

## 102 **PETITIONS**

(A) In accordance with Standing order 21, the Mayor received petitions submitted by:

Councillor I Lewis on behalf of 29 signatories requesting the installation of a pedestrian controlled crossing at the junction of Moreton Road and the Moreton Spur to help children travel to school safely and local residents travelling between Moreton, Overchurch and Upton Village.

Councillor S Clarke on behalf of 13 signatories opposing the closure of 5 respite care homes.

Councillor I Williams on behalf of 153 signatories opposing the closure of all Council run respite care homes, at least until a satisfactory alternative has been found and approved by the majority of current users and their carers.

(B) In accordance with the Petition Scheme (when petitions with a threshold of 1500 signatures will trigger a Council debate) the Council received an ePetition of some 1034 signatures in agreement (15 disagreeing) and linked paper petitions of some 950 signatures asking the Council to 'stop immediately the closure of all council-run respite care homes, at least until a satisfactory alternative has been found and approved by the majority of current users and their carers. We want the care of the most vulnerable in our borough to be one of our council's highest priorities and we do not want any cuts to the overall level of support provided to those vulnerable members of our community and their carers.'

In accordance with Standing Order No. 5 (m) it was moved by the Mayor and seconded by the Deputy Mayor that the contents of the petition asking the Council to 'stop immediately the closure of all council-run respite care homes' be noted.

Mr Brian Donaldson addressed the Council on behalf of the petitioners.

Councillor Moon moved an amendment to the petition, seconded by Councillor Green, that -

"(1) Council recognises the deeply felt concerns of service users and their carers as the Council re-provides respite care from the independent sector. Council further

recognises the good work being done by officers in contacting service users and carers and in supporting them making alternate arrangements; and instructs officers to continue these efforts to ensure a satisfactory outcome is achieved for all current users and their carers.

(2) Council shares the aspirations of the petitioners that care of the most vulnerable in our borough be one of the Council's highest priorities. Council further notes that the Cabinet's Budget recommendation makes no cuts in the overall level of support to those most vulnerable members of our community and their carers."

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At 6.38pm the Mayor adjourned the meeting whilst a member of the public was removed from the public gallery for causing a disturbance in accordance with Standing Order No. 16 (1).

The meeting resumed at 6.53pm but due to a further disturbance was further adjourned whilst a member of the public was removed from the public gallery in accordance with Standing Order No. 16 (1).

The meeting resumed at 6.58pm.

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Councillor Moon then spoke to his amendment, followed by Councillor McLaughlin and Councillor Green, who had seconded the amendment.

On a procedural matter, Councillor Foulkes suggested that the second Labour amendment to Cabinet Budget minute 327 be debated next due to it being linked with the subject matter of the petition.

Councillor Holbrook moved, seconded by Councillor Mitchell and it was –

**Resolved (41:23) - That the vote on the amendment to the petition be delayed until after the Council had debated the budget and a vote had been taken on the Labour amendment relating to this matter.**

## 103 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 had been circulated to members and it was -

**Resolved – That the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.**

## 104 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL

In accordance with Standing Order 13 (Budget Council Procedure), Councillor J Green, Leader of the Council, moved the Cabinet's budget recommendations duly seconded by Councillor S Holbrook, Deputy Leader, with any additional paragraphs (those relating to precepts) and any other minutes from the Cabinet meeting on 21 February, 2011 that required approval by the Council. The following minutes were

deemed to be approved, subject to consideration of the Labour Group Budget amendments (see minute 106 post).

## **1. Cabinet minute 327 – Council Budget 2011-12**

**RESOLVED: That**

### **Your FAMILY: Services for Children and Young People**

Wirral is home to almost 78,000 children and young people. It is a good place to grow up and most children and young people will fulfil the aspirations that we, their parents and their carers have for them. However, some children and young people experience real disadvantage, poverty, hardship and failure to achieve the results they should in school. Our work will be targeted at seeking to ensure that all of our young people grow up in safety and have the best possible start in life.

#### **Caring for our most vulnerable children**

It be noted that an additional £1 million has been placed in the Council's base budget to supplement and enhance the Government's new Early Intervention Grant to:

- Give the highest priority to protecting, promoting and enhancing Sure Start and our Children's Centres. This means in Wirral there will be no reduction in the overall Sure Start budget: **£700,000**.
- We are committed to continuing the excellent work undertaken by the Council and a range of partners from across the Community, Voluntary and Faith sector to support and raise the aspirations of disabled children: **£300,000**.

#### **In addition**

- The Administration is aware of the potential impact on schools budgets from the effects of outstanding equal pay claims. To protect the education of all Wirral children, and spending in our class rooms, we will make a contribution to the costs of equal pay in schools from the equal pay reserve: **£1 million**.
- We will enhance every Sure Start Centre, enabling our dedicated staff to offer even more opportunities for the children and families they serve during 2011-2012. This will include an additional £2,000 grant for every Centre to buy new equipment and offer additional enriching activities and experiences for families: **£32,000**.
- Residents who provide foster care opportunities for children to be brought up in a safe and caring environment deserve all the support we can provide. Our residents provided the highest response of all as part of the Wirral's Future consultation when asked to suggest ideas about how more carers could be recruited. We are therefore ensuring that foster care allowances are increased in line with national recommendations: **£130,000**.
- We will invest to cover inflation costs of our independent residential care contracts: **£95,000**.

- Wirral Council is the parent to around 650 children who are in our care. Many receive valuable support and assistance from their peers on the Children in Care Council. During 2011-2012 we will invest further in a wide range of communication and engagement services to ensure we involve even more of our children in this activity: **£20,000**.
- The transition to becoming an adult can be difficult for many children who have been in care or who have experienced difficulties and chaos in their young lives. We will therefore protect the Stop Gap service which is an intensive support programme for Wirral's vulnerable, homeless 16-17 year old young people, who have complex or multiple needs: **£87,000**.
- Following the introduction of youth hubs elsewhere in the Wirral, we will provide the resources necessary to progress the development of the brand new youth hub facility in Birkenhead with the 'Onside' organisation, local youth partners and the Fire Service: **£50,000**.
- The Administration recognise that despite the significant amount of work that has taken place since 2006/7 through the Wirral Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, which itself has led to a sustained reduction in alcohol-specific hospital admissions for young people, Wirral remains one of the worst areas in the country for alcohol specific hospital admissions for under 18s. We also recognise the valuable work undertaken by our Trading Standards Officers to combat the illegal sale of alcohol to young people.

