



Council

Town Hall
Wallasey

3 February, 2012

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.15 pm or 10 minutes after the rising of the second extraordinary meeting, whichever is the later, on Monday, 13 February 2012** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects :

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AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Council are invited to consider whether they have a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

2. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive the Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence

3. PETITIONS

To receive petitions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 21

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 46)

To receive as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12 December, 2011.

5. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 47 - 50)

In accordance with Article 7.3 (iii) (d) of the Council's Constitution, the Council is requested to consider the attached two motions.

6. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

7. MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL (Pages 51 - 62)

To consider matters referred to the Council for determination. The relevant minutes will be attached to the supplementary agenda; copies of the related reports can be provided for Council members on request.

In accordance with Standing Order 7(1), these matters will be taken as approved except in respect of any to which objections or amendments are submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2).

Any matters referred to the Council by Cabinet at its meeting on 2 February, 2012, including:

- (i) Draft Corporate Plan 2012/13 (See also Motion deferred from the Council meeting on 12 December, 2011 – attached) (In accordance with the Council resolution (minute 76 refers) the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the Corporate Plan are also attached)
- (ii) Enterprise Zone – Business Rates Discounts
- (iii) Local Development Framework for Wirral – Evidence Base
- (iv) Housing Market Renewal Transitional Funding Bid Including Proposed Exit Plan and Suggested Amended Housing Investment Programme for 2011/12
- (v) Appointment of Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures
- (vi) Local Transport Settlement – Additional Funding: Integrated Transport Block (ITB) 2011/12
- (vii) Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy

Any matters referred to Council by the Improvement Board at its inaugural meeting on 3 February, 2012.

8. MATTERS FOR NOTING (Pages 63 - 68)

The following matters, determined by the Cabinet, are drawn to the Council's attention in accordance with the Constitution (copies of the related reports can be provided for Council members on request).

- (i) Minute 259 (12/1/12) – Report on Visit to China – September / October 2011
- (ii) Matters potentially to be referred to the Council by Cabinet at its meeting on 2 February, 2012 include:
 - Action Plan in Response to the Independent Review of Claims Made by Martin Morton (and others) [Reason – proposed waiving of call-in in respect of the establishment and first meeting of the Improvement Board]

9. QUESTIONS

To deal with questions from councillors and from members of the public, in accordance with Standing Order 11.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION (Pages 69 - 74)

Notice has been given, in accordance with Standing Order 8(1), of motions on the following subjects. They are listed in the order received, and the full text of each motion is attached.

1. Improving Transparency and Accountability of Severance Deals
2. Libraries Pay the Price for Parks
3. Failure to Act
4. Freemasonry
5. National Citizen Service
6. Council Tax
7. Benefits Cap
8. National Cuts

11. MATTERS FOR DEBATE

Pursuant to Standing Order 5(2)(n), and in accordance with Standing Order 5(4), to consider written comments, objections or amendments to minutes submitted under Standing Order 7(2), together with those motions, submitted under item 11 above, that the Council agrees to debate at this meeting and any minority reports submitted in accordance with Standing Order 35(4).

12. VACANCIES

To receive nominations, in accordance with Standing Order 25(6), in respect of any proposed changes in the membership of the Cabinet and committees, and to approve nominations for appointments to outside organisations.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To consider any other items of business that the Mayor accepts as being urgent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. M.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

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COUNCIL

Monday, 12 December 2011

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Moira McLaughlin) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Gerry Ellis)

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

Apologies Councillor J Hale

65 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Bernard McConnell, led the Council in prayers.

The Mayor advised the Council that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor John Hale. She referred also to the recent death of Peter James McCarthy, former Labour Councillor for Park Ward, Bebington County Borough Council, 1972-74 and for Bebington Ward, Wirral Council, 1974 – 1980.

The Mayor referred also to the recent Your Champions awards held in Chester, at which Wirral had five nominees: Lance Corporal Alan Redford; Ryan Hanlon; Ken McDermott; Abigail Snowden; and Calday Grange Grammar School. Two of the five nominees had won awards in their categories. Lance Corporal Alan Redford of the Mercian Regiment had been named Regional Community Champion; and Ryan Hanlon from Rock Ferry had been named Regional Sports Champion. The Mayor said that she would be inviting all five nominees to a reception to formally recognise their achievements.

66 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors R Abbey, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, D Dodd, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Glasman, J Green, P Hackett, A Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A McArdle, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, C Meaden, B Mooney, L Rowlands, J Salter, H Smith, T Smith, J Stapleton, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, and J Williams, declared their personal interest in Motion 14 (Fairness, Not Favours) (see minute 89 post) by virtue of their membership of a trade union.

Councillor I Lewis declared a personal interest in Motion 21 (Education, Education, Education) (see minute 95 post) by virtue of him being a school governor.

Councillor S Clarke declared a personal interest in Motion 3 (Adoption: Being the Best Corporate Parents) (see minute 79 post) by virtue of her membership of the Fostering and Adoption Panel.

Councillor L Rennie declared a personal interest in Motion 16 (Cuts to Local Transport Plan) (see minute 91 post) by virtue of her appointment on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

67 **PETITIONS**

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

Councillor L Rennie, on behalf of 92 signatories requesting the Council to carry out a full road safety review around St Georges Primary School (upper site) on Claremount Road, Wallasey.

Councillor S Whittingham, on behalf of 58 signatories requesting repairs to the damaged verges and roundabout on Ackers Road, Woodchurch and measures to prevent future damage.

Councillor H Smith, on behalf of approximately 600 signatories requesting the Council to implement a 20mph speed limit in residential areas in Pensby and Thingwall surrounding Pensby Primary and Ladymount School.

Resolved - That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate chief officer in accordance with Standing Order 34.

68 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 11 and 17 October, 2011, had been circulated to members and it was –

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

69 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor S Foulkes, addressed the Council on the following matters –

- He expressed his thanks to the Mayor, the Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups and everybody involved in the recent successful visit of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton.
- He referred to the current radical review of corporate governance procedures and the need to have the Corporate Plan in place. It was important to show this could be done in a timely manner, with all groups working together around a joint vision. He understood that both opposition parties would like to see the Plan go through the scrutiny process and would therefore be moving an amendment to an objection to suggest the plan be considered by a special meeting of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to coming back before the Council by 9 January, 2012.

70 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 7(1) a number of matters were submitted for approval by the Council.

Three matters from the Cabinet on 8 December, 2011, minute 210 (Corporate Plan 2012/13), minute 215 (Capital Programme and Financing 2012/15) and minute 216 (Budget Projections 2012-15), were submitted for approval but were the subject of objections (see minutes 77, 78, 93 and 97 below).

On a motion by Councillor S Foulkes and seconded by Councillor P Davies, it was -

Resolved – That the following matters be approved:

- (i) **Minute 175 (Cabinet – 3/11/11) - Provision for Inflation 2012/13.**
- (ii) **Minute 198 (Cabinet – 24/11/11) - Insurance Fund Budget 2012/13.**
- (iii) **Minute 211 – (Cabinet – 8/12/11) - Council Tax Base 2012/13.**

71 **MATTERS FOR NOTING**

Resolved – That the following matter be noted, as required by the constitution:

Minute 232 (Cabinet - 8/12/11) - Local Account (Reason – waiving of call-in).

72 **QUESTIONS**

Mr J Brace, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on the AKA (Anna Klonowksi Associates Ltd) report.

The Leader of the Council responded accordingly.

The following Councillors, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11 submitted questions on the topics listed:

- (i) Councillor Pat Williams to Councillor Harry Smith (20mph zones)

(ii) Councillor Ann Bridson to Councillor Ron Abbey (Bidston – Wrexham rail line train stations)

(iii) Councillor Phil Gilchrist to Councillor Adrian Jones (Office accommodation)

The Councillors responded accordingly.

Councillor J Green then, in accordance with Standing Order 11, asked the Leader of the Council a general question in relation to disclosure of information. The Mayor suggested that Councillor Green should put his question in writing to the Leader of the Council.

Councillor J Green then tried to ask a supplementary question which the Mayor, having taken advice from the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, ruled was out of order.

73 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

The matters listed for debate in accordance with Standing Order 5(2) (n) were dealt with as indicated in minutes 75 to 97 below.

74 **PROCEDURE**

It was moved by Councillor W Davies and duly seconded, that -

“Standing Order 7(8) be applied from 8.00pm.”

It was moved as an amendment by Councillor S Kelly and duly seconded that –

“Standing Order 7(8) be applied at the end of the debate on the third motion.”

The amendment was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved – That Standing Order 7(8) be applied at the end of the debate on the third motion.

75 **MOTION: POLICIES AFFECTING WOMEN**

Proposed by Councillor Bernie Mooney
Seconded by Councillor Chris Jones

(1) This Council calls on the coalition government to reconsider a number of policies which are disproportionately affecting women. These policies appear to have been developed without any form of equality assessment of risk to women, these include:

- (i) Job cuts in the public sector
- (ii) Female unemployment at a 23-year-high
- (iii) Changes to the benefit system affecting childcare
- (iv) Changes to the NHS
- (v) The appalling state of care for the elderly
- (vi) Education and student fees

- (vii) Food price inflation
- (viii) Price of petrol
- (ix) Changes to pensions
- (x) The whole direction of the deficit reduction programme and its effect on day to day life

- (2) Council calls on David Cameron to stop trying to simply appeal to women voters with populist policies such as offering caesarean section to all who want it.
- (3) Council believes that if the coalition puts women's rights and issues at the heart of policy formation and development they may not look so arrogant and out of touch with the needs of female voters.

Following a debate and Councillor Mooney having replied, the motion was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

76 **MOTION: COUNCIL PROCESSES AND PURPOSE**

The Mayor stated that this notice of motion would be debated in conjunction with the two objections received to minute 210 (Cabinet – 8/12/11) (see minutes 77 and 78 post).

