

# CABINET

Thursday, 12 April 2012

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	J Green (Chair)	Finance and Best Value and Social Care and Inclusion
	Councillors	S Clarke	Children's Services and Lifelong Learning
		T Harney	Corporate Resources
		I Lewis	Community and Customer Engagement
		L Rennie	Culture, Tourism and Leisure
		D Mitchell	Streetscene and Transport Services
		Vacant Portfolios	Environment Housing and Community Safety Public Health Regeneration and Planning Strategy

## 373 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor J Green informed that he had agreed that the Cabinet would consider an item of urgent business – Disposal of Care Home, Meadowcroft, 304 Spital Road, Bromborough. It was urgent because there was a need to relocate services as soon as possible.

Frank Field MP would be attending the meeting to make a presentation in respect of Item No. 13 on the agenda – Child Poverty – Budget Option. Mr Field was on the way and the Cabinet would consider this matter as soon as he arrived.

Councillor J Green asked if there were any requests to bring any items of business on the agenda forward. A request was received to consider Item No. 48.1 – Area Forum Development earlier than expected and Councillor J Green agreed to this request. (Minute No. 422 refers.)

## 374 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Clarke declared a personal interest in Item No. 13 – Child Poverty – Budget Option by virtue of being a member of the Wirral Child and Family Working Group. She also declared a personal interest in Item No. 15 – Financial Support for Adopters by virtue of being a member of the Adoption Panel.

Those Members who were also School Governors declared personal interests in respect of Item No. 14 – Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and Item No. 16 – Governor Support.

Councillor J Green declared a personal interest in Item No. 14 – Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools by virtue of his wife's employment with the authority.

Councillor D Mitchell declared a personal interest in Item No. 24 – Public Health Developments 2012/2013 by virtue of being a Governor of Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust.

Councillor J Green declared a personal interest in Item No. 24 – Public Health Developments 2012/2013 by virtue of being a Governor of Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust.

Councillor L Rennie declared a personal interest in Item No. 45 – Cross Lane, Wallasey – West Wallasey Van Hire by virtue of her, as a ward Member having attended meetings with officers about this in the past.

### 375 **AREA FORUM DEVELOPMENT**

A report by the Chief Executive made recommendations to increase engagement with Wirral communities with regard to the Council's decision making and resource allocation. Members were advised that this involved a programme of activity for 2012/13 as well as a proposal for the distribution of the funding available to Area Forums for the coming fiscal year.

The Cabinet had resolved, in June 2011, to develop Neighbourhood Plans for each of Wirral's eleven Area Forums, which preceded a comprehensive consultation programme throughout July, August and September 2011. The results of this consultation were being used to develop plans for each of the Area Forums. The Council resolved, in February 2012, that additional funding would be devolved to Area Forums to commission activity against the priorities contained within those plans. It was, therefore, important to agree a robust, accessible and appropriate method for increasing engagement and distributing funding.

The key message was that the Council was letting go and neighbourhoods would be determining their priorities in future. The level of influence that a community was able to exert to attract funding was being increased

Members noted the funding available to Area Forums to spend in 2012/13.

#### **RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) those officers involved with Area Forum Development be thanked for their hard work;**
- (2) the proposals set out in the report be agreed as the basis for the future development of the Area Forum engagement programme and the distribution of Area Forum funding;**
- (3) the existing 'You Decide' and 'Funds for You' funding streams be combined with the £30,000 p/forum policy option into one 'Neighbourhood Fund' and have the ring fenced elements removed and the funding allocated to Road Safety and pavement improvements be**

added to this Neighbourhood fund, but ring fenced still for Road Safety and pavement improvements;

- (4) Area Forum Members be requested to take into account particular areas of deprivation within their forum area when allocating funding, using the IMD criteria as a guide;
- (5) funding be distributed following the process outlined in Appendix A to the report, with the October round of Forum meetings acting as participatory budgeting events, in those areas meeting the requirements, as outlined in Appendix A to the report and the. Cabinet retain final approval of all schemes recommended for approval by Area Forums;
- (6) the main agenda item for all eleven meetings in June 2012 and February 2013 be linked directly to the Neighbourhood Plan project, with the option for each individual chair to request that additional items be added to the agenda and Community representatives also be appointed at the June meetings, if agreed with ward Members; and
- (7) the Area Forum Constitution at Appendix B to the report be accepted as guidance for Members.

376 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15 and 29 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.**

377 **VODAPHONE PROPOSAL**

Councillor J Green informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 15 March 2012 had agreed a contract for the Council to work with Vodafone. (Minute No. 331 refers.) He proposed that Officers discuss with Vodafone the possibility of a discount scheme for staff at no cost to the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Officers try to negotiate, at no cost to the Council, some discount for its staff when they make purchases from Vodafone.**

378 **NEW BRIGHTON - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

A Report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed the decision by Council on 1t March 2012 to invest a further £1.2M in environmental improvements in New Brighton (Minute No. 131 refers). The report sought endorsement for the proposed Outline Design and Scheme Timetable described in the report.

In addition the report sought authority for the Director of Technical Services to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Outline Design and timetable for the proposed scheme described in the report be endorsed; and**
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work.**

**379 HOYLAKE STATION GATEWAY - PHASE 2A SCHEME**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed the decision by Council on 1 March 2012 to invest a further £1.2M in improvements in Hoylake (Minute No. 131 refers). The report sought endorsement for the proposed Outline Design and Key Principles as set out in the report.

In addition authority was sought to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work and to negotiate with Network Rail and Merseytravel to formalise an agreement for the Council to adopt and maintain the completed highway improvement works.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Outline Design and Key Principles for the proposed scheme as set out in the report be endorsed;**
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to proceed with the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to carry out the work; and**
- (3) the Director of Technical Services be authorised, in conjunction with the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management, to negotiate with Network Rail and Merseytravel to formalise an agreement for the Council to adopt and maintain the completed highway improvement works.**

**380 WIRRAL TOWN TEAMS FUNDING**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed the recent Council budget (Minute No. 317 refers). The report set out the approach for taking forward the £500,000 which had been made available to local shopping areas, through a bidding process, to help to improve the vitality of their centre.