In line with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Access to Alcohol by Young People in Wirral, we will make permanent the Trading Standards posts required to continue the work to control the illicit sale of alcohol to young people: **£40,000**.

- We are committed to tackling child poverty in Wirral, and in line with our commitment to consult, involve and engage, during 2011-2012, we will invest in targeted engagement with Wirral organisations and local communities to develop an action plan for Wirral with the aim of lifting children and families out of poverty: **£10,000**.

### **Your FAMILY: Adult Social Services**

A key priority for the Council is to improve the quality of services we deliver for vulnerable people. This necessity was highlighted by the 2010 Care Quality Commission inspection report which found that our services were simply not good enough. A robust plan is now in place to ensure urgent and lasting improvements are made.

Wirral's Future consultation identified two key priorities for future delivery of services; **affordability and quality**

- We will therefore invest to ensure we have the staff in place with the necessary skills to provide rigorous quality assurance of provision for our

vulnerable residents so that we can secure for them the improvements we have committed to deliver: **£600,000**.

- We also know that the number of older people in need of our care is increasing. The Adult Social Services Task Force considered this and recommended that budgets should properly reflect demand where the needs of vulnerable people are known. Therefore rather than expect the department to meet this demand within existing budgets we are increasing the budget of Adult Social Services appropriately: **£2 million**.
- The Council's support for children with learning disabilities is excellent – support that should be maintained as they become adults. We are therefore providing further investment into the support of young adults with Learning Disabilities as they make the transition from childhood to adult: **£800,000**.
- No one deserves our support more than the men and women who have served their country in the Armed Forces. We will establish an Armed Forces Community Welfare Pathway to support the men and women we have asked to fight our country's wars by providing office accommodation and start up costs for volunteers to then signpost members of the armed forces, their families and local veterans to a range of support services with set up funding this year: **£20,000**.

### **Your NEIGHBOURHOOD**

We understand that the most important influence on residents overall quality of life is the house and street where they live. We are committed to listening and engaging with Wirral residents and providing opportunities to get involved with the issues that matter the most to them. We know Wirral's environment really matters to local people and we are strongly committed to reducing Wirral's carbon footprint. We will deliver improvements in recycling while putting in place further innovative energy saving measures to deliver on our 60% carbon reduction target by 2025.

- Wirral's Future consultation identified anti-social behaviour as a key concern to Wirral residents and it is vital that we provide the most effective action possible. We will conduct a full review of the Council's and partner organisation approach, including the implementation of our commitment to community justice in this vital area. Therefore we will provide funding to the ASB team for a further twelve months to enable this review to take place: **£290,000**.
- In addition, we will re-introduce daytime staffing of the CCTV control room at a cost of £60,000 to the base budget. Any additional income arising from increased issuing of fixed penalty notices as a result of the improved monitoring of CCTV will be directed to a community fund, with the proceeds applied to future community projects: **£60,000**.
- We will secure the provision of advocacy and support service for survivors of domestic violence coupled with the provision of information and intelligence to make Wirral communities safer: **£500,000**.

- The Coalition Government's new Homelessness Grant will be invested to combat homelessness, assist those facing re-possession, prevent tenancy fraud and reduce levels of under occupation. It will also be used to support the Citizens Advice Bureau assist residents facing problems in their housing: **£171,000.**
- We will make a significant additional capital investment to maintain and improve Wirral's roads through a programme of highway maintenance and road safety improvements: **£1.6 million.**
- We are committed to making our roads safer in residential areas and outside our schools by implementing statutory 20 mph speed restrictions in non-major routes in residential areas throughout Wirral. Any of the £275,000 committed to this project last year and still not spent will be rolled forward and added to a further £275,000 in 2011-2012.
- We will make a significant capital investment in solar energy on appropriate Council buildings. Such an investment will add to revenue costs however, the proposed investment will yield savings in energy costs in excess of the capital financing costs, result in CO2 savings of approximately 400 tonnes per year and provide a major boost for employment in Wirral's growing low carbon economy: **£2.8 million.**
- The Administration welcomes the success and the 30 local jobs created by the free household insulation initiative. We confirm our commitment to continuing with the programme to provide free insulation to every household in Wirral. Cabinet notes that £729,000 of the £1.049 million committed last year has been spent to date, and confirms that the balance will be rolled forward and added to a further £1.049 million in 2011/12.
- This Administration appreciates the valuable work undertaken by community groups and understands the financial pressures that make it difficult for them to invest in their buildings in order to reduce overheads. We will therefore add £57,000 to the balance of the Community Energy Efficiency Fund, bringing the total to £110,000. To widen and increase access to these much needed resources, we will also, as a matter of urgency, reduce the bureaucracy placed on voluntary and community groups by simplifying the application and approval process. These funds will be allocated to Area Forums for them to recommend to Cabinet appropriate schemes for approval: **£110,000.**
- The Administration believes the Assistant Recycling Project Officers have made a significant contribution to sustaining the improvement in Wirral's recycling performance and reducing the amount of contaminated recycling that would otherwise be sent to landfill thereby reducing the Council's exposure to landfill tax. Therefore, we will make the six Assistant Recycling Project Officer posts permanent: **£95,000.**
- We will also make a revenue investment in our waste infrastructure: **£202,000.**