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) Council notes the ongoing activity to improve the Council's Corporate Governance processes.
- (2) Council believes that as the activity to improve its processes continues it becomes even more important to restate our purpose.
- (3) Council therefore commits itself to the following principles:
 - A commitment to making Wirral a bigger and stronger society.
 - Creating the environment and developing the skills needed to make Wirral a place where local employers succeed and businesses choose to invest – an economy with high levels of private sector employment, which retains and attracts our young people and provides the job opportunities for all to realise their full potential.
 - Placing the views of Wirral, residents, employers, Community and Voluntary groups at the heart of all we do, providing opportunities for people to improve their neighbourhoods, lives and those of their families, ensuring that no part of Wirral is ignored.
 - Actively supporting the Coalition Government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020, providing support services to children, young people and their families that help to alleviate the effects of poverty and, in the long term, break inter-generational cycles of deprivation.

- Providing services that meet the needs and aspirations of all Wirral people, fostering a real pride in the borough, ensuring high standards of cleanliness, environmental protection and public safety, creating a clean, safe and sustainable environment.
- Working everyday to keep children and vulnerable people safe and tackle the gross inequalities in health and education outcomes experienced by our residents. Services provided for our most vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded citizens, wherever they may live, should be founded on fairness, raise aspirations, promote choice and improve quality of life.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes
 Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

Add the following:

Council notes the principles set out in this motion and recognises that they have already been incorporated in the re-refresh of the Corporate Plan agreed by Cabinet on the 8th December.

Council is concerned that a number of the principles included in the list in this motion, eg. ending child poverty and creating a sustainable environment, have been made more difficult to achieve as a direct result of the announcements in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement and the coalition government's draconian cuts to local government budgets.

In accordance with Standing Order 9(q), the following motion was put:

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
 Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

That the motion be deferred to the next Full Council meeting and that, in the meantime, the motion is referred to all the Council's OSCs for consideration, alongside the draft Corporate Plan. That the views of the OSCs on the motion be included in the report to the next Council on the Corporate Plan.

In connection with the Liberal Democrat objection to minute 210 (Cabinet – 8/12/11) an amendment was then moved, in accordance with Standing Order 9(p), by Councillor Steve Foulkes and seconded by Councillor Phil Davies (see minute 77 post).

The Mayor then adjourned the meeting at 7.50pm to enable consideration of Councillor Foulkes' amendment.

The meeting reconvened at 8.00pm.

Following a debate, Councillor Green having replied in respect of the notice of motion and Councillor Foulkes having replied in respect of the objections to minute 210 (Cabinet - 8/12/11), the amendment proposed by Councillor Foulkes to the motion was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The motion of Councillor Harney was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council notes the ongoing activity to improve the Council's Corporate Governance processes.**
- (2) Council believes that as the activity to improve its processes continues it becomes even more important to restate our purpose.**
- (3) Council therefore commits itself to the following principles:**
 - **A commitment to making Wirral a bigger and stronger society.**
 - **Creating the environment and developing the skills needed to make Wirral a place where local employers succeed and businesses choose to invest – an economy with high levels of private sector employment, which retains and attracts our young people and provides the job opportunities for all to realise their full potential.**
 - **Placing the views of Wirral, residents, employers, Community and Voluntary groups at the heart of all we do, providing opportunities for people to improve their neighbourhoods, lives and those of their families, ensuring that no part of Wirral is ignored.**
 - **Actively supporting the Coalition Government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020, providing support services to children, young people and their families that help to alleviate the effects of poverty and, in the long term, break inter-generational cycles of deprivation.**
 - **Providing services that meet the needs and aspirations of all Wirral people, fostering a real pride in the borough, ensuring high standards of cleanliness, environmental protection and public safety, creating a clean, safe and sustainable environment.**
 - **Working everyday to keep children and vulnerable people safe and tackle the gross inequalities in health and education outcomes experienced by our residents. Services provided for our most vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded citizens, wherever they may live, should be founded on fairness, raise aspirations, promote choice and improve quality of life.**

That the motion be deferred to the next Full Council meeting and that, in the meantime, the motion is referred to all the Council's OSCs for consideration, alongside the draft Corporate Plan. That the views of the OSCs on the motion be included in the report to the next Council on the Corporate Plan.

77 **OBJECTION: MINUTE 210 (CABINET - 8 DECEMBER, 2011) - CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13 - UPDATE**

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

- (1) That a decision on the Corporate Plan be postponed and deferred to the next Full Council meeting and that, in the meantime, the Corporate Plan is referred to all the Council's OSCs for scrutiny. In line with Article 6 of the Constitution, OSCs to consider those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of each committee, with Council Excellence OSC carrying out its coordinating role in line with Clause 23 of the Constitution relating to Council Excellence, specifically "the overall production of the Corporate Plan." That a report to the next Council be made on the views of the OSCs.
- (2) Council notes that the Corporate Plan was not issued with the Council Summons and therefore elected members have not had sufficient time to consider this important document, nor have they been sufficiently engaged in its development, despite the previous assurances of the Leader of the Council to include OSCs in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 9(p)

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes
Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

In view of the urgent need to agree a Corporate Plan in sufficient time to allow the Departmental Service Plans to follow, and the Council's budget to take proper account of the Corporate Plan and the Departmental Service Plans, in line with agreed Corporate Governance procedures, Council agrees to the calling of a Special Council on Monday 9 January to discuss the Corporate Plan, preceded by a special Cabinet on Thursday 5 January and, with the consent of the Chair a special meeting of the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 3 January, or if necessary an alternative date prior to Thursday 5 January, to refer any recommendations of the committee to Cabinet and from there on to Council.

Council notes that the targets attached to the Corporate Plan will be considered as part of the Corporate Governance work programme to ensure their robustness before being finally attached to the Plan, but is happy for a draft version to be considered by Council Excellence as part of that process.

Following a combined debate and Councillor Foulkes having replied (see minute 76 ante) the amendment was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The objection was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

- (1) That a decision on the Corporate Plan be postponed and deferred to the next Full Council meeting and that, in the meantime, the Corporate Plan is referred to all the Council's OSCs for scrutiny. In line with Article 6 of the Constitution, OSCs to consider those parts of the Corporate Plan within the**

remit of each committee, with Council Excellence OSC carrying out its coordinating role in line with Clause 23 of the Constitution relating to Council Excellence, specifically "the overall production of the Corporate Plan." That a report to the next Council be made on the views of the OSCs.

- (2) Council notes that the Corporate Plan was not issued with the Council Summons and therefore elected members have not had sufficient time to consider this important document, nor have they been sufficiently engaged in its development, despite the previous assurances of the Leader of the Council to include OSCs in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework.

78 **OBJECTION: MINUTE 210 (CABINET - 8 DECEMBER, 2011) - CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13 - UPDATE**

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council recognises the difference between a wish list (however many good intentions the list espouses) and a plan is the presence of objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound. Council notes that the new corporate plan sent to it by the administration for endorsement has 13 pages of commentary, 75 wishes and a complete lack of specific activities to be undertaken, dates by when they will be completed or how success will be measured.

Council believes that the lack of clarity and rigour in the plan, as now presented, will lead to confusion regarding how departmental plans can best be configured to contribute to clear Council objectives and lead to a return of the silo approach to service delivery and problem solving.

Council notes the definition of good corporate governance includes reference to inclusive, consultative and transparent decision making and therefore regrets that the development of the new corporate plan, sent to it by the administration for agreement, has not been inclusive, consultative or transparent.

Council therefore refuses to adopt the new Corporate Plan in its current state and recommends, in the absence of a meaningful public consultation exercise this year, that:

- (1) The administration seeks the views of all relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Council partners.
- (2) Any comments received are transparently evaluated by the Cabinet.
- (3) Following (1) & (2) above, a more robust plan containing SMART objectives is resubmitted to a future Council.

Following a combined debate and Councillor Foulkes having replied (see minute 76 ante) it was –

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) - That the objection be approved.

MOTION: ADOPTION - BEING THE BEST CORPORATE PARENTS

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston
Seconded by Councillor Pat Williams

Council:

- (1) Congratulates the Acting Director of Children's Services and his staff on the achievement of the "performing excellently" rating from Ofsted in relation to the quality of children's services in Wirral and believes that this is fair recognition for the work undertaken over the past few years to ensure that the council provides the highest level of service possible for children and young people in our community.
- (2) Notes that Wirral Council currently looks after 679 children (102 children per 100,000 population - the 5th highest in the North West). The recent release of the Children in Care Performance tables from DfE show that, as an average for the 3 year period 2008-2010, Wirral Council is ranked 105th out of 143 authorities in terms of percentage of children (69%) who are adopted within 12 months of the decision being taken that adoption is the best route.
- (3) Recognises that there can be many complex and different reasons why adoption placements can sometimes take longer than 12 months, such as large sibling groups or complex health needs. In these circumstances the stability of placement is critical and Wirral has a good record in this area with just 1 unplanned ending out of 24 placements in the year to May 2011. Ofsted's Adoption inspection report of June 2011 noted, "The very low disruption rate indicates that children are appropriately matched with their adoptive parents".
- (4) Welcomes the recommendations of the Government's recent Family Justice Review, particularly those that focus on tackling delays in the family justice system.
- (5) Believes that, in those circumstances where the risk to a child is too great for that child to remain in the care of his or her natural family, adoption is normally the best opportunity of securing positive life chances for that child, particularly if the adoption can happen in the child's first few years.
- (6) Further, believes that the current system can be too slow to recognise where adoption is the preferred option and then take swift action to ensure that adoption is speedy and suitable in those cases.
- (7) Therefore, instructs the Acting Director of Children's Services to bring forward a report to the Children and Young People OSC setting out:
 - (i) How decisions around the adoption system are made (including the approval processes for prospective adoptive parents) and how they might be speeded up and improved for those children in care where adoption is likely to be the best outcome for providing a stable, permanent home.
 - (ii) An explanation of the relational link between the Fostering and Adoption team, the support provided by foster carers when children move from foster

care to adoption and any weaknesses in process highlighted, with recommendations to improve any issues.