The report outlined the approach to consulting and advertising the application process to help gain interest in creating a Town Team and bidding for the funding. The report also outlined the process for applications and the requirements that Town Teams would need to meet in order to be eligible for funding, as well as outlining the criteria which the applications would be considered against.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the process and criteria for individual bids of up to £100,000 to be invited from Traders Groups in Wirral, for the creation of a number of Town Teams be agreed; and**
- (2) a further report be presented to the Cabinet for the approval of bids, once the application process has been completed.**

**381 REGIONAL GROWTH FUND ROUND 3**

A report by the Director for Regeneration, Housing and Planning explained how the Government had recently announced the opening of a further round of the Regional Growth Fund (RGF). The report set out the objectives of the Fund and detailed the criteria against which bids would be assessed. The report also detailed how RGF could support the delivery of key priorities within the Council's Investment Strategy and the Cabinet was asked to agree the next steps outlined within the report for bringing forward projects, in partnership with the private sector that met the RGF criteria.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning and the Investment Strategy Team be requested to progress the development of the four applications to the Regional Growth Fund as set out in the report; and**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration and Planning Strategy to negotiate, finalise and submit the applications for Regional Growth Fund.**

**382 CHILD POVERTY - BUDGET OPTION**

A report by the Chief Executive advised the Cabinet that the local authority has a statutory duty to work with partners to develop a Wirral Child Poverty Strategy as set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The Cabinet were further advised that the discussions of Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group have informed the development of a draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy and action plan which was approved by Cabinet on 13th October 2011 as the basis for further consultation and engagement. Central to the discussions of the independent Working Group has been the need for all partners to work with each other to add value to existing provision and the need to utilise the positive assets of local communities in raising the aspirations of children and families. The report provided an update on the development of the action plan, and highlighted some of the work that is already being taking forward within the scope of the draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy.

It was reported that the Council's budget resolution of the 1st March set out a commitment to tackling intergenerational poverty in Wirral and agreed an investment of £400,000 to take forward the 'Roots and Wings' strategy. Council also agreed that the independent Working Group is best placed to determine and prioritise where this investment should be made to best effect in local communities. This report therefore provided initial views from the Working Group as to the allocation of the funding.

Frank Field MP was in attendance at the meeting and presented an application to establish a free school from twelve weeks of pregnancy. The aim of Springboard was to teach young people parenting skills and ensure children were ready for their first day of school.

Mr Field hoped that the project would begin during the early stages of pregnancy and go some way to halting the cycle of "intergenerational poverty."

This application was being made because local young people had informed Mr Field that they wanted to learn how to make life-long friendships and how to be good parents. The idea was not to worry about buildings but to begin a service from the twelfth week of pregnancy where the Council could work with expectant mothers. During the first years of a child's development, their life chances were determined, particularly those from the poorest backgrounds. The Springboard project would work with parents when their baby was still in the womb to make them more useful than they would otherwise be.

Springboard would be very much a Wirral project of cutting edge ideas. No-one had done this before and it involved thinking very much outside of the box. Under the proposal, the school would operate from a number of centres with its headquarters based at Tranmere Community Centre and the most vulnerable mothers and children would gain enhanced support. The Birkenhead Education Trust, which would run Springboard, was also working with St Anselm's College and Prenton High School on a pilot scheme to find out how parenting skills can be integrated into the curriculum. If successful, Springboard was expected to be rolled out across the country to improve skills among young people and create better life chances for future generations.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) Frank Field MP be thanked for his attendance at the meeting and for his informative presentation;**
- (2) Cabinet wishes to express its thanks to all members of Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group for their work so far on this initiative and welcomes the close involvement of voluntary, community and faith organisations in this Group;**
- (3) Cabinet welcomes the radical and innovative approach described in the establishment of 'Springboard' a free school specifically aimed at breaking decisively the intergenerational inheritance of poverty;**
- (4) Cabinet therefore, recommends to the Working Group that £300,000 of the £400,000 budget be allocated to assist in the establishment of this initiative; and**

- (5) **the Acting Director of Children's Services be requested to provide any help needed in respect of this project.**

**383 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - GREEN GROWTH SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 52 – Green Growth Scrutiny Review (and the corresponding report) - which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

'The Chair introduced the final report of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review. The panel, consisting of Councillors Mark Johnston, Peter Kearney, Steve Niblock and Stuart Whittingham had focused on seven main issues for the review and had been supported by the Scrutiny Support Officer, Alan Veitch. Details were given of the variety of methods which the Panel had employed to gather evidence and thanks were expressed to all those who had assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions.

The report contained 19 recommendations and assuming that the Committee agreed with these it was recommended that the report be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting.

The Chair expressed his thanks to all those involved, especially to Ben Lavell, Business Engagement Officer, at Invest Wirral and to Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer. He would be more than happy if Members were also involved with the Working Group, which it was proposed be set up to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

The Director thanked the review panel for all their work and commented that the staff involved in the review had found the process very beneficial.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee supports the contents and recommendations of the Green Growth Scrutiny Review.
- (2) That the Green Growth Scrutiny Report be presented to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting.
- (3) That further reports be presented to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update members regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations.
- (4) That this Committee welcomes this example of cross-party working which sees scrutiny at its best.'

**RESOLVED:**

**That the above Minute of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee be agreed.**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed the Scrutiny Review of Green Growth in Wirral, produced by The Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which acknowledged the importance, vibrancy and potential of the 'Green Economy' to create enterprise, jobs and help Wirral to become environmentally sustainable. The report set out proposals to develop the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review in order to respond to the needs of Wirral businesses and therefore, to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral

The report sought Members' approval for a range of policy options designed to enable businesses in Wirral's 'green economy' to set up, grow and maintain competitiveness.