- We note the success of the work of the Dog Fouling Enforcement Team, currently carried out by staff working through the Future Jobs Fund. The work of this team has resulted in significant reductions in dog fouling in targeted locations as well as additional benefits in relation to Streetscene such as litter enforcement. We will therefore establish this team, team leader and 4 dog fouling wardens on a permanent basis with an additional £10,000 to deliver extra enforcement activity at weekends: **£120,000**.
- To support the fantastic work of the volunteers and our staff who have worked hard to establish a Friends of Birkenhead Kennels Group, we will demonstrate the Council's support for their commitment and initiative by investing during the year to make improvements they have requested to the Council's dog kennels: **£7,400**.
- We will ensure our Streetscene activity is not compromised and that our contract delivers an excellent standard of service by meeting inflation costs on the existing contract: **£400,000**.
- We will invest in our vibrant weekend football leagues by investing £20,000 in the provision of equipment and pitch clean ups. We also believe that children's play areas should be cleansed at weekends so that they remain clean, safe and available for children at the times when they are most likely to be used. We will therefore provide an additional £40,000 to enable weekend inspection and cleaning work to be carried out: **£60,000**.
- We acknowledge the commitment demonstrated by our allotment holders and the support groups they have created. In recognition of this we will make a fund available for new and existing sites to bid into to invest in improvement works: **£50,000**.
- We welcome the security we have brought to our Leisure Centres by our swift actions this year and reaffirm our commitment to ensure that the existing scheme of free swimming at Council facilities for residents under 18 and over 60 are funded on an ongoing basis through the Base Budget.

We note that more than £1 million has been invested in Wirral libraries since May 2010. As this Administration recognises that Wirral's libraries are a vital part of our civil society and the public's commitment to them is part of what makes Wirral special we reject the approach taken by other local authorities and will not be closing any libraries.

- This Administration also recognises that our libraries are a major asset and are not solely about books. We will implement a communication and engagement campaign to promote Wirral's Library service across all communities, with particular emphasis on the most hard to reach groups in our society. During 2011-2012 we will aim to communicate the huge range of services contained within a library to encourage people – particularly those who are isolated, lonely or feel excluded from society - to utilise their local facility as a safe, warm and secure social space with provision to access services, search for jobs and training, improve literacy levels or to meet and make friends: **£20,000**.



- During 2011-2012 we will modernise the service our libraries provide to make them more attractive and equipped for 21st Century users by investing in the installation of wi-fi, information screens and a brand new e-book service in every library: **£120,000**.
- During 2011-2012 we will ensure that the 'Get into reading' project continues through investing a further year's funding in this important project. Building on our parenting role to the children in our care we will place a particular focus on promoting and improving reading to this group of Wirral's children: **£100,000**.

### **Your ECONOMY**

We will continue to listen to and support our employers, investors and residents to secure our economic recovery. We will give priority to supporting our small businesses and making Wirral a place where business chooses to invest and create jobs. We will seek to achieve a rebalanced economy that retains and attracts our young people and provides opportunity for all to realise their full potential.

Crucially we will maximise our investment in the Wirral Apprentice Programme - guaranteeing even more local people benefit. We will also ensure that every young person leaving school has access to training or a job.

In December we announced an investment of £2.845 million to support the recommendations arising from the Wirral's Future Consultation. This included £500,000 to support a further 142 Apprentices taking the total supported to 313, £200,000 to link business growth with delivering jobs for local people, and £200,000 to support the development of social enterprises and mutuals in Wirral's economy.

Today we are able to announce further support for local businesses and the jobs they can create:

#### **Keeping It Local Initiative**

We know that Wirral's district and local retail centres are very important to local people as well as providing valuable local jobs. We are therefore announcing specific measures during 2011-2012 to support their 'bounce back' and assist them to regain their once vibrant environment.

- Following the success of the biggest ever package of reduced car parking charges over Christmas 2010 and to encourage local people to shop in Wirral all car parking, including on street, from Monday through to Friday will be 'free after three': **£482,000**.
- The challenges and issues of empty shops continue to be a problem for many of our district and local shopping centres. We note the early enthusiasm for the pilot projects in Egremont, Bromborough and New Ferry and will therefore, in consultation with local traders and Area Forums, allocate additional funds of £17,500 to address the issue of empty shops this is in addition to the funds already allocated: **£192,500**.

- To make our 27 local and district shopping centres more attractive places to visit, shop and do business, we will, in consultation with local traders and Area Forums, carry out a focussed programme of street cleansing including deep clean, gum removal, repairs and environmental enhancements: **£500,000.**
- From within the Council's current resources we will work with voluntary groups to assist local businesses identify low cost common sense solutions to improve access for people with a disability.

We will give additional support to Wirral's local shops and businesses by seeking to develop innovative publicity and advertising partnerships. This will be achieved from within existing Council press and publicity resources.

A thorough evaluation of the results and economic impact of our 'Keeping It Local Initiative' will be reported to an appropriate meeting of Cabinet.

### **Supporting our small businesses**

Our Administration believes supporting Wirral's 6,755 small and medium sized businesses which together employ some 65,000 people is vital. Research has shown us it is these businesses which properly supported can provide the rapid growth and jobs needed to help rebalance our local economy.

- We will therefore provide dedicated business support and advice to all who have the potential to grow, helping them to identify new business opportunities and access new markets.
- We will also develop a Wirral Business Angels programme whilst further developing and enhancing business workshops delivered through Invest Wirral.

This initial two year investment will ensure an additional 100 jobs are created or safeguarded this year and an additional £2 million invested over and above agreed annual targets: **£250,000.**

- During 2011-2012 the Council will via a successful European Social Fund bid matched from the Working Neighbourhood reserve, invest to support over 700 people currently without jobs who have experienced ill health and other complex problems: **£1.5 million.**

The Administration welcomes the fact that unlike other neighbouring Authorities, and consistent with our experience of what achieves the best outcomes, we have chosen to deliver this activity through voluntary, community and faith sector organisations utilising their experience and links into our communities and with the hardest to reach groups in Wirral.