- (iii) An explanation of the impact of the Family Courts on the adoption process, with suggestions given as to how to better work with and strengthen the existing approach by the Merseyside Family Court Justice Council to improve the likelihood of appropriate and timely adoptions, taking account of the recommendations and proposals set out in the Family Justice Review.
- (iv) The potential for further development of a peer mentoring scheme for new adoptive parents to provide more support in the early days of adoption and further reduce the risk of placement failure.

Following a debate and Councillor Johnston having replied, it was –

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

80 MOTION: CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

This Council:

- (1) Welcomes the recommendations in the AKA report regarding corporate governance.
- (2) Supports the steps which have been taken by the administration to begin to implement these recommendations, i.e.
 - (i) Setting up a Cabinet Committee including the Leaders of the opposition groups;
 - (ii) developing a work programme including ten key lines of enquiries based on the AKA report;
 - (iii) inviting all members of the Council to get involved in contributing to the work programme;
 - (iv) Setting up a dedicated Change Team to drive this forward;
 - (v) holding an initial meeting with the Local Government Association to explore external support which is available.
- (3) Records its appreciation to Ms Anna Klonowski for agreeing to provide additional support to enable the Council to put the necessary measures in place to improve our corporate governance and for providing a helpful presentation at the recent members' seminar.
- (4) Re-iterates the importance of elected members putting aside political differences and working together with staff, the public and other key stakeholders to deliver good corporate governance.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Insert an additional paragraph:

- (5) Acknowledges that at the Local Elections in May 2011, the people of Wirral voted that no one political party should run this Council. In order to reflect the wishes of our electorate and work to achieve excellent Corporate Governance the Leader of the Council, if he truly believes that all political differences should be put aside, could mend this 'Broken Council' by immediately forming a Cabinet made up of members from ALL political groups.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Add new paragraph to end:

- (5) However, Council is concerned:
- (i) The current Administration has so far failed to consult the public and carry out meaningful consultation on next year's Budget, leaving the authority at risk of legal challenge.
 - (ii) The current Administration has failed to engage and involve the Council's OSCs in the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, despite previous assurances by the Leader that he would do so.
 - (iii) At the removal of the results of the Budget Simulator from public view from the Council's website after the closure of the Simulator.
 - (iv) The current Administration has repeatedly failed to produce and publish important Cabinet reports in good time, prior to those meetings taking place, reducing the opportunities for elected members to constructively challenge recommendations and performance.
 - (v) Important decisions on governance improvements are being made without full publication of all the relevant information.
 - (vi) That, until the current Administration changes the way it works, poor governance is likely to continue.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment proposed by Councillor Green was put and lost (26:38) (One abstention).

The amendment proposed by Councillor Harney was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

This Council:

- (1) Welcomes the recommendations in the AKA report regarding corporate governance.**
- (2) Supports the steps which have been taken by the administration to begin to implement these recommendations, i.e.**
 - (i) Setting up a Cabinet Committee including the Leaders of the opposition groups;**
 - (ii) developing a work programme including ten key lines of enquiries based on the AKA report;**
 - (iii) inviting all members of the Council to get involved in contributing to the work programme;**
 - (iv) Setting up a dedicated Change Team to drive this forward;**
 - (v) holding an initial meeting with the Local Government Association to explore external support which is available.**
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- (4) Re-iterates the importance of elected members putting aside political differences and working together with staff, the public and other key stakeholders to deliver good corporate governance.**
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 - (ii) The current Administration has failed to engage and involve the Council's OSCs in the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, despite previous assurances by the Leader that he would do so.**
 - (iii) At the removal of the results of the Budget Simulator from public view from the Council's website after the closure of the Simulator.**
 - (iv) The current Administration has repeatedly failed to produce and publish important Cabinet reports in good time, prior to those meetings taking place, reducing the opportunities for elected members to constructively challenge recommendations and performance.**
 - (v) Important decisions on governance improvements are being made without full publication of all the relevant information.**
 - (vi) That, until the current Administration changes the way it works, poor governance is likely to continue.**

81 MOTION: DUTY TO INVOLVE, INFORM AND CONSULT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council notes that at its meeting on 18th July 2011 Council agreed the following resolution:

(1) This Council:

(i) Reaffirms its commitment to enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken, as agreed unanimously by Notice of Motion at Council on 15 February 2010.

(ii) Believes that last year's Wirral's Future consultation, using the task force model and public questionnaire, followed the principles set out in that Notice of Motion to:

- Share the problem or issue and develop broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions;
- Develop a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making, and;
- Improve the use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads.

(iii) Acknowledges the need for consultation to include a strong independent element and recognises the crucial work of the independent task forces - comprised of experts in their thematic fields - and thanks them again for their work.

(iv) Also believes that this approach played a substantial and legitimate role in achieving a balanced Budget for 2011/12 whilst protecting services, cutting the cost of running the Council and ensuring no compulsory redundancies.

(v) Calls on the Leader to:

- Confirm the venues and dates at which the public will have the opportunity to take part and notes that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, the main programme had already been circulated.
- Confirm which organisations, employers, service users and partners are involved in the consultation, noting that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, this information was already available.
- Publish the names of the individuals who have written the questionnaire and the names of those who will consider the responses from the public and notes that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, this information had already been circulated.
- State how many contacts and how many qualitative responses will be considered a 'success', noting his Party's criticism of the contact with more than 40,000 people and 5,500 completed questionnaires in the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010.

(2) Council notes that five months on from passing this resolution the Leader of the Council has still not complied with the content of this resolution.

(3) Therefore Council calls on the Leader of the Council:

- to apologise to Council for ignoring its democratically expressed wishes
- to write to all members of the Council explaining the Council's legal responsibilities to involve, inform and consult on its services with residents and stakeholders and how robust processes of public consultation, before budget decisions are taken, is to be achieved prior to introducing its 2012 – 2013 budget.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Delete all. Replace with:

- (1) Council notes that two extensive Consultations have already taken place this year, one leading to the creation of Neighbourhood Plans, setting out particular priorities for individual neighbourhoods, and the other a Budget Simulation exercise which has given all those who are interested the opportunity to participate in a budget setting exercise, and in so doing to allow an analysis of favoured priorities. Both these exercises will inform the budget setting process.
- (2) Council notes that this is in addition to the widely publicised, if flawed, consultation, which took place last year which again drew conclusions on the priorities of Wirral residents.
- (3) Council is mindful of the guidance in the central government Code of Practice on consultation which refers to the “burden of consultation” and states that “formal consultation should not be entered into lightly”.
- (4) Council is also mindful of the fact that Consultation may well be required where a reduction or change in funding alters the level of service provided and affects third parties, and that there are particular responsibilities where services to people with disabilities are concerned, and that that Consultation would need to be very specific to the service altered and the relevant service users.
- (5) Council notes that, should such a situation arise, the Chief Executive has been granted delegated powers, in consultation with the Leadership of the Council to carry out the relevant consultation.
- (6) Council also notes that, given the upheaval and instability created by last year's budget, including the loss of a fifth of the Council's workforce, which did not form part of any consultation, it is the stated aim of this administration to do all in its power to avoid any further destabilisation or dramatic cuts in services and that its budget will be designed to avoid further trauma if possible.
- (7) Council expresses its concern that the Chancellor's Autumn Statement which seeks a further £15 billion cuts in the Public Sector may well have a serious impact on Local Authority Funding, which is already in a state of crisis, but the timescale of that impact is not yet known.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

Council notes that at its meeting on 18th July 2011 Council agreed the following resolution:

(1) This Council:

(i) Reaffirms its commitment to enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken, as agreed unanimously by Notice of Motion at Council on 15 February 2010.

(ii) Believes that last year's Wirral's Future consultation, using the task force model and public questionnaire, followed the principles set out in that Notice of Motion to:

- **Share the problem or issue and develop broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions;**
- **Develop a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making, and;**
- **Improve the use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads.**

(iii) Acknowledges the need for consultation to include a strong independent element and recognises the crucial work of the independent task forces - comprised of experts in their thematic fields - and thanks them again for their work.

(iv) Also believes that this approach played a substantial and legitimate role in achieving a balanced Budget for 2011/12 whilst protecting services, cutting the cost of running the Council and ensuring no compulsory redundancies.

(v) Calls on the Leader to:

- **Confirm the venues and dates at which the public will have the opportunity to take part and notes that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, the main programme had already been circulated.**
- **Confirm which organisations, employers, service users and partners are involved in the consultation, noting that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, this information was already available.**

- Publish the names of the individuals who have written the questionnaire and the names of those who will consider the responses from the public and notes that, at this stage of the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010, this information had already been circulated.
 - State how many contacts and how many qualitative responses will be considered a 'success', noting his Party's criticism of the contact with more than 40,000 people and 5,500 completed questionnaires in the successful 'Wirral's Future' consultation in 2010.
- (2) Council notes that five months on from passing this resolution the Leader of the Council has still not complied with the content of this resolution.
- (3) Therefore Council calls on the Leader of the Council:
- to apologise to Council for ignoring its democratically expressed wishes
 - to write to all members of the Council explaining the Council's legal responsibilities to involve, inform and consult on its services with residents and stakeholders and how robust processes of public consultation, before budget decisions are taken, is to be achieved prior to introducing its 2012 – 2013 budget.

82 **MOTION: EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS**

Proposed by Councillor Brian Kenny
 Seconded by Councillor Adrian Jones

- (1) This Council is extremely concerned that the Government has announced its intention to give companies greater freedom to sack employees as part of an overhaul of employment laws, to boost economic recovery.
- (2) Council is also concerned at plans to double the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims and to introduce a fee for lodging an employment tribunal claim for unfair dismissal.
- (3) Council believes that it is typical of this Government to claim that the only way to bring unemployment down is to make it easier to sack people and reduce their employment rights.
- (4) Instead of attacking these rights, Council believes that the Government should reverse its disastrous economic policies, which have produced near-record levels of unemployment, and to produce a plan to restore much-needed growth.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Andrew Hodson
 Seconded by Councillor Simon Mountney

Delete all after (1) This Council and insert:

endorses the changes proposed by the Government with regards to Employment rights and it recognises whilst providing protection to employees the system does need to be made simpler for both employers and employees.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Tom Harney

Paragraph (1) – delete “to boost economic recovery”

Delete paragraphs (3) and (4) and insert new paragraph (3):

(3) Council believes that boosting economic growth is not reliant upon changes to employment rights.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment proposed by Councillor Hodson was put and lost (26:38) (One abstention).