The report complemented Wirral's Investment Strategy, which set future priorities for the economy in the borough. The Strategy proposed an increased emphasis on developing a number of key growth sectors that would build on existing local specialisms and would offer the most growth potential. Two of the proposed growth sectors were Offshore Energy and the Low Carbon sectors.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) Cabinet agrees that Officers should develop and implement a co-ordinated and robust business support service for businesses in Wirral's green economy in order to enable job creation, enterprise development and investment in the borough, as set out in the report:**
- (2) Cabinet agrees to the formation of a Green Economy Officer Working Group to support the development of Wirral's Green Economy and to the implementation of the reports recommendations;**
- (3) update reports be provided to the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) on the potential of Enterprise Zone to provide development opportunities in green sectors;**
- (4) an Invest Wirral Business Forum be developed to allow for the creation of a standalone green (environmental) cluster group, which will provide members from all sectors with a number of online services, including a directory of green product and service providers, provide a sense of identity for the sector and provide clear information and improved signposting to support services for businesses that engage in 'green' business activities;**
- (5) during the forthcoming Municipal Year (2012/13), the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) be encouraged to invite a minimum of two leading Wirral companies in the green sector to meet the Committee to further explore the problems and opportunities currently faced by those companies;**

- (6) an awareness raising event take place in September 2012 aimed at raising awareness of the products and services provided by the local green economy; (The event is an opportunity for Wirral Council to publicly display its commitment to supporting this sector);
- (7) Corporate Procurement be requested to ensure that all potential suppliers are made aware of environmental and sustainable procurement policies;
- (8) the Creation of Wirral Green Skills Growth Fund to unlock barriers to workforce skills in the green sector until 31 March 2013 be agreed;
- (9) a minimum of 24 apprenticeship opportunities be ring-fenced for green growth businesses within the next round of the Wirral Apprentice Programme;
- (10) the Green Growth Officer Working Group is to undertake further detailed research, into existing training services and explore the feasibility of a Council operated database of green skills;
- (11) the Green Growth Officer Working Group be requested to undertakes further detailed research, exploring the feasibility of a Council backed green accreditation scheme; and
- (12) the Green Growth Officer Working Group be tasked to compile a report for the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or successor committee) that explores the rationale for creating a green growth cluster of businesses either in a geographical location (a Green Business Park) or by association in various locations across Wirral.

#### 385 **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK**

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services outlined the main headlines of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by the Communities and Local Government Department on 27 March Policy Framework. It was reported that the NPPF came into effect immediately and replaced the previous suite of existing national Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Minerals Planning Statements.

It was noted that a number of previous planning policies were to be retained and the Director would circulate these to Members.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of this report be noted.**

#### 386 **COMMITTEE REFERRAL - BUSINESS SUPPORT**

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 51 – Business Support (and the corresponding report) which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

'The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which set out proposals to expand Invest Wirral's services to compliment the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) and to expand current business support to pre-start businesses. The matter would be referred to Cabinet for consideration / approval.

The NEA scheme and Enterprise Clubs provided essential help to unemployed people in becoming self employed however, it did not include certain individuals and mentoring support was not provided past the early stages of trading. The current eligibility criterion excluded people who had not been claiming JSA for a minimum of 6 months. This could include individuals in the following circumstances:

- Out of work less than 6 months
- Part-time workers
- Individuals in temporary jobs
- Unemployed people not claiming JSA
- Individuals in full time employment with a potential business idea

Individuals with a robust business idea that fell into any of the above categories could not currently access business start support. Invest Wirral provided a range of business support services which currently included the Micro Business Support programme. This programme supported companies with less than 3 staff and/or a turnover less than £100,000. It was suggested that this programme could be expanded to include help for pre start businesses that were not eligible for NEA support. In such cases, Invest Wirral Micro Business Support Managers would work with individuals to develop a sustainable business plan and guide them through the stages of business start up.

Members, in expressing support for the proposal, commented that the best time to get people back into work was when they had been just been made redundant.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee supports the expansion of the current Invest Wirral services, to include access to business support for pre start businesses that are not eligible for NEA.
- (2) That the matter be referred to Cabinet for consideration.'

The Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration highlighted the issues raised and comments received concerning the range of support. A review had been carried out to make sure there was support available for those who wanted to start a business. It was noted that there was a quality service available to anyone who needed it.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) **the content of Minute and report be noted; and**

- (2) **the Interim Head of Strategic Development and Regeneration be thanked for presenting this item of business and for work he is going to do to ensure quality business support is available for those who require it.**

**387 TACKLING WORKLESSNESS AND SUPPORTING APPRENTICES IN WIRRAL**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning followed a request by Members for details of how programmes would be developed and delivered to tackle worklessness and support apprentices. This request had come as part of the complementary suite of budget policy options for the economy.

The report set out the proposed models for the programmes and sought Members approval to commence delivery. This included a combination of both externally contracted elements that required competitive tendering and elements to be delivered in house by the Council.

Appendix A to the report contained commercially sensitive information relating to a competitive tendering process, the disclosure of which was not appropriate under paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). (Minute No. 427 refers.)

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) **the delivery model for the worklessness support programme be approved and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning be authorised to commence a competitive exercise to re-tender this contract as set out in Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) **the delivery model of The Wirral ILM and Pre-recruitment Support element be approved and the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning be authorised to commence delivery as set out in paragraph 3.3 and 3.4 of the report;**
- (3) **the delivery model of The Wirral Apprentice Programme be approved and the commencement of delivery be authorised as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report; and**
- (4) **the allocation of £1,500,000 from the Worklessness and Apprenticeship Policy Option; £260,000 from the Green Growth in Wirral Policy Option and £500,000 from the base budget for apprentices, as set out in Appendix A of the report, to meet the objectives of tackling worklessness and supporting apprentices be approved.**

**388 MICRO SUPPORT SERVICES - UPDATE**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning advised the Cabinet that Invest Wirral delivered a range of business support services that help businesses set up, grow and maintain competitiveness. A Cabinet report in June 2011 had set out proposals to expand these services further in order to respond to

the needs of Wirral businesses and, therefore, to stimulate economic growth and create new jobs for the residents of Wirral.

The report provided an update on how these services had developed and outlined some recommendations to ensure the new business support services provided the best possible value for money.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the changes to the Investment Support Services Framework based on the information set out in the report be agreed.**

Councillor J Green left the meeting.

Councillor L Rennie in the Chair.

**389 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS 2013-2014**

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services invited the Cabinet to determine the Authority's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools in the borough and the co-ordinated schemes for 2013-2014. The Cabinet was advised that this was a statutory requirement.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated schemes for 2013-2014 be agreed; and**
- (2) members of the Working Group be thanked for their work and for bringing this initiative together.**

**390 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ADOPTERS**

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services outlined the proposals for a revised policy for financial support for adoption. The Cabinet was advised that the proposal was to continue with the model means test provided by the government, using Department for Education criteria. The approach differed from the one used for special guardianship and assisted residence orders to reflect the specific circumstances of adoption compared to other permanence arrangements.