Taken together the measures announced in this section of our budget proposal and economic regeneration activity in the next 12 months will help create or safeguard 925 jobs and secure some £16 million of additional private sector investment.

## Your COUNCIL

As a 'can-do' Council, we want to be the best we can. Our aim is to deliver first class services, which are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of local people. Wherever possible we will do this through listening to, engagement with and the empowerment of individuals and communities in both the design and delivery of local services, and by working together with partners in the public, private, community, voluntary and faith sectors.

**This Administration will invest in and enhance Wirral's Big Society.** The Community, Voluntary and Faith sector in Wirral deliver a wide range of services and activities for local people. This includes direct delivery of services for the most vulnerable, advocacy and advice services along with many community-led activities which have a huge impact and make a really positive impact to people's quality of life.

Unlike neighbouring authorities, we will continue to maintain our investment of around **£11 million**, commissioning services from the Community, Voluntary and Faith sector and providing grants to local organisations. As part of our drive to ensure everything we do is open and transparent we will publish full details of this funding. The dedicated Big Society Unit, established in December 2010, will work with the sector to ensure that a clear funding strategy is put in place which will support the Council to deliver its priorities, provide high-quality local services and enable local organisations to develop and grow.

This Administration believes that a key element of Wirral's Big Society is involving residents in determining Council priorities and giving local residents the opportunity to make real decisions on matters affecting their neighbourhood.

Wirral's Future be a part of it has been a huge success enabling Wirral people to get involved in reshaping Council services and deciding what their Councils priorities are after all. We therefore request that the interim Chief Executive takes all necessary steps, within current resources, to initiate the next phase of Wirral's Future consultation programme for 2011/12 to further embed our Administrations approach of listening, engaging and consulting with our residents.

Our eleven Area Forums are a real strength for Wirral and have been actively involved in distributing funding and helping to set local priorities. Their activities have improved neighbourhoods and communities. We will continue to support and enhance the important role they play by:

- Area Forums will be supported to more robustly influence the way in which we invest our resources in the future. Each Forum will be assisted to develop their own Local Plan with £5,000 provided to each this year to help them to organise community consultation: **£55,000**.
- We recognise Area Forum funding has been distributed in previous years from a variety of sources including one off policy options. This includes, Funds for You – voluntary, community and faith sector grants of £170, 000, You Decide funding of £220, 000 and winter resilience funding of £55,000. We note this totals £445, 000 equating to £40, 500 per Area Forum. This investment will now be safeguarded. In addition, this year we will distribute

£200,000 for local road safety schemes as identified by each Area Forum. The Administration will work to increase the transparency and simplify the distribution of all the resources identified: **£645,000.**

- Recognising the value our residents place upon demonstrating their commitment to ethical and responsible trade we will provide resources for a Wirral wide Fair Trade project involving schools, businesses and faith groups, to increase awareness and enhance the Borough's existing Fair Trade status: **£10,000.**

From April 2012, in line with the Coalition Government's democratising of Health Service funding, Public Health will integrate fully with the Council. With full support from all of our Wirral Health partners, including the three Pathfinder GP Commissioning Consortia, Wirral has applied for early adopter status to start the transfer of responsibilities during 2011. The interim Chief Executive will bring an early report to the Council's Cabinet which will detail the integration of Wirral's Public Health service with other Council services and outline the Council's role in fulfilling this new function which currently includes £22 million in public health service spending.

### **Council Staff**

Our employees are the Council's most valuable resource as it is they who oversee or deliver services to the people we serve. It is therefore vital that we continue to improve the way we communicate with each other. We will therefore ensure all staff have an e-mail address and access to a computer. It is noted that this can be achieved at no additional cost to the Council and that by connecting all staff in this way a platform will be provided from which we can build a wide array of digital services for staff to reduce administrative and back office costs still further.

The Administration realise that to allow the 1,100 staff who applied to leave the Council to go will require leadership, imagination, commitment and resources to support the 5,000 people who remain if we are to ensure that the new ways of providing services are to be successfully and effectively achieved.

- The Efficiency Investment Budget will be used to meet the full costs of any restructuring and retraining requirements that have been identified by each Chief Officer. This funding will be released on the confirmation of an appropriate business case by the Strategic Change Programme Board. To meet the full costs of all restructuring requirements identified by Chief Officers: **£2 million.**

The Administration is also aware that 108 people working for Wirral residents have been working for the Council on temporary contracts for over two years. We believe that this is unacceptable leading as it does to unnecessary personal anxiety and financial insecurity. We therefore request the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development to implement a process of issuing every member of staff who has been on a temporary contract in excess of two years with a permanent contract of employment.

In summary, this budget proposal has ensured that no part of Wirral has been left behind and that all of our residents and communities benefit from the Administration's prudent management of the Council's resources.

- **It will keep Wirral children and young people safe and improve their life chances**
- **It will put the most vulnerable members of our society at the heart of all we do as a Council**
- **It will support the creation of private sector employment and the rebalancing of Wirral's economy**
- **It will deliver long overdue environmental improvements to our local shopping centres**
- **It will deliver a step change in carbon reduction and improving our environment, while delivering a major boost to Wirral's low carbon economy**
- **It will foster Wirral's Big Society by changing the way we deliver services, giving greater power to all local residents to improve their neighbourhoods and by protecting spending to voluntary, community and faith based organisations**
- **It will deliver a stronger, listening, more open and honest Council with radically reduced senior management costs delivering better services**

**No Wirral resident will see their Council Tax rise this coming year.**

**We have ensured that we enter the next financial year with balances of £14 million, a prudent approach that secures the Council's long term financial security and we commend it to the Council and the people of Wirral.**

Any requirement of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 to consider reports be dispensed with on the grounds that, in the opinion of the Council, the matters are urgent.

That for the financial year 2011/12 the Council will ensure that no pensioner household over 75 will have any increase in Council Tax liability, including the consequences of any police and fire increases. This applies where:

- (i) the Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 75 or over on 1 April 2011 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2011 eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only);
- (ii) this reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs;

- (iii) application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit;

No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Benefit will qualify for the reduction.