The amendment proposed by Councillor Kelly was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

(1) This Council is extremely concerned that the Government has announced its intention to give companies greater freedom to sack employees as part of an overhaul of employment laws.

(2) Council is also concerned at plans to double the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims and to introduce a fee for lodging an employment tribunal claim for unfair dismissal.

(3) Council believes that boosting economic growth is not reliant upon changes to employment rights.

83 MOTION: PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE PROCUREMENT EXERCISE (PACSPE)

Proposed by Councillor David Elderton
Seconded by Councillor Tom Anderson

(1) Council notes with disappointment Cabinet’s decision to ignore the views of the Council’s Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and abandon the Parks & Countryside Procurement Exercise

(2) Council notes that this abandonment will result in the following Corporate Plan target not being met: ‘Successfully deliver the Parks and Countryside Services

Procurement Exercise to enable proposed contract benefits to be achieved by January / February 2012.'

(3) Council expresses its serious concern that when reviewing the Cabinet's decision, the Council's Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee found:

- 'No mention or discussion took place regarding stakeholder management or the views of key stakeholders about the benefits of clear quality improvements that were built into the procurement exercise. In fact, other than the views of the Council Trades Unions, the results of consultation and the views of park users and user groups were not even mentioned by a single Cabinet Member at the meeting'.
- 'No mention was made of the training and development programme for staff and volunteers or the three to six new apprentices to be created as part of PACSPE'.
- 'Insufficient account appeared to be taken of the reduction from costs of £8.1 million per year to £7.4 million per year already achieved by the PACSPE process with the potential to reduce costs by a further very large sum'.
- And that it was 'hard to understand how the Leader of the Council characterised the potential savings as marginal'.

(4) Council is therefore drawn to sharing the conclusions of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that 'the decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract will see the ever decreasing quality of a service starved of investment by this administration which is already characterised by going for the quick fix instead of making the difficult but necessary strategic decisions in the interests of Wirral residents.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Chris Meaden
Seconded by Councillor Chris Jones

Delete all. Replace with:

Council re-iterates the position outlined in the resolution carried by the Cabinet on November 3rd (Minute 173) and reminds members again of:

- The seriousness of the qualification by the District Auditor of the Council's Value for Money Statement.
- The warning that members should be aware of the increased risk of letting a ten year contract if there is only very limited information on the costs and activity levels of the existing service against which to monitor whether or not the new contract provides Value for Money.

- The fact that the cost of contractual inflation over a period of three years at current CPI levels would erode any savings delivered by outsourcing the contract and in subsequent years could increase costs to the Council.

Council believes that it is now time to look forward.

It welcomes the fact that the Managers and workforce within the Parks and Countryside Service are working together to deliver a new improved service for the people of Wirral and that so far timescales contained within the business plan have been met. Plans are in place for the transfer of staff from Continental Landscapes back to the Council and there is universal determination to demonstrate that the Council can provide true Value for Money and an excellent service in the future.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council notes with disappointment Cabinet’s decision to ignore the views of the Council’s Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and abandon the Parks & Countryside Procurement Exercise**
- (2) Council notes that this abandonment will result in the following Corporate Plan target not being met: ‘Successfully deliver the Parks and Countryside Services Procurement Exercise to enable proposed contract benefits to be achieved by January / February 2012.’**
- (3) Council expresses its serious concern that when reviewing the Cabinet’s decision, the Council’s Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee found:**
 - **‘No mention or discussion took place regarding stakeholder management or the views of key stakeholders about the benefits of clear quality improvements that were built into the procurement exercise. In fact, other than the views of the Council Trades Unions, the results of consultation and the views of park users and user groups were not even mentioned by a single Cabinet Member at the meeting’.**
 - **‘No mention was made of the training and development programme for staff and volunteers or the three to six new apprentices to be created as part of PACSPE’.**
 - **‘Insufficient account appeared to be taken of the reduction from costs of £8.1 million per year to £7.4 million per year already achieved by the PACSPE process with the potential to reduce costs by a further very large sum’.**

- And that it was 'hard to understand how the Leader of the Council characterised the potential savings as marginal'.

(4) Council is therefore drawn to sharing the conclusions of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that 'the decision to refuse to award the PACSPE contract will see the ever decreasing quality of a service starved of investment by this administration which is already characterised by going for the quick fix instead of making the difficult but necessary strategic decisions in the interests of Wirral residents.

84 **MOTION: AFFORDABLE HOMES**

Proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

- (1) Council welcomes the recent Coalition Government announcement to support first time buyers through the introduction of government supported 95% mortgages as part of a strategy to tackle housing shortage, boost the economy, create jobs and get more people on to the housing ladder.
- (2) Council notes that, under this new mortgage indemnity scheme, the Government will underwrite a percentage of each loan on newly built property, meaning buyers will not have to raise as much towards a deposit.
- (3) Council also notes that this scheme sounds very similar to the 'Lend a Hand' local authority mortgage scheme referenced in the Notice of Motion "Mortgage Support for First Time Buyers", aimed at first time buyers finding it difficult to raise the 20-25% deposit needed to obtain an affordable mortgage interest rate and agreed unanimously at Full Council on 18th April 2011 (Minute 118).
- (4) Council agreed that this scheme had the potential to support housing markets in areas at risk of housing market failure, stimulating the local housing market and benefiting the wider local economy
- (5) Council is reminded that the Director of Finance was instructed to bring forward a report reviewing the impact of the 'Lend a Hand' local authority mortgage scheme and any lessons that would need to be learnt prior to the implementation of such a scheme in Wirral.
- (6) Given that the Government continues to endorse the principle of public sector backed top up mortgages, the Economy and Regeneration OSC is urged to request a report from the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning on how Wirral can be at the vanguard of any implementation plan of the Government's scheme.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor George Davies

Seconded by Councillor Pat Hackett

Add the following:

- (7) Council welcomes and supports this scheme which will add to the tools available to allow people more options to access home ownership in the current challenging climate.
- (8) Council recognises that this is an opportunity to boost the local housing market by supporting access to home ownership and employment opportunities.
- (9) Council believes it will enable greater choice when offered alongside our original intended scheme, which is to support access to mortgages for first time buyers to purchase from the existing stock in the borough.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment and the motion, as amended, was put and it was -

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council welcomes the recent Coalition Government announcement to support first time buyers through the introduction of government supported 95% mortgages as part of a strategy to tackle housing shortage, boost the economy, create jobs and get more people on to the housing ladder.**
- (2) Council notes that, under this new mortgage indemnity scheme, the Government will underwrite a percentage of each loan on newly built property, meaning buyers will not have to raise as much towards a deposit.**
- (3) Council also notes that this scheme sounds very similar to the ‘Lend a Hand’ local authority mortgage scheme referenced in the Notice of Motion “Mortgage Support for First Time Buyers”, aimed at first time buyers finding it difficult to raise the 20-25% deposit needed to obtain an affordable mortgage interest rate and agreed unanimously at Full Council on 18th April 2011 (Minute 118).**
- (4) Council agreed that this scheme had the potential to support housing markets in areas at risk of housing market failure, stimulating the local housing market and benefiting the wider local economy**
- (5) Council is reminded that the Director of Finance was instructed to bring forward a report reviewing the impact of the ‘Lend a Hand’ local authority mortgage scheme and any lessons that would need to be learnt prior to the implementation of such a scheme in Wirral.**
- (6) Given that the Government continues to endorse the principle of public sector backed top up mortgages, the Economy and Regeneration OSC is urged to request a report from the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning on how Wirral can be at the vanguard of any implementation plan of the Government’s scheme.**

- (7) Council welcomes and supports this scheme which will add to the tools available to allow people more options to access home ownership in the current challenging climate.
- (8) Council recognises that this is an opportunity to boost the local housing market by supporting access to home ownership and employment opportunities.
- (9) Council believes it will enable greater choice when offered alongside our original intended scheme, which is to support access to mortgages for first time buyers to purchase from the existing stock in the borough.

85 **MOTION: BYE-LAW BANNING DOGS FROM CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS**

Proposed by Councillor Jean Stapleton
 Seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny

- (1) Council is concerned about irresponsible dog walkers who allow their dogs to enter enclosed children's play areas.
- (2) Council asks for the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to report back to Cabinet on the process for producing a new bye-law or other appropriate measures to give the Council powers to impose sanctions on dog walkers who deliberately allow their animals to enter enclosed children's play areas.
- (3) Council also asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to report back to Cabinet on a new bye-law obliging all dog walkers to carry an appropriate bag at all times when walking their dog.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Pat Williams
 Seconded by Councillor Mark Johnston

Paragraph (2) – delete “on the process for” and replace with “on the feasibility of”
Paragraph (3) – insert “the feasibility of” after “report back to Cabinet on”

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment and the motion, as amended, was put and it was -

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council is concerned about irresponsible dog walkers who allow their dogs to enter enclosed children's play areas.
- (2) Council asks for the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to report back to Cabinet on the feasibility of producing a new bye-law or other appropriate measures to give the Council powers to impose sanctions on

dog walkers who deliberately allow their animals to enter enclosed children's play areas.