Cabinet was informed that the amendments to the financial support policy for adoption clarified the eligibility criteria for financial support and the decision making process. The revised policy included how financial support was determined when children were placed for adoption, and brought the financial support available to previous foster carers that adopt in line with regulations.

The Cabinet noted that the revised policy complied with the requirements of the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005.

**RESOLVED:**

**That that the Acting Director of Children's Services be requested to consult further with representative adopters in respect of the proposed Policy for Financial Support for Adopters and that a further report is brought to Cabinet for consideration on the outcome of these consultations.**

391 **GOVERNOR SUPPORT**

A report by the Acting Director of Children's Services advised the Cabinet that support services for governors in schools had been provided and funded by the Council for a substantial number of years. The cost in 2011/12 for this was approximately £106,000. The report provided information about the outcomes from the Learn Together Partnership (LTP) Directors of Children's Services decision in 2009 to move towards more shared services. Cabinet was informed that the Learn Together Partnership had formally existed since 2004 and was a collaborative of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Warrington and Wirral, Children and Young People's Services.

The shared service proposal was based around four local authorities sharing governor support services, Wirral, Warrington, Halton and Cheshire East Councils, with Cheshire East taking the lead on school governor development and support during 2012. This would further support and enhance the corporate priorities of developing joint working to provide an outstanding service which would provide greater value for money via group opportunities for procurement, with no redundancies. The statutory duty placed on local authorities to secure training and support for governors would still be fulfilled.

**RESOLVED:**

**That approval be given to enter formally into the shared Governor Support Service with Cheshire East, Halton and Warrington Councils.**

392 **VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR NEET**

As part of a complementary suite of budget policy options for Your Family – Services for Children and Young People, Members had requested that the Director of Children and Young People bring forward a report for the Cabinet's consideration detailing how a work placement programme with the Voluntary, Community and Faith (VCFS) sector would be developed and delivered to tackle NEET.

The report set out the proposed delivery model for the programme and sought approval to commence delivery.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the delivery model for the NEET 16 and 17 year old work placement programme be approved.**

Councillor L Rennie vacated the Chair.

Councillor J Green returned to the meeting and took the Chair.

**393 LANDICAN CEMETRY - STEVEN BOOTE**

Councillor J Green raised concerns about a recent report in the Wirral Globe that Mrs Margaret Boote, whose 22-year-old son Steven had been killed in Afghanistan in 2009, had been shocked to receive, what he could only call a 'cold' letter from Wirral Council. The letter demanded that graves have any extra items removed such as gravel, kerbed edgings and precious mementos to fit in with the Council's guidelines.

Councillor J Green informed that he was appalled at how the family of the fallen hero had been treated by the Council. He said Mr and Mrs Boote deserved a full apology for the way in which they had been told to remove sentimental items from their son's graveside at Landican Cemetery and that the Council must do more to address bereaved families more sensitively. He was aware that the Council had a habit of speaking 'dalek' in the letters it sent out and that this needed to stop. Councillor J Green instructed Officers to apologise for what had occurred and to ensure it did not occur again.

**394 ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT**

A report by the Chief Executive outlined how Wirral Council recognised the enormous contribution which the Armed Forces had made and continue to make to the safety and security of the Nation. The purpose of the report was to further demonstrate that recognition by seeking the Cabinet's approval to 'sign up' to a Wirral Armed Forces Community Covenant.

The report also sought the Cabinet's approval for the nominations of Armed Forces Champions at both Member and Officer levels.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (2) the intention to sign up to the Draft Armed Forces Community Covenant on Armed Forces Day, 30 June 2012 be endorsed**
- (3) subject to the Council's approval, each Mayor elected be also nominated as Elected Members' Armed Forces Champion;**
- (4) the recommendation that the Health, Safety and Resilience Manager continue as the Armed Forces Champion be endorsed and he be thanked for his hard work;**
- (5) the Armed Forces Champion be requested to establish a Wirral Armed Forces and Veterans Forum; and**

- (6) agreement be given to progress being reported, via an annual report by the Chief Executive and the Brigade Commander.

395 **WIRRAL/LGA IMPROVEMENT BOARD - REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Cabinet considered the revised Terms of Reference of the Local Government Association (LGA) Wirral Improvement Board which was a partnership between the Council and the LGA and would provide oversight, support and challenge to the Council's improvement and transformation journey.

The Improvement Board's role is to:

- Provide support and guidance
- Identify and signpost appropriate good practice
- Provide challenge and act as a critical friend
- Ensure the contributions from different external agencies/bodies to Wirral's improvement journey are coordinated
- Ensure there is a single, integrated and holistic improvement plan that can be clearly understood and communicated internally and externally
- Endorse decisions which impact on political and managerial leadership arrangements, corporate governance and improvement in advance of them going through Wirral's own decision-making structures, e.g. Cabinet or Council.

It was expected that the Improvement Board would be in place for at least eighteen months and that every third meeting of the Board would be held in public to report on progress and take questions.

Councillors I Lewis and D Mitchell asked that it be recorded that they were not happy that only every third meeting was being held in public and believed that all meetings of the Improvement Board should be held in public.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Terms of Reference of the Wirral/LGA Improvement Board be accepted.**

396 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

This item of business was withdrawn from the agenda. Councillor J Green informed that this was because a number of staffing matters needed to be resolved in a holistic way rather than as one offs.

397 **CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER - BUDGET 2012**

A report by the Director of Finance provided a summary of the main issues of the Budget, presented by The Chancellor of the Exchequer on 21 March 2012, together with the key implications for local authorities.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

398 **BANKING SERVICES**

A report by the Director of Finance informed the Cabinet of the outcome of a procurement process to appoint a provider of banking services for the Council and recommended that it approve the awarding of the contract. The detail of the recommendation was provided in an exempt report by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, i.e. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) (Minute No. 427 refers).