It be noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2010 the Council calculated the figure of 104,879 as its council tax base for the year 2011/12 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2011/12 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Collection Fund (Council Tax Benefit) (England) Direction 2002:-

- (a) £833,250,000 being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (c) of the Act;
- (b) £541,706,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) to (c) of the Act;
- (c) £291,544,000 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) exceeds the aggregate at (b), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;
- (d) £160,110,000 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant, adjusted for the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year between its Collection Fund and it's General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and any amount which the Council estimates to be transferred between its Collection Fund and its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, issued on 7 February 1994;
- (e) £1,253.20 being the total amount at (c) less the amount at (d), divided by the council tax base, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;

#### **Wirral Services Valuation Bands**

A	£835.47	B	£974.71	C	£1,113.96	D	£1,253
E	£1,531	F	£1,810.18	G	£2,088.67	H	£2,506.40

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings in Valuation Band D, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings as listed in different valuation bands.

**It is noted that this equates to 0% Wirral Council Tax rise.**

It be noted that for the year 2011/12 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts of precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

**Fire Valuation Bands**

A £43.18	B £50.38	C £57.57	D £64.77
E £79.16	F £93.56	G £107.95	H £129.54

**Police Valuation Bands**

A £97.49	B £113.73	C £129.98	D £146.23
E £178.73	F £211.22	G £243.72	H £292.46

Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts for Wirral services and the Fire and Police precepts, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2011/12 for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

**Wirral Council Valuation Bands**

A £976.14	B £1,138.82	C £1,301.51	D £1,464.20
E £1,789.58	F £2,114.96	G £2,440.34	H £2,928.40

**It is noted that this equates to a 0% overall increase in Council Tax.**

**2. Cabinet minute 328 – Schools Budget 2011-12**

**RESOLVED - That**

**(1) taking account of the views of the Schools Forum:**

- the Schools Budget is approved at the sum of £229,403.700;
- the DSG reserve of £742, 025 is used to meet backdated harmonisation costs in schools;
- the Excess Balance Reserve of £136,934 is also used for this purpose;
- the increase in contributions to combined budgets including Harmonisation back pay £450,000, Local Children’s Safeguarding Board £6,000, School Sports Partnership £25,000 and Discretionary Rate Relief £270,000 are noted;
- the budget for schools includes provision for pay harmonisation “going forward” for support staff totalling £1,057,000;

**(2) changes to the local funding formula are agreed for:**

- grants estimated at £32.2 million, which are to be consolidated into the formula using the previous grant make up and the latest data available;
  - an Early Years Single Funding Formula be introduced from 1 April 2011 using a single base rate for all providers together with a number of specific supplements for deprivation, quality, flexibility and a headteacher supplement (for Nursery Schools only);
  - that the operation of the formula be reviewed during 2011/12; and
- (3) the Cabinet notes that in the settlement for 2011/12 there is no increase (or decrease) in school funding per pupil. The Administration particularly welcomes the £5 million contribution to the Schools Budget from the Coalition Government's pupil premium.
3. Cabinet minute 329 – Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2011-14

**RESOLVED – That**

- (1) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2011 to 2014 be approved;
- (2) the Prudential Indicators be adopted;
- (3) the Minimum Revenue Provision policy be approved;
- (4) the following Council Officers listed in Appendix D of the Strategy Statement, be authorised to approve payments from Council bank accounts for all treasury management activities;

Director of Finance	- Ian E. Coleman
Deputy Director of Finance	- David L.H. Taylor-Smith
Head of ICT	- Vacant
Head of Benefits, Revenue and Customer Services	- Malcolm J. Flanagan
Head of Financial Services	- Thomas W. Sault
Head of Support Services	- Vacant
Chief Accountant	- Peter J. Molyneux
Chief Accountant	- Robert D. Neeld
Chief Accountant	- Jenny Spick



**4. Cabinet minute 330 – Capital Programme and Capital Financing 2011-13**

**RESOLVED - That**

- (1) the revised proposals for the Wallasey Town Hall and Wallasey Annexes schemes be reflected in the Capital Programme;**
- (2) an additional investment of £1.1 million in Transport schemes be included within the Capital Programme for 2011/12;**
- (3) the capitalisation of £3.42 million of statutory redundancy costs be included within the Capital Programme for 2010/11; and**
- (4) the Capital Programme 2011-2013 and capital financing, as now presented, be agreed and incorporated within the Council Budget for 2011/12.**

**5. Cabinet minute 331 – Interim Carbon Budget 2011-12**

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the actions (contained within Appendix B, the Carbon Budget Impact Statement) to implement the Council's interim Carbon Budget for 2011-12 be noted and endorsed;**
- (2) a further report be presented to Cabinet detailing the revisions to the Carbon Budget in April 2011;**
- (3) the proposed investment of £2.8m in solar energy in (included in its amendment to the Capital Programme) which will generate CO2 savings of around 400 tonnes per annum be noted, and this be taken into account when producing the further report for the Cabinet's consideration at its meeting in April 2011;**
- (4) the Merseyside Pension Fund be requested to give consideration to implementing carbon budgeting as part of its normal business activities;**
- (5) an appropriate evaluation model for quantifying CO2 emissions as part of the procurement process for new Council contracts and other spend be developed by the Director of Finance and a report be brought back to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity;**
- (6) the progress on reducing CO2 emissions be included in the regular performance monitoring reports which are brought to the Cabinet and other Committees; and**
- (7) a briefing be arranged in the next Municipal Year as part of the Members' Training and Development Programme on the ethos of a Carbon Budget.**

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With the permission of the Council, the Leader reserved part of the time for speaking, allocated to him under Standing Order 5 (2) (h), to his right of reply to the debate on the Labour Group amendments to the Cabinet's budget.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Director of Finance submitted a written report in respect of the budget recommended by the Cabinet, which examined the robustness of the proposed budget with particular reference to:

- (a) the adequacy of General Fund balances and reserves;
- (b) the achievability of any savings included in the budget;
- (c) the impact of the proposed budget for 2011-12 on the setting of the budget for 2012-13.