- (3) Council also asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to report back to Cabinet on the feasibility of a new bye-law obliging all dog walkers to carry an appropriate bag at all times when walking their dog.**

86 MOTION: AKA REPORT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Simon Mountney

- (1) Council notes it has been seven months since the former leader of the Council requested Officers to contact Mr Martin Morton to offer him a position back with the Authority following the report of Mr Martin Smith, Independent Associate Consultant, North West Employers and that to date, due to a lack of urgency by the new administration, this matter has still not been resolved.
- (2) Council further notes it has been over two months since the Leader of the Council received the two AKA reports, commissioned by the then leader of the Council, into the circumstances surrounding the Martin Morton 'scandal.'
- (3) Council believes that justice delayed is justice denied and calls for the immediate publication of the additional two AKA reports (Executive Summary & Full Report) into this matter.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

Replace paragraphs (1) (2) and (3) with the following new paragraphs:

- (1) Council does not believe it appropriate for negotiations between an individual and the Council to be made the subject of a public debate at Council. Council recognises however that these negotiations have been protracted and urges those concerned to reach a speedy conclusion in the interests of all concerned.
- (2) Council welcomes the fact that the AKA inquiry, commissioned by the former Leader of the Council, identified key issues of Corporate Governance which needed to be addressed, dating back through several different forms of political administration, from Majority, to Minority, to Coalitions of different persuasions. Council further welcomes the fact that this report was published as rapidly as possible to allow all three parties to work together to tackle the challenges to good Corporate Governance on Wirral.
- (3) Council believes that the Leader of the Conservative Group is well aware of the legal constraints on publication of the remaining elements of the report until a Right of Reply process has been completed and it is disingenuous for him to imply that there is any other reason for its delay, or that the Leader of the Council is in some way "sitting" on a draft report that has been shared with opposition leaders.

- (4) Council further believes that natural justice is best served by allowing the Right of Reply process to be completed before publication and preserving proper confidentiality until that point, as good Corporate Governance would demand.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

In response to a Member's question the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reminded the Council that he had sent an email to all Members (a copy of which had been circulated to all Members) with legal advice on the question of publishing AKA's preliminary draft report.

The amendment was put and carried (37:26) (The Mayor and Councillor Mrs P M Williams abstaining).

The substantive motion was put and carried (37:26) (The Mayor and Councillor Mrs P M Williams abstaining)

Resolved (37:26) (The Mayor and Councillor Mrs P M Williams abstaining) -

- (1) Council does not believe it appropriate for negotiations between an individual and the Council to be made the subject of a public debate at Council. Council recognises however that these negotiations have been protracted and urges those concerned to reach a speedy conclusion in the interests of all concerned.**
- (2) Council welcomes the fact that the AKA inquiry, commissioned by the former Leader of the Council, identified key issues of Corporate Governance which needed to be addressed, dating back through several different forms of political administration, from Majority, to Minority, to Coalitions of different persuasions. Council further welcomes the fact that this report was published as rapidly as possible to allow all three parties to work together to tackle the challenges to good Corporate Governance on Wirral.**
- (3) Council believes that the Leader of the Conservative Group is well aware of the legal constraints on publication of the remaining elements of the report until a Right of Reply process has been completed and it is disingenuous for him to imply that there is any other reason for its delay, or that the Leader of the Council is in some way "sitting" on a draft report that has been shared with opposition leaders.**
- (4) Council further believes that natural justice is best served by allowing the Right of Reply process to be completed before publication and preserving proper confidentiality until that point, as good Corporate Governance would demand.**

87 **MOTION: CASHLESS SCRAP METAL TRADE**

Proposed by Councillor Dave Mitchell
Seconded by Councillor Ann Bridson

- (1) This Council notes with great concern the level of metal theft across our Borough, and the effect of this crime on our community, including on homeowners, businesses, places of worship, community buildings, heritage assets, war memorials and infrastructure providers. According to Merseyside Police, almost 6 crimes per day (5.8) are related to theft of metal. This equates to 2.1% (more than one in 50) of all recorded crimes.
- (2) Council welcomes the e-petition launched (by Walsall Council <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/406>) on the official Government website calling for a change to the Scrap Metal Merchants Act 1964, to prohibit cash transactions, and make payment by cheque or bank transfer mandatory, providing an audit trail when thefts are detected or stolen or suspect materials are recovered.
- (3) Council welcomes the proposal of the Metal Theft (Prevention) Bill to Parliament by Hyndburn MP Graham Jones, aimed at establishing a robust licensing scheme for scrap metal dealers coupled with greater police and judicial powers to close scrap yards found flouting the law.
- (4) Council also welcomes the Government review into what else needs to be done to tackle the issue of metal theft.
- (5) Therefore, Council calls on the Leader to request:
 - (i) That the Chief Executive contact Wirral's four Members of Parliament, and the Home Secretary, to inform them of Wirral Council's support for this legal change, and to request their support;
 - (ii) That the e-petition be publicised on the Council's website, along with advice on preventing such thefts, or on measures which may help to identify thieves such as the use of smart water, in partnership with the local Police and other partners, as appropriate.
- (6) Further, Council instructs the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to prepare a report for the next Sustainable Communities OSC on current levels of metal thefts, the steps that are being taken to prevent them and to bring those responsible to justice, with the opportunity for members to contribute suggestions and comments, to ensure that Wirral's response to metal theft is as robust as possible.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Bill Davies
Seconded by Councillor John Salter

In paragraph (4) add after 'theft':

'including consideration of the introduction of a full licensing regime to regulate the activity.'

In paragraph (5) (i) delete all after 'Council's support' and add the following:

'for the Bill before Parliament and further measures that would strengthen regulatory controls for this trade such as a licensing regime, and to request their support.'

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment and the motion, as amended, was put and it was -

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

- (1) This Council notes with great concern the level of metal theft across our Borough, and the effect of this crime on our community, including on homeowners, businesses, places of worship, community buildings, heritage assets, war memorials and infrastructure providers. According to Merseyside Police, almost 6 crimes per day (5.8) are related to theft of metal. This equates to 2.1% (more than one in 50) of all recorded crimes.**
- (2) Council welcomes the e-petition launched (by Walsall Council <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/406>) on the official Government website calling for a change to the Scrap Metal Merchants Act 1964, to prohibit cash transactions, and make payment by cheque or bank transfer mandatory, providing an audit trail when thefts are detected or stolen or suspect materials are recovered.**
- (3) Council welcomes the proposal of the Metal Theft (Prevention) Bill to Parliament by Hyndburn MP Graham Jones, aimed at establishing a robust licensing scheme for scrap metal dealers coupled with greater police and judicial powers to close scrap yards found flouting the law.**
- (4) Council also welcomes the Government review into what else needs to be done to tackle the issue of metal theft including consideration of the introduction of a full licensing regime to regulate the activity.**
- (5) Therefore, Council calls on the Leader to request:**
 - (i) That the Chief Executive contact Wirral's four Members of Parliament, and the Home Secretary, to inform them of Wirral Council's support for the Bill before Parliament and further measures that would strengthen regulatory controls for this trade such as a licensing regime, and to request their support;**
 - (ii) That the e-petition be publicised on the Council's website, along with advice on preventing such thefts, or on measures which may help to identify thieves such as the use of smart water, in partnership with the local Police and other partners, as appropriate.**
- (6) Further, Council instructs the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to prepare a report for the next Sustainable Communities OSC on current levels of metal thefts, the steps that are being taken to prevent them and to bring those responsible to justice, with the opportunity for members to contribute suggestions and comments, to ensure that Wirral's response to metal theft is as robust as possible.**

MOTION: ANNUAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES ASSESSMENT

Proposed by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Seconded by Councillor Tony Smith

- (1) This Council notes that Wirral Council's Children's Services has been awarded an excellent rating in the Annual Children's Services Assessment by Ofsted. Wirral was one of only 28 authorities across the country providing excellent services for children in their area. The rating is an improvement on last year's score, and recognises sustained and further improvement in a number of areas.
- (2) During the inspection Ofsted looked at 22 types of services and settings including schools, nurseries and colleges, fostering and adoption services, children's homes, and childminders and childcare. Inspectors also took into account a recent inspection of safeguarding and looked after children which judged services to be 'good with good capacity to improve with some outstanding features,' and recent good inspections of adoption and fostering services.
- (3) The inspection team said that the very large majority of services, settings and institutions are 'good or better' and most provision helps children and young people to learn and stay safe.
- (4) Positive strengths they highlighted included educational standards and progress, the development of five-year-olds, (and in particular a reduction in the gap between the achievements of those from low income families and other children of the same age), and the proportion of primary and secondary schools that are now 'good' or 'outstanding.'
- (5) There was also special praise for the fact that more children with special educational needs achieve good GCSE's than elsewhere, with provision for special educational needs being 'good' or 'outstanding.'
- (6) Elsewhere, there was special mention of the quality of post-16 education and training, children's homes, fostering and adoption, and services for safeguarding and looked after children where leadership and management are outstanding, as are partnership agreements.'
- (7) Two areas of improvement were identified, and moves are now underway to improve the performance of some childcare provision and reduce the gap in achievement between young people from low income families and other young people of the same age.
- (8) Council records its congratulations to the Acting Director and all the staff, both in the department and in schools, for their dedication and commitment to the young people of Wirral.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

89 **MOTION: FAIRNESS, NOT FAVOURS**

Proposed by Councillor Cherry Povall
Seconded by Councillor Tony Cox

- (1) Council recognises the valuable role played by trade unions in ensuring effective industrial relations, their role in consultation and involvement in matters concerning health and safety and the unpaid hours of service given by many trade union members to wider issues affecting their colleagues.
- (2) However, Council believes that trade unions must, wherever possible, remain impartial and not be dependent on an employer for favours. Council also notes that taxpayers in Wirral are subsidising trade union activity at Wirral Council and this activity is costing £360,000 per annum.
- (3) Council notes this includes eight full time union officials, employed by Wirral Borough Council, for the sole purpose of promoting trade unions and carrying out union activity. Council notes that a further 112 trade union stewards in the Council are given 8,458 hours of Council time to conduct union business.
- (4) Council believes that, given the state of the public finances, it is no longer fair for the taxpayer to subsidise trade unions in this way and that responsibility for funding trade union activity should rest with trade union members and trade union leaders.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Bernie Mooney
Seconded by Councillor Adrian Jones

Delete all, replace with:

- (1) Council believes it is important to recognise the important and valuable role of the trade unions in ensuring effective industrial relations, in maintaining the highest possible level of health and safety standards and ensuring training and learning opportunities through consultation and involvement.
- (2) Council notes that unions operate under legal recognition agreements which give statutory rights to elected union representatives for paid time to undertake trade union duties and to train for those duties. These duties include negotiating terms and conditions of employment, representation at disciplinary and grievance hearings, attending health and safety meetings, and promoting learning and training needs. Wirral Council has a trade union recognition policy with a facilities agreement which is based on Employment legislation, a National Agreement through the National Joint Council and the ACAS Code of Practice.
- (3) Council believes it is misleading to suggest that all the responsibilities of union representatives should be classed as trade union activities which should be paid for by union members, as the vast majority of work undertaken by legally elected representatives concerns duties and training directed at ensuring good standards of industrial relations, which is as beneficial to the Council and to Wirral's Council Tax payers as it is to union members.