**RESOLVED:**

**That the bank recommended in the exempt report be appointed to provide banking services to the Council.**

399 **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CARERS SELF DIRECTED ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION SYSTEM**

A report by the Director of Adult Social Services was presented to the Cabinet seeking agreement on a proposal for an engagement and consultation exercise to consider changes to the current carer's budget provided through the Department of Adult Social Services Resource Allocation System (RAS). The Cabinet was advised that these changes would be undertaken as part of a co production arrangement with carers and their representatives and aimed to ensure that there was a clearer focus on carers when they needed support. Members were informed that it would also ensure that the Council meet its statutory obligation towards carers of vulnerable adults which were outlined in the 1995 Carers Act and subsequent equalities legislation.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (2) the Cabinet agrees to progress the consultation and engagement process for changes to the carers personal budget using the methodology referred to in the report.**

400 **PUBLIC HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS 2012/2013**

A report by the Director of Public Health provided the Cabinet with an overview of the key development areas which would be delivered through the Public Health Annual

Plan for 2012-13. The Cabinet was informed that currently accountability for the delivery of these activities lay within the National Health Service at the NHS Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral Cluster Board. However, during 2012-13 public health reform means that increasingly the Council would need to be involved in the determination of future priorities for action, and would want to understand progress against the existing plan in order to be in a good position to take early decisions affecting delivery from April 2013 onwards. Members were advised that the Health and Social Care Act which enshrined these public health reforms was expected to receive Royal Assent before the Easter recess.

It was explained that the activities described in the report were those identified for the final year of the delivery of NHS Wirral's Strategic Commissioning Plan, and for a number of other existing public health programmes.

It was noted that the Organisational Development Manager would co-ordinate training needs identified in respect of the public health function and ensure the training required was provided.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Cabinet note and support the main developments planned for 2012-13 within the Public Health Annual Plan and their link to the Council's Corporate Plan for 2012-13; and**
- (2) Members identify areas where they would like further information or relevant training to enable them to become familiar with the new areas of responsibility transferring under the Health and Social Care Bill to local authorities, the Organisational Development Manager to co-ordinate this and that the Director of Public Health be requested to make it available.**

**401 BRIEFING REPORT - KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY**

A report by the Director of Public Health reminded the Cabinet that within the Budget agreed at the Council, it had been stated that:

"The transfer of public health responsibilities to the Council and the establishment of our health and wellbeing board provide the opportunity to strengthen cross-sector working between the Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector to reduce inequalities, increase efficiency and improve health outcomes.

Members were advised that keeping people in good health means that we need to go beyond provision of separate services and single-issues, and look at providing an integrated response and model of support in our communities. The approach recommended was to assess what services we have currently supporting different parts of the borough, to assess how those services can work more closely together and to develop a model where we can ensure that people can get the support they need as easily and simply as possible. They are likely to include services for supporting people on healthy lifestyles, self-care and independent living, families and early years, work, learning and skills,

health protection and personal safety, community development and leisure and welfare.

The Director of Public Health advised that this would enable those commissioning and providing services to offer a holistic and systematic offer of support to all those who could benefit from it. We will also identify areas of Wirral where we can implement this in the first instance so that we can evaluate the benefits before rolling out more widely. This work had been identified as a work stream for the Health & Wellbeing Board, and will initially be supported by place-based leadership funding from the National Leadership Council. “

The Cabinet was informed that there had been a call for a shift in public health emphasis from preventing illness to keeping people well and building on individual and community assets in recent years. ‘Living Well’ was a North West public health call to action to reduce inequalities through prioritising wellbeing. Wirral had been used as a case study in national reviews of this approach as a result of the work it had done in the Health Action Areas and Wirral’s Community Health Programme. The report provided a briefing on evidence for this approach, and highlighted the steps that would be taken in building on this early start to achieve the Council’s aspirations for improving public health outcomes for people living and working in Wirral.

The report identified that Wirral’s shadow Health and Wellbeing Board had identified this approach as its public health workstream, and with support from the National Leadership Council, had set up a workshop and invited colleagues from all sectors to explore the potential for developing a model which could be tested in Wirral. This workshop had taken place on 20 March 2012 and a report detailing the discussions, and the suggested actions would be presented to a future Health and Wellbeing Board. The key issues debated during the workshop were highlighted in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted, and it be agreed that the direction of travel for this project is, in principle, are in line with the aspirations of the Council in its role as a public health organisation.**

**402 PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSITION**

This report was withdrawn from the agenda for the same reason as the report on the Chief Executive’s Office was withdrawn. (Minute No. 396 refers.)

**403 WELFARE AND DEBT ADVICE SERVICES**

A report by the Director of Finance set out the work undertaken at the Council’s One Stop Shops and Libraries in relation to financial advice to residents. It also provided details on the provision of information and advice on fuel tariffs and the opening of bank accounts to further improve financial inclusion.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the progress on the delivery of welfare and debt advice services be noted; and**
- (2) the Welfare Rights Unit currently managed by the Department of Adult Social Services be transferred to the Finance Department.**

**404 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN CONTACTS**

A report by the Director of Finance informed the Cabinet of the number and nature of requests for information received under the Freedom of Information Act and contacts made by the Local Government Ombudsman service, recommended a regular reporting procedure.

The report did not provide the detail on internal reviews or on responses that were outside the legal time frame. Nor did the report set out the reasons for delays and dates when replies were expected to be sent. It was considered that qualitative information must be included in the report so that the Cabinet could monitor performance.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and**
- (2) a similar report be submitted to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis to include the additional information set out above.**

**405 LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY**

A report by the Chief Executive updated the Cabinet on the progress made in planning activities for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay visiting Wirral on 1 June 2012.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**406 WIRRAL POSITIVE FUTURES PROJECT**

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided the Cabinet with an update on the work of the Wirral's Sports Development Unit and, in particular, the Positive Futures Project and sought its endorsement for the proposed activity for 2012/13 as agreed in the Council budget for 2012/13.