Similar reports were also submitted in respect of the proposals detailed in minute 106 below.

105 **ADJOURNMENT**

In accordance with Standing Order No. 16 (2) the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7.35pm whilst the public gallery was cleared due to a general disturbance.

The meeting resumed at 8.02pm.

106 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

**LABOUR AMENDMENT (1) TO BUDGET CABINET MINUTE 327**

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes  
Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

1. Council notes that this budget cuts Wirral's workforce by nearly 20%, and that, in order to make this cut, this administration has borrowed £6.4m, which will have to be paid back at the revenue cost of £600,000 a year, over a period of 25 years which totals £15m. This amount is in addition to the £15m being found from other sources over the next two years.
2. Council notes that the loss of 1300 jobs, (of which only 1100 are accounted for in this budget) will take £51m directly out of Wirral's economy, with all the consequent knock on to contractors, traders and shop keepers, which will considerably increase the impact of that loss.
3. Council believes that an area like Wirral, which is heavily dependent on public sector employment, has little chance of making up that loss with new private sector jobs, particularly in a climate where the private sector is already shedding the jobs it currently has, and that a cut of this severity, from one of the biggest employers on Wirral, can only push Wirral's economy deeper into depression, increasing the level of unemployment and reducing opportunities for future generations of Wirral's young people.

4. Council believes that the policy of this government to pursue deficit reduction over such a short timescale, with its consequent impact on local government, is driven more by political election timetables and a political ideology which wants to drastically reduce the size of the State, than it is by necessity. Council notes that even under a Thatcher "There is no Alternative" government, they chose to reduce a budget deficit over a period of nine years rather than five.
5. Council believes the damage done to the local economy has been compounded by the fact that the Secretary of State chose in the Local Government Settlement to front load in one year many of the cuts to Local Government spending, and that this draconian move was further exacerbated by a decision to centre those cuts, through the use of Area Based Grant, on the areas of highest deprivation in the country, leading to a situation where, for example, Richmond on Thames loses just £5.39 in Revenue Spending Power per head of population, Wirral loses £84.27 and Liverpool loses £162.99
6. Council deeply regrets that Wirral's Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition has not joined with their colleagues elsewhere in the country in condemning this government's treatment of Local Government and its impact on vital front line services, but has chosen instead to celebrate the scale of the job losses they are inflicting as a triumph of leadership, without showing any appreciation of the damage they are doing.
7. Council further condemns the fact that they have taken every opportunity to thwart any attempt to scrutinise the impact of these cuts, unlike neighbouring authorities who have taken an all party approach to reduce the impact of any cuts that have to be made, and have gone to great lengths to conceal the real truth about what these cuts mean, including suspending elements of the Council's Constitution to suppress proper scrutiny and debate, and refusing to allow constitutionally called Scrutiny Committees to proceed.
8. Council notes that the outcome of this behaviour is that the members of this Council are being asked to approve a budget which has not been properly and rigorously scrutinised, which does not have in place any published departmental restructuring plans to show how services will be delivered in the future, and which does not have any published risk assessments or equality impact statements.
9. Council expresses its outrage that members are being asked to approve this budget "blind", without any of the essential back up information, and that they have not even been allowed to see the detailed departmental budget breakdowns which, in the past, have always been published as part of the budget "blue book" presented to Budget Cabinet as an integral part of the Budget report.
10. Council believes this is totally unacceptable, that there is no evidence to show that this budget is either robust or deliverable, and that the failure to follow the Council's own Constitution on the budget procedure also renders it potentially illegal and open to challenge.
11. Council welcomes the fact that the residents of Wirral will not be faced with any increase in Council Tax, but regrets that the capping formula applied by the Secretary of State, combined with the financial incentive to set a zero Council Tax

increase, effectively took away any choice from local people on whether or not they wished to pay even a small increase in order to protect vital services.

Council recommends that:

- Detailed Restructuring Plans, along with all relevant risk assessments and equality impact statements, be published as a matter of urgency to demonstrate how Council Services will be delivered in future in the light of the loss of nearly 20% of the workforce.
- The ban on allowing an in house bid for the PACSPE contract be lifted and timescales extended in order to allow a competitive bid to be submitted by Wirral's staff.
- The previous terms and conditions which applied to EVR/VS applications be re-instated immediately for any future applicants.
- Concessionary Travel for the over 60s is retained.
- Current levels of refuse collection are maintained and no new charges are introduced.
- In the light of the Draconian cuts to police services on Wirral, which include the loss of 325 officers and 163 police staff in this year alone, the posts of four Community Patrol Officers are restored at the cost of £110,000, using the fund for re-structuring costs, to run in tandem with the review of the Anti Social Behaviour Team.
- The Independent Panel on Members Allowances be asked to devise a sliding scale formula equivalent to a 5% saving so that those members in receipt of the highest allowance bear the largest reduction, and the level of their public sector income as a consequence of their role as a councillor is taken into account.
- No member be allowed to accept more than one Special Responsibility Allowance, including allowances from other public sector bodies.

Council notes that other major changes to the budget are contained within separate amendments in order to maximise the opportunity for all councillors to vote with their consciences.

## **LABOUR AMENDMENT (2) TO BUDGET CABINET MINUTE 327**

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin  
Seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny

Council notes that the provision of Respite Care, Intermediate Care and Home Reablement services plays a key role in the Council's strategy for reducing the numbers of elderly and vulnerable adults who require full time residential care.

Council further notes that these services also play a key role in reducing unnecessary bed blocking in Wirral's hospitals.

Council recognises that over time the introduction of the Personalisation agenda where individuals can choose how they spend the budgets allocated to them may have an impact on the services currently offered.