- (4) Council believes that to remove these rights would not only be a breach of the law, and a breach of a National Agreement, but a totally false economy which could end up costing more than it saved.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Paragraph (2) - *delete* "and this activity is costing £360,000 per annum."
Paragraph (3) - *delete final sentence and replace with* "This activity is costing £191,000 (plus on costs) per annum."

Delete paragraph (4) and replace with:

- (4) Council believes that the scale of investment in these services should be a reflection of workforce numbers and the duties required for adequate representation and that work to establish this should be undertaken.

Add new paragraph:

(5) Council acknowledges the work of the 112 shop stewards and the valuable role they play in representing the workforce to management on such issues as health and safety and other statutory obligations, promoting in-work learning and development and contributing to the effectiveness of the Council.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment proposed by Councillor Mooney was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The amendment proposed by Councillor Kelly was put and carried (38:26) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (38:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (38:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) **Council recognises the valuable role played by trade unions in ensuring effective industrial relations, their role in consultation and involvement in matters concerning health and safety and the unpaid hours of service given by many trade union members to wider issues affecting their colleagues.**
- (2) **However, Council believes that trade unions must, wherever possible, remain impartial and not be dependent on an employer for favours. Council also notes that taxpayers in Wirral are subsidising trade union activity at Wirral Council.**
- (3) **Council notes this includes eight full time union officials, employed by Wirral Borough Council, for the sole purpose of promoting trade unions**

and carrying out union activity. This activity is costing £191,000 (plus on costs) per annum.

- (4) Council believes that the scale of investment in these services should be a reflection of workforce numbers and the duties required for adequate representation and that work to establish this should be undertaken.
- (5) Council acknowledges the work of the 112 shop stewards and the valuable role they play in representing the workforce to management on such issues as health and safety and other statutory obligations, promoting in-work learning and development and contributing to the effectiveness of the Council.

90 **MOTION: INCREASING RECYCLING**

Proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse
Seconded by Councillor Bob Wilkins

Council:

- (1) Is reminded of its support of The Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside which includes a commitment to recycle 50% of household waste by 2020.
- (2) Believes that it can reach and should exceed this target much sooner, helping to reduce the borough's carbon footprint and reduce the amount paid out for waste disposal.
- (3) Is reminded that it agreed unanimously (Council, 12th July 2010, Minute 22) "to request that the Director of Technical Services continues to examine new ways to reduce waste to landfill, such as through the introduction of food waste collections (taking account of existing work undertaken to date), the collection of recyclable material from businesses, increasing the range of recyclable material that can be taken to the council's recycling collection points and working with MWDA to increase the range of materials that can be placed in grey bins".
- (4) Instructs the Director of Technical Services to present a report to the next available Sustainable Communities OSC, and calls on the Leader to request a Cabinet report, setting out the contribution and progress Wirral has made since 12th July 2010. This report shall also include, but not be limited to, options for;
 - (i) increasing the range and proportion of materials that are recycled;
 - (ii) supporting the development of improved facilities and services for the recycling of trade and commercial wastes, recognising that a local green infrastructure will support the development of local businesses;
- (5) Instructs the Director of Technical Services to present a report to the Sustainable Communities OSC, and invites the Leader to request a Cabinet report, before the end of the municipal year proposing a Wirral Council Action Plan that clearly sets out the mechanism by which Wirral will achieve the objectives included in The Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside.

- (6) Also calls on the Leader to instruct the Director of Technical Services to work with the MWDA to modernise the levy mechanism and design a new system which more accurately reflects the benefits of recycling and the disposal costs of non recyclable waste.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Irene Williams
Seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny

Amend paragraph (2) as follows:

- (2) Believes that (subject to the implementation of a new Levy Payment Mechanism that incentivises district investment in recycling) it can reach and should exceed this target much sooner, helping to reduce the borough's carbon footprint and reduce the amount paid out for waste disposal.

Amend paragraph 4 (i) as follows:

“increasing the range and proportion of materials that are recycled with particular focus on materials realising the most carbon savings, such as textiles and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment);”

Amend paragraph (6) as follows:

- (6) Also calls on the Leader to instruct the Director of Technical Services to work with the Merseyside Waste and Recycling Authority and other Merseyside authorities to modernise the levy mechanism and design a new system which more accurately reflects the benefits of recycling and the disposal costs of non recyclable waste.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment and the motion, as amended, was put and it was -

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

Council:

- (1) Is reminded of its support of The Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside which includes a commitment to recycle 50% of household waste by 2020.**
- (2) Believes that (subject to the implementation of a new Levy Payment Mechanism that incentivises district investment in recycling) it can reach and should exceed this target much sooner, helping to reduce the borough's carbon footprint and reduce the amount paid out for waste disposal.**

- (3) Is reminded that it agreed unanimously (Council, 12th July 2010, Minute 22) “to request that the Director of Technical Services continues to examine new ways to reduce waste to landfill, such as through the introduction of food waste collections (taking account of existing work undertaken to date), the collection of recyclable material from businesses, increasing the range of recyclable material that can be taken to the council’s recycling collection points and working with MWDA to increase the range of materials that can be placed in grey bins”.
- (4) Instructs the Director of Technical Services to present a report to the next available Sustainable Communities OSC, and calls on the Leader to request a Cabinet report, setting out the contribution and progress Wirral has made since 12th July 2010. This report shall also include, but not be limited to, options for;
- (i) increasing the range and proportion of materials that are recycled with particular focus on materials realising the most carbon savings, such as textiles and WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment)
 - (ii) supporting the development of improved facilities and services for the recycling of trade and commercial wastes, recognising that a local green infrastructure will support the development of local businesses;
- (5) Instructs the Director of Technical Services to present a report to the Sustainable Communities OSC, and invites the Leader to request a Cabinet report, before the end of the municipal year proposing a Wirral Council Action Plan that clearly sets out the mechanism by which Wirral will achieve the objectives included in The Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside.
- (6) Also calls on the Leader to instruct the Director of Technical Services to work with the Merseyside Waste and Recycling Authority and other Merseyside authorities to modernise the levy mechanism and design a new system which more accurately reflects the benefits of recycling and the disposal costs of non recyclable waste.

91 **MOTION: CUTS TO LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN**

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith

Seconded by Councillor Ron Abbey

- (1) This Council condemns the coalition government’s decision to cut Wirral’s Local Transport Plan transport capital programme by £2.3 million.
- (2) This cut has hit a number of key areas which contribute to residents’ health and quality of life, i.e. highway maintenance, reducing congestion, road safety, the promotion of walking and cycling, breaking down the barriers to people using public transport and schemes to improve access to jobs, healthcare, education and job opportunities.
- (3) Council asks the government to re-consider these damaging cuts and to restore these budgets.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Lesley Rennie
Seconded by Councillor Adam Sykes

Delete all and insert:

- (1) Council notes that this year's Local Transport Plan has seen a reduction in funding.
- (2) Council notes that the borough wide consultation exercise, 'Wirral's Future - be part of it' undertaken by the previous Administration clearly shows that the residents of Wirral value road safety and highway maintenance as a priority.
- (3) Council is therefore pleased to note that the previous Conservative-led Administration listened to local people and made available the sum of £1.6million as a significant investment to maintain and improve Wirral's roads through a programme of highway maintenance and road safety improvements.
- (4) Council calls upon the present Council Leader to reflect similar commitment when formulating a budget for the coming year.
- (5) Council also notes that the Coalition Government made available to Wirral a sum of £625,931 to repair pot holes caused by severe weather conditions over the winter period.
- (6) Council requests the Director of Technical services continues to work in collaboration with Partner Agencies to deliver a full Road Safety Programme. Further ways of working together with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to deliver Road Safety Educational Training be explored, as Council acknowledges their vast experience in delivering excellent training to young people in successful schemes such as 'Drive to Arrive'.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Paragraph (1) – delete all and replace with:

- (1) Council notes the international economic circumstances are likely to lead to a reduction in available capital finance for the Local Transport Plan.

Paragraph (2) – delete: "This cut has hit a number of key areas which" and insert:

*"Council affirms that the Capital Transport Programme should be prioritised to..."
continue rest of paragraph as before.*

Paragraph (3) – delete all and replace with:

- (3) Council affirms its commitment, in line with the principles outlined in paragraph (2), to the introduction of 20mph zones in residential areas and outside schools and

calls upon the Cabinet to stop stalling and get on with the work for which money has already been made available.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The movers of both amendments agreed that both amendments could be combined as one joint amendment.