The following activity was proposed for the additional allocation of £50,000 approved by Council for 2012/13 which will enable the project to extend its work:

- Purchase of a transit van complete with telescopic lighting capabilities and generator to floodlight an area of land in the evening allowing organised sports to take place. The mobile sports unit would operate in Parks and multiuse games areas in the evenings at weekends to engage young people. **Cost £20,000**
- Employment of a Positive Futures Assistant Activity Mentor to work alongside Colin Hunt, full time to develop and enhance targeted sports activities and increase volunteering and coaching opportunities for vulnerable young people. The post would be for one year predominantly in the evenings and at weekends in areas of most need. **Cost £22,000**
- Training budget for up to 40 targeted young people enabling them to qualify as sports instructors and be ready for employment on Sports Development and other Sports & Recreation schemes. **Cost £8,000.**

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) **the work of Wirral's Sports Development Unit and, in particular, the Positive Futures Project be noted; and**
- (2) **the proposed activity for 2012/13 outlined above be endorsed.**

407 **FINDINGS OF THE WIRRAL VISITOR RESEARCH STUDY - CONDUCTED IN 2011 TO SUPPORT WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES**

A report by the Chief Executive summarised the key findings of both current and potential visitors' perceptions of Wirral, and highlighted feedback from the Wirral Tourism Business Network, regarding the Council's Destination Marketing team's ongoing support and current performance. It also recommended future activity based on these findings, to help achieve visitor growth, generate spend and encourage long-term economic sustainability.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) **the Cabinet notes the findings and conclusions of the Wirral Visitor Research Study, and supports the development of the future Wirral Tourism Marketing Strategy, and annual Implementation Plan. The strategy's objectives will reflect the Study's conclusions to help increase the numbers of visitors to the Borough, encourage visitor spend and support the needs of Wirral's growing tourism businesses; and**
- (2) **the Cabinet would like to congratulate the pioneering work of the Wirral Tourism Business Network and the Council's own Destination Marketing team. The value of tourism and the substantial increase over the past five years is a reflection of their combined commitment, hard work and innovation. Special thanks are passed to the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Tourism Business Network and its six Partnerships (i.e. Accommodation, attractions, coast, food and drink,**

**golf and history and heritage), and their dedication and energy is applauded and celebrated by all within Wirral Council.**

**408 PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE INCLUDING PROPOSED WORKFORCE WORKING PRACTICES PILOT INITIATIVE**

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided the Cabinet with a progress update on the Parks Modernisation Project and sought endorsement for the proposed Workforce Working Practices Pilot initiative agreed with Trade Union representatives.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Progress Update provided in section 3.0 of the report be noted; and**
- (2) the proposed Workforce Working Practices Pilot initiative agreed with Trade Union representatives described in section 4.0 of the report be endorsed.**

**409 PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES MODERNISATION PROJECT - PLANT AND EQUIPMENT CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

A report by the Director of Technical Services sought approval for the proposed plant and equipment capital investment programme to modernise the Parks and Countryside Service.

The Parks and Countryside Service Modernisation Project was a complex multi-disciplinary project with the purpose of establishing a modern, cost effective and efficient service comparable to that offered by the private sector by spring 2013.

**An Outline Delivery Plan was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 24 November 2011 (Minute No. 205 refers) and has been set out under four key workstreams all reporting to a Project Board:**

- Policy, Processes and Performance
- Human Resources
- Assets
- Communication and Engagement

A progress report on the modernisation of the service and achievement of the Delivery Plan has also been considered at this Cabinet meeting. (Minute No. 404 refers)

At the Cabinet meeting on 12 January 2012 approval was given to use £500,000 of the existing Capital Programme allocation for Cultural Services assets to purchase plant and equipment necessary to deliver the Highways Grounds Maintenance aspect of the Parks and Countryside Service from 1 February 2012 (Minute No. 261 refers).

This report now sought approval for a comprehensive programme of investment in plant and equipment to enable the modernisation and continuous improvement of the Parks and Countryside Service.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) subject to the agreement of the Council:**
  - (a) the proposed Plant and Equipment Capital Investment Programme outlined in the report be approved;**
  - (b) the corresponding amendment of the Council's Capital Programme be approved;**
- (2) the report be referred to Council for ratification;**
- (3) officers be thanked for their hard work on this project; and**
- (4) the Deputy Director of Technical Services be instructed to prepare a note on the project costs for Councillor J Green.**

**410 THE READER ORGANISATION**

A report by the Director of Finance set out the work undertaken by the Council and The Reader Organisation as part of the Get into Reading initiative. The Cabinet was informed that the 2012/13 Budget identified a sum of £100,000 for this initiative. The report detailed the work delivered with similar funding in 2011/12.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**411 LIBRARIES CHAMPION**

A report by the Director of Finance sought the approval of Members to appoint a Libraries Champion in response to the proposal made in the 2012/13 Budget.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Council be recommended to appoint Councillor D McCubbin as Libraries Champion.**

**412 UPDATE ON AREA APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS - BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD**

A report by the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning sought authorisation to proceed with the demolition of ten buildings in Belmont, Birkenhead acquired by the Council and updated Members on the overall progress of the Belmont area appraisal.

The action supported ongoing work to seek the longer term comprehensive regeneration of the Belmont area, in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Members were informed that Demolition would reduce both the Council's liability of ongoing security and maintenance and exposure to risk through anti-social behaviour, vandalism and theft. They noted that Demolition was not a statutory duty.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the demolition of numbers 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 20 Belmont, Birkenhead be approved;**
- (2) officers be authorised to consider additional demolition of the remaining nine units should any further agreements to acquire houses be reached; and**
- (3) the progress with the area appraisal be noted, pending a further report detailing a more comprehensive regeneration proposal for the Belmont area as a whole.**

**413 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - AFFORDABILITY AND MORTGAGES INCLUDING FIRST TIME BUYERS**

The Cabinet considered Minute No. 50 – Affordability and Mortgages Including First Time Buyers (and the corresponding report) - which was referred to it by the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee following its meeting held on 8 March 2012 as follows:

'The Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning submitted a report which updated the Committee on the current situation regarding housing market support, the availability of mortgages and which gave an analysis of how these issues were affecting Wirral. It also set out an overview of Government programmes and the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme which were available to support and enable sustainable home ownership.

Responding to comments from Members, the Director and Lisa Newman, Housing Strategy Manager, gave further details on how the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme would work. 22 local authorities had launched the scheme so far and there had been no defaults. There was a risk as with all such schemes but some members expressed the view that the risk would only be if house prices went down and the risk was minimal although the benefits could be high.