Council also recognises that, in line with many other authorities, it faces unprecedented levels of cuts in resources, that it is legally obliged to set a balanced budget, and that it therefore has to take action in order to reduce its expenditure to meet the limited resources available.

Council understands, however, that change can be very disturbing and destabilising for the elderly, for individuals with dementia, for those with learning difficulties and for those with mental health needs, and consequently for their families and carers, and that this change needs to be managed very carefully.

Council acknowledges the representations it has received from service users, their families and from charities experienced in this area that the Council is moving too far too fast and the consequence is growing levels of fear and confusion with the attendant risk, in some cases, that a breaking point will be triggered, leading to higher levels of demand for more costly residential care.

In response to these representations, and in line with the statement from the Leader of the Council that he wishes to “invest further where necessary to protect those who are most vulnerable in society,” Council recommends the priorities in the budget are re-focussed in the following way:

The HART service remains as an integrated in house unit	£760,000
Mapleholme stays open in line with the recommendations made at Cabinet in November 2009, following a lengthy and detailed consultation	£800,000
The closure of Pensall, Poulton, Meadowcroft and Fernleigh is postponed for a period of at least six months in order to ensure that appropriate and quality checked alternative services are in place and service users and their families have been properly consulted and are satisfied and familiar with any alternative arrangements that have been made.	£990,000

In order to pay for this, Council recommends

Remaining Council Balances, following the implementation of the proposals in the budget and the use of £4.4m to pay for EVRs, are reduced from £6.8m to £6m, in line with the amount recommended as best practice by the District Auditor as a percentage of expenditure.	£800,000
In the light of the contribution of the Hart Service to reducing admissions to residential care, £166,000 is earmarked from the £2m allocated within the budget on page 5 to meet increasing demand for services for the elderly.	£166,000
In line with other services which are being asked in this budget to absorb £7.8m of inflationary costs, based on the current 4% increase in the consumer price index, the £400,000 allowance for inflation on the Biffa contract be removed. In order to avoid any appearance to the public of rewarding poor performance, particularly in winter weather, the Chief Officer be asked to absorb the consequences, with the suggestion that a more rigorous monitoring of the contract given past track records, and the application of penalties where standards are breached might prove helpful in this matter.	£400,000

In line with other areas where specific grant has not been replaced, the £202,000 grant for waste infrastructure be not replaced, but any essential needs be met from within existing resources of the Council or the contractor.	£202,000
In the light of real concerns that the implementation of the “Free after Three” parking scheme has been tested only over Christmas, when holiday shopping patterns are very different, and may well not increase trade but simply distort shopping patterns over a longer period of time, as well as changing the competitive position of smaller shopping areas like Bebington and New Ferry where parking is still free, this initiative should be postponed until such time that a proper review of all appropriate consequences has taken place and the true cost or benefits of the scheme to Traders and the Council has been properly analysed.	£482,000
The Council’s new Big Society Unit be instructed to investigate how the deep cleansing of local and district shopping centres could be achieved under the principles of localism and the Big Society, by using the financial resources already available within Area Forums, or a combination of Area Forums, by recruiting willing clean up volunteers and by a rigorous enforcement by the Council and by residents and traders of current cleansing contracts.	£500,000

Council believes that these measures will not only benefit Wirral’s most vulnerable residents, but will also make transparent the level of Health Authority Grant being paid back into Social Services, against a background of £13m of resources being removed, and demonstrate that the full £4.9m of grant is being used in the proper manner, (set against the £3.4m of grant currently evident in this budget).

In conjunction with this amendment, the Council also considered a minority report which had been prepared by Councillors McLaughlin, Roberts, Salter and Kenny.

### **LABOUR AMENDMENT (3) TO BUDGET CABINET MINUTE 327**

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones  
 Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Council demands that a full review takes place on the way in which applications for EVRs and Voluntary Severance were invited.

Council does not believe that it is appropriate to ask employees to take serious decisions about their future in a “last chance saloon” climate of fear, where pressure is applied to persuade people to go by telling them that any future settlements will be considerably reduced, and that a failure to reach the required number of EVRs or Voluntary Severance requests would lead to compulsory redundancies.

Council instructs the Employment and Appointments Committee to re-instate immediately the previous terms and conditions which applied to EVR/VS applications for any future applicants, pending the review.

## **LABOUR AMENDMENT (4) TO BUDGET CABINET MINUTE 327**

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes  
Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

Council notes that information recently revealed in the Times under the Freedom of Information Act shows that Conservative Council Leaders have warned the Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, that the Government's spending cuts will have "devastating" consequences on public services and complained about the unfairness of the settlement, with many Northern Authorities faring worse than Southern Authorities.

Council notes that this adds to the clear condemnation of the consequences of such a savage front loading of cuts made by Liberal Democrat Council Leaders and councillors in a prior letter to the Times.

In the light of this information, Council calls on the Wirral Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition to join their colleagues in this protest and lobby their own Government about the unprecedented damage being caused by this savage slashing of Council resources in one year, with no time to phase in alternative ways of delivering services.

Council asks that this budget setting procedure be delayed until its legal limit on March 10th in order for this lobbying to take place and the full impact this budget will have on front line services to be set out clearly to Government ministers in a last ditch attempt to prevent such damage being done to the people of Wirral.

Following the debate, and Councillor Green having replied, each amendment was put to the vote as follows:

Labour amendment (1) was put and lost (23:41:1).

Labour amendment (2) was put and lost with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (23) - Councillors JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, D Dodd, S Foulkes, P Glasman, AER Jones, B Kenny, A McArdle, ARC McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, D Realey, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, JV Stapleton, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams.

Against the amendment (41) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Bridson, A Brighthouse, SL Clarke, W Clements, D Elderton, GJ Ellis, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, JE Green, J Hale, T Harney, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, S Holbrook, PSC Johnson, M Johnston, P Kearney, J Keeley, S Kelly, D Knowles, I Lewis, D McCubbin, D Mitchell, RK Moon, SR Mountney, S Niblock, C Povall, A Pritchard, P Reisdorf, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, R Wilkins, Mrs PM Williams, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Abstention (1) – Councillor AJ Jennings

Labour amendment (3) was put and lost (23:41:1).