The combined amendment was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council notes the international economic circumstances are likely to lead to a reduction in available capital finance for the Local Transport Plan.**
- (2) Council notes that the borough wide consultation exercise, ‘Wirral’s Future - be part of it’ undertaken by the previous Administration clearly shows that the residents of Wirral value road safety and highway maintenance as a priority. Council affirms that the Capital Transport Programme should be prioritised to contribute to residents’ health and quality of life, i.e. highway maintenance, reducing congestion, road safety, the promotion of walking and cycling, breaking down the barriers to people using public transport and schemes to improve access to jobs, healthcare, education and job opportunities.**
- (3) Council is therefore pleased to note that the previous Conservative-led Administration listened to local people and made available the sum of £1.6million as a significant investment to maintain and improve Wirral’s roads through a programme of highway maintenance and road safety improvements.**
- (4) Council affirms its commitment, in line with the principles outlined in paragraph (2), to the introduction of 20mph zones in residential areas and outside schools and calls upon the Cabinet to stop stalling and get on with the work for which money has already been made available.**
- (5) Council calls upon the present Council Leader to reflect similar commitment when formulating a budget for the coming year.**
- (6) Council also notes that the Coalition Government made available to Wirral a sum of £625,931 to repair pot holes caused by severe weather conditions over the winter period.**
- (7) Council requests the Director of Technical Services continues to work in collaboration with Partner Agencies to deliver a full Road Safety Programme. Further ways of working together with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service to deliver Road Safety Educational Training be explored, as Council acknowledges their vast experience in delivering excellent training to young people in successful schemes such as ‘Drive to Arrive’.**

MOTION: PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND SHARED SERVICES

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Tom Harney

- (1) Council notes with interest Liverpool City Council's Budget consultation with residents, stakeholders and service users on quantified options for cost savings, which includes savings arising from the sharing of services between the five Merseyside authorities (including Wirral).
- (2) Council further notes with dismay that whilst Liverpool residents were being consulted at an early stage on sharing services with Wirral, Wirral residents were not given the opportunity of being consulted on sharing services with Liverpool or any other of the Merseyside authorities.
- (3) Therefore, Council instructs the Chief Executive to make publicly available all material relating to discussions and negotiations that have taken place with the other Merseyside districts in relation to sharing services, including any assessment of the implications for services and service users as well as quantifying the level of savings that can be achieved.
- (4) This Council believes that the current Labour Administration;
 - (i) has, to date, failed to comply with the Council's own unanimously agreed policy (Council, 15th Feb 2010, Minute 103) "to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken";
 - (ii) has, despite stating they would set out to use You Choose and build on last year's detailed 'Wirral's Future' consultation, done too little and may have left it too late to carry out any meaningful consultation on next year's budget, leaving the authority at risk of legal challenge, and;
 - (iii) has, despite the willingness of overview and scrutiny committees to engage with the process, failed to provide any information or set out a single option or proposal in relation to next year's Budget for members to scrutinise.
- (5) Council, therefore, calls on the Leader to publish, as a matter of urgency, his draft Budget proposals, so that what little time which remains can usefully be applied to public consultation to mitigate the risk of legal challenge.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Seconded by Councillor Jean Stapleton

Delete everything and replace with the following:

Council notes that both the Chief Executive and the Acting Director of Adult Social Services has confirmed that no officer has been involved in any discussions with

Liverpool City Council regarding the sharing of adult social care services between the five Merseyside authorities.

The principle of shared services has been discussed at a City Region level for a number of years, however, to date no agreement has been reached on any specific proposals.

During this municipal year the Labour Administration has put in place a wide-ranging and inclusive consultation process around key priorities for the Council. This has three elements:

- (i) Neighbourhood Plans for each Area Forum have been developed via a questionnaire, focus groups and meetings with local organisations such as residents associations – the results were reported to Cabinet on the 24th November.
- (ii) The 'You Choose' Budget Simulator, which was recommended by the Local Government Association and is used by a wide range of local authorities – the results were reported to Cabinet on the 8th December.
- (iii) All Overview & Scrutiny Committees were given the opportunity of putting forward suggestions of areas of the budget which could yield savings.

The above have been used to inform a refresh of the Corporate Plan which was submitted to Cabinet on the 8th December.

Council thanks all individuals and organisations who have engaged in the consultation exercise described above.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council notes with interest Liverpool City Council's Budget consultation with residents, stakeholders and service users on quantified options for cost savings, which includes savings arising from the sharing of services between the five Merseyside authorities (including Wirral).**
- (2) Council further notes with dismay that whilst Liverpool residents were being consulted at an early stage on sharing services with Wirral, Wirral residents were not given the opportunity of being consulted on sharing services with Liverpool or any other of the Merseyside authorities.**
- (3) Therefore, Council instructs the Chief Executive to make publicly available all material relating to discussions and negotiations that have taken place with the other Merseyside districts in relation to sharing services, including any assessment of the implications for services and service users as well as quantifying the level of savings that can be achieved.**

(4) This Council believes that the current Labour Administration;

(i) has, to date, failed to comply with the Council's own unanimously agreed policy (Council, 15th Feb 2010, Minute 103) "to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken";

(ii) has, despite stating they would set out to use You Choose and build on last year's detailed 'Wirral's Future' consultation, done too little and may have left it too late to carry out any meaningful consultation on next year's budget, leaving the authority at risk of legal challenge, and;

(iii) has, despite the willingness of overview and scrutiny committees to engage with the process, failed to provide any information or set out a single option or proposal in relation to next year's Budget for members to scrutinise.

(5) Council, therefore, calls on the Leader to publish, as a matter of urgency, his draft Budget proposals, so that what little time which remains can usefully be applied to public consultation to mitigate the risk of legal challenge.

93 OBJECTION: MINUTE 215 (CABINET - 8 DECEMBER, 2011) - CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FINANCING 2012-15

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

That the Capital Programme as proposed by Cabinet be amended to include:

- Preventative maintenance to classified roads - £500,000.
- Preventative maintenance to unclassified and residential streets - £500,000.
- Road safety improvements and local transport schemes - £650,000.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) – That the objection be approved.

94 MOTION: LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis

Council:

(1) Welcomes public engagement in the democratic process. Council notes the growing use of blogs and microblogs by members of the public and notes that many sites now also include video and audio recorded at Council meetings.

- (2) Reaffirms its commitment, made last year by the previous Conservative Liberal Democrat administration, to ensure that any member of the public who wishes to film or broadcast from a public Council meeting is encouraged to do so.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Jim Crabtree
Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts

Add additional paragraphs:

- (3) Council would not wish to see proper debate constrained in any way by the presence of cameras or audio equipment and therefore asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to clarify in writing for members the position on qualified privilege which may go some way to allay fears about unfounded legal actions arising from detailed recordings of proceedings.
- (4) Council further asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to draw up a protocol on the use of material designed to prevent any abuse of material which could be harmful to councillors who are legitimately engaged in the processes of democracy.
- (5) In the meantime, the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management is asked to re-circulate the original guidance he produced when the issue first arose.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Dave Mitchell
Seconded by Councillor Pat Williams

Add additional paragraph:

- (3) However, Council is concerned to protect the rights of members of the public, petitioners and others who are not elected members and may interact with the Council and its committees. Council asks the Director of Law HR and Asset Management to ensure that the Chairs of committees are appropriately briefed.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell.

The amendment proposed by Councillor Crabtree was put and carried (38:26) (One abstention).

The substantive motion (as amended by both amendments) was put and carried (64:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

Council:

- (1) Welcomes public engagement in the democratic process. Council notes the growing use of blogs and microblogs by members of the public and notes that many sites now also include video and audio recorded at Council meetings.
- (2) Reaffirms its commitment, made last year by the previous Conservative Liberal Democrat administration, to ensure that any member of the public who wishes to film or broadcast from a public Council meeting is encouraged to do so.
- (3) However, Council is concerned to protect the rights of members of the public, petitioners and others who are not elected members and may interact with the Council and its committees. Council asks the Director of Law HR and Asset Management to ensure that the Chairs of committees are appropriately briefed.
- (4) Council would not wish to see proper debate constrained in any way by the presence of cameras or audio equipment and therefore asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to clarify in writing for members the position on qualified privilege which may go some way to allay fears about unfounded legal actions arising from detailed recordings of proceedings.
- (5) Council further asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to draw up a protocol on the use of material designed to prevent any abuse of material which could be harmful to councillors who are legitimately engaged in the processes of democracy.
- (6) In the meantime, the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management is asked to re-circulate the original guidance he produced when the issue first arose.

95 **MOTION: EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION**

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke
 Seconded by Councillor James Keeley

Council:

- (1) Welcomes the decision of the Coalition Government to increase the Pupil Premium by a further £58 per pupil this year, thereby eliminating the deficits at many schools in recent years. Council believes further increases in the Pupil Premium will enable schools in Wirral to make further, welcome progress in raising the achievement and attainment of all pupils in the Borough, regardless of background.
- (2) Also notes that many existing schools have benefited from the Council's budget this year, including improvements to school buildings, such as:
 - £75,000 toilet refurbishment at St Andrew's Primary School, Bebington
 - £60,000 replacement windows at Greasby Junior School
 - £27,000 kitchen improvements at Thingwall Primary School
 - £93,000 safer playground at Christchurch School, Moreton

- £450,000 mobile classroom replacement at St George's Primary School, Wallasey
- (3) Is pleased to note that the Deputy Prime Minister has announced the introduction of free nursery school provision for approximately 140,000 children from the most deprived families and looks forward to working with schools to ensure that children in Wirral benefit from this extra investment.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Ann McLachlan
Seconded by Councillor Tony Smith

Delete all. Replace with:

- (1) Council notes that the Pupil Premium was introduced to address the current inequalities between children eligible for Free School Meals and their wealthier peers.
- (2) Council further notes that, whilst Schools are free to spend the Pupil Premium as they see fit, they will be held accountable for how it is spent and this money is not intended to be used to plug any deficit in School budgets.
- (3) Council welcomes the consultation on extending the former Labour Government's commitment to provide free nursery education for all children under school age to two year olds.
- (4) Council also notes the much reduced capital programme for 2011/12, compared to the over £40m invested in 2010/11, which enabled many Schools in Wirral to benefit from improvements to their buildings and facilities.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (29:35) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (35:29) (One abstention).