Resolved –

- (1) That Committee notes the contribution of the range of programmes/ packages to assist home buyers, including first time buyers and the Affordable Homes Programme Framework, to support home ownership in Wirral.**

- (2) That Committee notes the issues relating to the housing and mortgage markets and the potential value and risks identified with operating a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme.
- (3) That Committee asks Cabinet to consider the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Cabinet thanks the Economy and Regeneration Committee for this referral and instructs the Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning to undertake further work on the establishment of a Local Authority Mortgage Scheme to assist first time buyers in Wirral, reporting back to a future meeting of the Cabinet. This further work should take on board lessons learned from pilot areas operating Local Authority Mortgage Schemes and include the development of options outlining how this and other schemes could be implemented in Wirral, identifying the funds that would need to be made available, both for investment and as a reasonable provision to mitigate against the risks of repossession.**

**414 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Further to Minute No.117 of the Council meeting held on 1 March 2010 which set out a £1.1M four year programme relating to the provision of 20mph speed limits in residential areas within Wirral, a report by the Director of Technical Services was presented to the Cabinet. The commitment to this initiative had been reiterated in a Council Notice of Motion in July 2011 and in the 2012/13 Budget approved by Council on 1 March 2012 (Minute No. 131 refers).

The Director, in his report, sought approval for the key principles and timetable for the project and requested authority to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012.

The report also sought approval for the use of an external consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to support the delivery of the whole £1.1M project if required. The Cabinet was also asked to endorse the provision of further funding in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of the initiative as well as recognising the need for revenue growth in the future to cover the future maintenance liabilities associated with the project.

The Cabinet emphasised the need to provide proper permanent signage and instructed that signage that fitted into the area must be used in this initiative. Members informed that local people in local areas knew where the problem areas were and asked Officers to work with communities at the Area Forums to identify these. The Cabinet also asked Officers to consult Councils elsewhere in the Country in order to identify best practice that could be used for this project.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) **the key principles and timetable for the project as described in section 3.0 of the report be approved;**

- (2) the proposal to allocate a further £275k for this project in each of the years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to complete the roll-out of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas be endorsed;
- (3) the use of external traffic management consultant resource up to a maximum value of £150k to deliver the whole £1.1M project, if required, as described in section 3.7 of the report be approved;
- (4) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to progress the necessary procurement process to secure a suitable tenderer to undertake the works commencing in October 2012; and
- (5) the principle of a future allocation of £100k per annum revenue growth from 2014/15 onwards, subject to a further report to a future Cabinet meeting regarding the maintenance liabilities associated with the project be endorsed.

415 **LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF) - 2011/12 PROGRESS REPORT AND 2012/13 PROGRAMME**

On 24 November 2011 the Cabinet had approved the acceptance of £810,000 of Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) from Merseytravel to deliver the 'Key Component' project. This funding, provided over a four year period 2011/12 – 2014/15, was allocated to assist the Council to support residents of East Wirral to access employment opportunities, as well as encouraging the use of sustainable transport in order to contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the Borough.

At the Cabinet's meeting on 24 November 2011 it was resolved that Officers would report back to a future meeting on the progress in delivering the 'Key Component' projects and provide detailed plans for 2012/13 onwards.

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided the Cabinet with a review of the successful delivery of Year 1 of the project and sought authority to continue delivery of the 'Key Component' Project as detailed in Section 4.0 of the report.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the success of Wirral Council Officers in successfully delivering Year 1 of the LSTF Key Component Project be noted;
- (2) the detailed proposals for 2012/13, as set out in Section 4.0 of the report, be approved and Officers be requested to report progress on the delivery of the 2012/13 programme and on detailed plans for 2013/14 onwards to a meeting in early 2013; and
- (3) Officers be requested to report to a future meeting of the Cabinet on the outcome of the decision by the Department for Transport with regard to the submission of the business case for the large bid. (This decision is expected in summer 2012.)

#### 416 **ENVIRONMENTAL STREETSCENE SERVICES CONTRACT FINANCIAL REVIEW**

A report by the Director of Technical Services referred to recent amendments to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to include a requirement that all financial variations (of over £50K for the life of the contract) be reported to the Cabinet. The report summarised all relevant financial variations to the Environmental Streetscene Services Contract that had been authorised by the Cabinet, from the inception of the contract in August 2006. The Contract had been awarded to Biffa on 8 May 2006 (Minute No. 598 refers).

The report also highlighted an adjustment required to the 2011 - 2012 waste collection and disposal budget in order to fully fund the waste disposal and treatment costs of all waste collected from Council run premises. The Cabinet approved an initial estimate of £70,000 on 22 February 2010. The additional growth of £53,000, now required in the Technical Services Waste budget, would be offset by a corresponding reduced waste levy requirement.

The Cabinet was requested to approve the Property Count Uplift applicable from 2011/12.

**RESOLVED: That subject to the agreement of the Council:**

- (1) the budget growth for 2012/13 onwards totalling £14,100 associated with the Property Count Uplift adjustment as described in section 3.2 of this report be approved;**
- (2) the budget growth for 2012/13 of £53,000 to fully fund the disposal and treatment costs of the Council's own waste arisings as detailed in section 4 of the report be approved; and**
- (3) all financial variations to the Environmental Streetscene Contract over the value of £50,000, in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules 16A.2 and 16A.3, as detailed in section 6 of the report, be noted.**

#### 417 **THE FLOOD AND WATER ACT 2010 - NEW POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided details of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 which had established Wirral Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The Director explained that LLFA's was required to lead the strategic management of local flood risk arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

The Cabinet was advised that the statutory responsibilities attached to the LLFA role, placed substantial new duties on the Council in managing flood risk and this would require the introduction of new policies for:

- flood investigations
- a flood risk asset register

In addition, clarity was required in making decisions in supporting communities in planning for, or during, flooding, and a policy was also now proposed for sandbag provision

**RESOLVED:**

**That policies relating to the following be approved:**

- **flood investigations;**
- **the flood risk asset register; and**
- **the provision of sandbags**

**418 AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Cabinet was reminded that in order to comply with best professional practice, the Audit and Risk Management Committee was required to complete and present to it an annual report on the work it had undertaken.