Labour amendment (4) was put and lost with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (23) - Councillors JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, D Dodd, S Foulkes, P Glasman, AER Jones, B Kenny, A McArdle, ARC McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, D Realey, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, JV Stapleton, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams.

Against the amendment (41) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Bridson, A Brighthouse, SL Clarke, W Clements, D Elderton, GJ Ellis, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, JE Green, J Hale, T Harney, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, S Holbrook, PSC Johnson, M Johnston, P Kearney, J Keeley, S Kelly, D Knowles, I Lewis, D McCubbin, D Mitchell, RK Moon, SR Mountney, S Niblock, C Povall, A Pritchard, P Reisdorf, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, R Wilkins, Mrs PM Williams, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Abstention (1) – Councillor AJ Jennings

**Resolved – That it be noted that Cabinet minute 327 is therefore confirmed.**

## **PETITION – RESPITE CARE HOMES**

Following on from minute 102 ante, the Council voted on the amendment moved by Councillor Moon, seconded by Councillor Green in respect of the petition which the Council had received and to which Mr Donaldson had spoken regarding the proposed closure of respite care homes, as below:

“(1) Council recognises the deeply felt concerns of service users and their carers as the Council re-provides respite care from the independent sector. Council further recognises the good work being done by officers in contacting service users and carers and in supporting them making alternate arrangements; and instructs officers to continue these efforts to ensure a satisfactory outcome is achieved for all current users and their carers.

(2) Council shares the aspirations of the petitioners that care of the most vulnerable in our borough be one of the Council’s highest priorities. Council further notes that the Cabinet’s Budget recommendation makes no cuts in the overall level of support to those most vulnerable members of our community and their carers.”

The amendment was put and carried, with the Council dividing as follows

For the amendment (41) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Bridson, A Brighthouse, SL Clarke, W Clements, D Elderton, GJ Ellis, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, JE Green, J Hale, T Harney, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, S Holbrook, PSC Johnson, M Johnston, P Kearney, J Keeley, S Kelly, D Knowles, I Lewis, D McCubbin, D Mitchell, RK Moon, SR Mountney, S Niblock, C Povall, A Pritchard, P Reisdorf, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, R Wilkins, Mrs PM Williams, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Against the amendment (23) - Councillors JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, D Dodd, S Foulkes, P Glasman, AER Jones, B Kenny, A McArdle, ARC



McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, D Realey, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, JV Stapleton, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams.

Abstention (1) – Councillor AJ Jennings

Before the substantive motion was put to the vote, Councillor Foulkes moved an amendment, seconded by Councillor P Davies, that –

“The council stop immediately the closure of all council-run respite care homes, at least until a satisfactory alternative has been found and approved by the majority of current users and their carers. We want the care of the most vulnerable in our borough to be one of our council’s highest priorities and we do not want any cuts to the overall level of support provided to those vulnerable members of our community and their carers.

In January 2011 Wirral Borough Council informed all users of respite services that it will close five council-run respite homes, by the end of March 2011. The homes provide respite for older people, people with learning disabilities, mental health issues and crisis situations. They give carers an essential break. At the end of 2010 Wirral Borough Council asked over 311,000 residents about their plans for Wirral’s future.

Less than 1% agreed with the recommendation that ‘the council should stop directly providing respite and residential care services and instead buy them in at the same quality but a lower cost from the private and voluntary sector and others’. This is no mandate for action that could have a real and lasting effect on the most vulnerable members of our community, and their families.

The council are also introducing personal assessments and budgets for these vulnerable people and have stated that as a consequence “the future of traditional Day Care Centres is extremely uncertain”.

“A society is judged by its treatment of its weakest and most vulnerable members” – United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.” “

This amendment was put and lost, with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (23) - Councillors JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, D Dodd, S Foulkes, P Glasman, AER Jones, B Kenny, A McArdle, ARC McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, D Realey, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, JV Stapleton, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams.

Against the amendment (41) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Bridson, A Brighthouse, SL Clarke, W Clements, D Elderton, GJ Ellis, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, JE Green, J Hale, T Harney, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, S Holbrook, PSC Johnson, M Johnston, P Kearney, J Keeley, S Kelly, D Knowles, I Lewis, D McCubbin, D Mitchell, RK Moon, SR Mountney, S Niblock, C Povall, A Pritchard, P Reisdorf, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, R Wilkins, Mrs PM Williams, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Abstention (1) – Councillor AJ Jennings

The amendment moved by Councillor Moon, then becoming the substantive motion was put to the vote and carried, with the Council dividing as follows:

For the substantive motion (40) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Bridson, A Brighthouse, SL Clarke, W Clements, D Elderton, GJ Ellis, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, JE Green, J Hale, T Harney, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, S Holbrook, PSC Johnson, M Johnston, P Kearney, J Keeley, S Kelly, D Knowles, I Lewis, D McCubbin, D Mitchell, RK Moon, SR Mountney, C Povall, A Pritchard, P Reisdorf, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, R Wilkins, Mrs PM Williams, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Abstentions (3) – Councillors A Jennings, M McLaughlin and S Niblock.

**Resolved (40:0:3) –**

**(1) Council recognises the deeply felt concerns of service users and their carers as the Council re-provides respite care from the independent sector. Council further recognises the good work being done by officers in contacting service users and carers and in supporting them making alternate arrangements; and instructs officers to continue these efforts to ensure a satisfactory outcome is achieved for all current users and their carers.**

**(2) Council shares the aspirations of the petitioners that care of the most vulnerable in our borough be one of the Council's highest priorities. Council further notes that the Cabinet's Budget recommendation makes no cuts in the overall level of support to those most vulnerable members of our community and their carers.**

107 **VACANCIES**

There were no nominations to vacancies submitted.