A report by the Chief Internal Auditor detailed the work undertaken by the Audit and Risk Management Committee. Attached at Appendix A to the report was the Annual Report prepared by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee in consultation with Internal Audit and agreed by the Audit and Risk Management Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2012.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**419 CHURCH ROAD (TRANMERE) HMRI ACQUISITION OF 25A SEYMOUR STREET AND 41 CHURCH ROAD**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management sought approval of the acquisition of two commercial properties included within the Church Road (Tranmere) Housing Market Renewal Initiative Area. The Appendix to the report contained information relating to the financial and business affairs of third parties, and was therefore not for publication (Minute No. 427 refers).

The Cabinet was advised that following the acquisition and subsequent demolition of these properties, the site would be redeveloped to help achieve the corporate goal of providing new and affordable homes. There was a target of 200 new homes across the Borough in 2011/2014.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the acquisitions be completed on the terms set out in the reported.**

420 **ROCK FERRY LIBRARY AND ONE STOP SHOP - SCHEME AND ESTIMATE REPORT**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management sought approval to obtain tenders for the works to allow a merged service to operate from the Rock Ferry Centre. Whilst the project was not a statutory duty, it would enable more efficient delivery of the services provided at the Centre.

The Cabinet was advised that the project was fully in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Plan, in that it helped maximise the future use of the building, and would support the Corporate Priorities.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to obtain tenders for the works as described in the report.

421 **CROSS LANE, WALLASEY - WEST WALLASEY VAN HIRE**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management set out for the Cabinet an approach from West Wallasey Van Hire who sought the relaxation of a requirement to cease van storage on two sites currently in their ownership, located at Mill Lane and Wallasey Village, and sought its views.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the request now reported from West Wallasey Van Hire for the removal of restrictions due to take effect upon completion of the sale of land at Cross Lane, Wallasey and affecting the future use of the company's sites in Mill Lane and Wallasey Village be approved; and
- (2) the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to complete the necessary legal documentation.

422 **URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR - DISPOSAL OF FORMER CARE HOME, MEADOWCROFT, 304 SPITAL ROAD, BROMBOROUGH**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management sought urgent consent to dispose of a former care home, Meadowcroft, 304 Spital Road Bromborough to Age UK Wirral. The Cabinet was told that proposal was in support of the Council's goal of creating an excellent Council by improving the use of the Council's land and assets. The sale of the asset would result in a capital receipt.

The building was no longer required for operational purposes and Age UK Wirral had submitted detailed proposals for reuse of the building, which would offer a variety of services for the benefit of the local community and Wirral Residents.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Meadowcroft, 304 Spital Road, Bromborough be disposed of in accordance with the terms set out in this report.**

**423 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management on the return on investment in respect of the Masters in Business Administration MBA Qualification which had been referred to it by the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2012.

The Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee had resolved:

‘That

- (1) the Cabinet be requested to note the significant concerns expressed by the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the MBA Programme, in particular –
  - (i). that it had not had regard to any comparative information on leadership development programmes from other local authorities;
  - (ii). that the skills and knowledge gained by managers who have completed the training programme have not been fully utilised;
  - (iii). that value for money has not been demonstrated;
  - (iv). that had the Cabinet seen the report now presented, it may have made a more informed decision.
- (2) a further more detailed report be presented to the next appropriate meeting, to address the concerns highlighted in (1) above, and to include also, details of the training budget and the percentage of that budget utilised by the provision of the MBA Programme.’

**RESOLVED:**

**That the concerns of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted and the further report be awaited.**

**424 TACKLING DOG FOULING IN WIRRAL**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided information for the Cabinet in respect of the strategy and associated activity to be undertaken by the Dog Fouling Enforcement Team and partners aimed at preventing and controlling dog fouling in Wirral.

The report sought the endorsement of the Cabinet for a zero tolerance approach to the enforcement of dog fouling infringements.

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management agreed to come back to Councillor I Lewis with an answer to his question on whether or not the names of those who had received a fixed penalty notice in respect of dog fouling were put in the public domain.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the actions and approach to dog fouling be noted and a zero tolerance approach to the enforcement of dog fouling be endorsed; and**
- (2) The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management prepare a further report for the Cabinet, setting out options for the possible introduction of Dog Exclusion Orders in designated areas, such as children's play areas. This report to include:**
  - (a) a summary of discussions and learning from other areas that already enforce Dog Exclusion Orders;**
  - (b) proposals for consultation with parents and children who use Council owned play areas, dog owners, and other local residents about striking the right balance between the interests of dog owners and the interests of those affected by the activities of dogs; and**
  - (c) proposals for engaging with schools and community groups about promoting Dog Exclusion Orders in future, if the proposal was taken forward.**

**425 COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012/2013**

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management recommended dates for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2012/2013. The draft Calendar of Meetings was attached as Appendix A to the report. The report also described various issues that had been taken into account in compiling this draft Calendar of Meetings.

Members considered that neither Council nor Committee meetings should be held in April, during purdah (the pre election period), when election campaigns were underway. Council elections were held in three out of every four years. Although, there were no Council elections in May 2013 it was considered that Council and Cabinet meetings should not be scheduled in April so that this new discipline could be brought into force and so that the Calendar of meetings could then be rolled forward each year and follow a similar pattern to that of the previous year.

Members also noted that there were very few meetings scheduled between June and September and considered that this was too big of a gap.

**RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to:**

- (1) consider the comments made by the Cabinet; and**

- (2) ask Officers, in the light of the Cabinet's comments, to amend the draft Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2012/2013 accordingly, for consideration and adoption at its Annual Meeting.

426 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

427 **EXEMPT APPENDIX**

The Cabinet noted the detail of the exempt appendix to:

- (a) Agenda Item No. 11 on the agenda - Tackling Worklessness and Supporting Apprentices in Wirral – that detailed financial information for all activities as outlined in the report (Minute No. 387 refers);
- (b) Agenda Item No. 22 on the agenda – Banking Services – that set out the details of the procurement exercise undertaken to select a provider of banking services to the Council (Minute No. 398 refers); and.
- (c) Agenda Item No. 43 on the agenda – Church Road (Tranmere) HMRI Acquisition of 25A Seymour Street and 41 Church Road – that detailed compensation payable and agreed;(Minute No. 419 refers)