Resolved (35:29) (One abstention) –

Council:

- (1) **Welcomes the decision of the Coalition Government to increase the Pupil Premium by a further £58 per pupil this year, thereby eliminating the deficits at many schools in recent years. Council believes further increases in the Pupil Premium will enable schools in Wirral to make further, welcome progress in raising the achievement and attainment of all pupils in the Borough, regardless of background.**
- (2) **Also notes that many existing schools have benefited from the Council's budget this year, including improvements to school buildings, such as:**

- £75,000 toilet refurbishment at St Andrew's Primary School, Bebington
- £60,000 replacement windows at Greasby Junior School
- £27,000 kitchen improvements at Thingwall Primary School
- £93,000 safer playground at Christchurch School, Moreton
- £450,000 mobile classroom replacement at St George's Primary School, Wallasey

(3) Is pleased to note that the Deputy Prime Minister has announced the introduction of free nursery school provision for approximately 140,000 children from the most deprived families and looks forward to working with schools to ensure that children in Wirral benefit from this extra investment.

96 **MOTION: LOSS OF GAS SUPPLY IN LEASOWE AND MORETON**

Proposed by Councillor Ian Lewis
 Seconded by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Council is concerned that 3,000 homes and employers in Leasowe and Moreton were without mains gas supply for up to eight days during November, caused by a leaking water main.

- (1) Council thanks members of the local community, including Leasowe Estate Tenants Association and the Autumn Club who immediately gave support to their more vulnerable neighbours, including the delivery of portable electric heaters and hotplates and those residents who worked to provide hot meals at the Leasowe Community Centre and Leasowe Millennium Centre for those who were unable to cook.
- (2) Council also expresses its gratitude to the engineers from National Grid who worked throughout this period to restore supply; the engineers from Scottish Power who responded quickly to loss of electricity supply in some roads; staff from the Council's Emergency Planning Team and Social Services Department and staff from Leasowe Community Homes, who all responded quickly to support residents.
- (3) Council while welcoming compensation payments of £30 per day, confirmed by National Grid on the first day of the loss of supply, is concerned that payment arrangements do not recognise the difficulties caused to people on prepayment meters or that many people do not hold a current account.

Council requests that the Chief Executive of the Council write to National Grid to thank his engineers for their work and outline the concerns expressed in this motion.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Anne McArdle
 Seconded by Councillor Ron Abbey

Add the following:

Council also notes that at the request of the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion that United Utilities and National Grid have been invited to

attend a meeting of the next Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present their reports on their response to the loss of supply.

It is also noted that letters of thanks to the local community for their support in the crisis have been sent from the Chief Executive.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Bob Wilkins
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Add to the end of the motion:

Council also requests that the Director of Technical Services prepares a report for the Sustainable Communities OSC, setting out lessons learnt, including appropriate recommendations on improving community resilience in the event of any future interruptions to energy supplies.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

The mover of the motion agreed to accept both amendments and the motion, as amended, was put and it was -

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) –

Council is concerned that 3,000 homes and employers in Leasowe and Moreton were without mains gas supply for up to eight days during November, caused by a leaking water main.

- (1) Council thanks members of the local community, including Leasowe Estate Tenants Association and the Autumn Club who immediately gave support to their more vulnerable neighbours, including the delivery of portable electric heaters and hotplates and those residents who worked to provide hot meals at the Leasowe Community Centre and Leasowe Millennium Centre for those who were unable to cook.**
- (2) Council also expresses its gratitude to the engineers from National Grid who worked throughout this period to restore supply; the engineers from Scottish Power who responded quickly to loss of electricity supply in some roads; staff from the Council's Emergency Planning Team and Social Services Department and staff from Leasowe Community Homes, who all responded quickly to support residents.**
- (3) Council while welcoming compensation payments of £30 per day, confirmed by National Grid on the first day of the loss of supply, is concerned that payment arrangements do not recognise the difficulties caused to people on prepayment meters or that many people do not hold a current account.**

Council requests that the Chief Executive of the Council write to National Grid to thank his engineers for their work and outline the concerns expressed in this motion.

Council also notes that at the request of the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion that United Utilities and National Grid have been invited to attend a meeting of the next Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present their reports on their response to the loss of supply.

It is also noted that letters of thanks to the local community for their support in the crisis have been sent from the Chief Executive.

Council also requests that the Director of Technical Services prepares a report for the Sustainable Communities OSC, setting out lessons learnt, including appropriate recommendations on improving community resilience in the event of any future interruptions to energy supplies.

97 OBJECTION: MINUTE 216 (CABINET - 8 DECEMBER, 2011) - BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2012-15

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) That the decision to cut £1m from the Early Intervention Grant be referred to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) That the sum of £1.4m pay provision be referred to the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8) the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (64:0) (One abstention) – That the objection be approved.

98 VACANCIES

The Council was requested to deal with the following appointments:

Outside Bodies

Licensing, Health & Safety and General Purposes

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Councillor Pat Glasman to replace Councillor Brian Kenny

Housing and Community Safety

Wirral Council and Riverside Challenge Fund Working Group (See Cabinet minute 179 – 3/11/11)

Councillor George Davies (Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Safety)
Mr K Adderley (Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning) or deputy
Mr B Norman (Director of Law, HR and Asset Management) or deputy

Leasowe Community Homes Management Board

Councillor Lesley Rennie to replace Councillor Ian Lewis

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

Birkenhead Sixth Form College Governing Body

Councillor Denise Roberts (1 Nov 2011 to 31 Oct 2015)
(Appointments to the Governing Body are made for a four year term)

Resolved – That the appointments be approved.

99 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Council were informed that this was Howard Cooper's last Council meeting before retiring and the Mayor thanked him on behalf of the whole Council for all his work both as Director of Children's Services and in his current role as Interim Director of Adult Social Services.

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MOTION MOVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 7.3 (iii) (d)

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

- (1) Now that the Council has received the AKA Ltd Final Report Independent Review of Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's Response to Claims Raised by Mr Martin Morton (and Others), we can all see the extent of the alleged mismanagement, incompetence, cover-up and negligence over a long period of time. These are extremely serious allegations relating to the care and safeguarding of some of the most vulnerable people in society. People to whom the Council owes a duty of care.
- (2) Although the report documents the failure of Council Officers, Council believes that it is incumbent upon all Councillors to ask themselves whether they could have asked more, or different, questions and uncovered or prevented some of these failings at a much earlier stage. In view of the apparent scale of wrong-doing and the length of time over which this happened, Council believes the Leader of the Council should explain whether he knew what was going on, and if not, why not.
- (3) Council believes that, despite all the advice and support available, the current Leader's approach has not been as inclusive as was promised. In practice, the Leader's approach has been to say publicly that he wants to work with all Parties, but then to carry on as before. Council is not convinced that the current Leader is committed to finding an all-party solution to the many questions raised in the Report. It is of considerable concern that this behaviour has contributed to the serious danger of collapse that this Council now finds itself in. It clearly isn't working and we need a fresh approach and a true commitment to put aside political differences and work together in an All-Party Cabinet to concentrate exclusively on putting right the many wrongs identified. Council believes that Councillor Foulkes is not the right person to lead such an All-Party approach.
- (4) Therefore, Council resolves, in accordance with Article 7.3(iii) (d) of the Constitution, that Councillor Foulkes be removed from the Office of Leader of the Council with immediate effect.
- (5) That Council elect a new Leader in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5B.

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MOTION MOVED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 7.3 (iii) (d)

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

(1) Wirral Council is in crisis:

- We stand publically accused of mismanagement, incompetence, negligence and cover up.
- We have been found guilty of failing to listen or believe Martin Morton and allowing him to be bullied, belittled, browbeaten and driven from a job he loved.
- We have shown ourselves to be incapable or unwilling to apply basic controls on the expenditure of Council Taxpayers money or of being able to provide protection from abuse, compassion & care to some of the most vulnerable members of our society and their families.
- Not one senior officer or politician has been held accountable by the Council for the failings identified in the AKA Limited report.

(2) Council believes the nature of the crisis the Council now finds itself in is so grave, the imminence of collapse so real, that all Members must come together, under fresh leadership, to work together on behalf of our residents & communities, as equals and in genuine partnership.

(3) Council resolves:

(i) That, In accordance with Article 7.3 (iii) (d) of the Constitution, Cllr Foulkes be removed from the office of Leader of the Council with immediate effect.'

(ii) That Council elect a new Leader in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5B

(4) The next Leader of the Council is recommended to:

- Establish an all party 'emergency Cabinet' of 4 Conservative, 4 Labour and 2 Liberal Democrat Members to be reviewed at Annual Council 2012
- Provide opportunities for all Council Members to question and share any ideas or concerns they may have
- Review current officer delegations to ensure openness, transparency and effective democratic oversight of decision making.

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MOTION: COUNCIL PROCESSES AND PURPOSE

(Deferred from Council on 12 December, 2011)

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) Council notes the ongoing activity to improve the Council's Corporate Governance processes.
- (2) Council believes that as the activity to improve its processes continues it becomes even more important to restate our purpose.
- (3) Council therefore commits itself to the following principles:
 - A commitment to making Wirral a bigger and stronger society.
 - Creating the environment and developing the skills needed to make Wirral a place where local employers succeed and businesses choose to invest – an economy with high levels of private sector employment, which retains and attracts our young people and provides the job opportunities for all to realise their full potential.
 - Placing the views of Wirral, residents, employers, Community and Voluntary groups at the heart of all we do, providing opportunities for people to improve their neighbourhoods, lives and those of their families, ensuring that no part of Wirral is ignored.
 - Actively supporting the Coalition Government's commitment to ending child poverty by 2020, providing support services to children, young people and their families that help to alleviate the effects of poverty and, in the long term, break inter-generational cycles of deprivation.
 - Providing services that meet the needs and aspirations of all Wirral people, fostering a real pride in the borough, ensuring high standards of cleanliness, environmental protection and public safety, creating a clean, safe and sustainable environment.
 - Working everyday to keep children and vulnerable people safe and tackle the gross inequalities in health and education outcomes experienced by our residents. Services provided for our most vulnerable, disadvantaged or excluded citizens, wherever they may live, should be founded on fairness, raise aspirations, promote choice and improve quality of life.

That the motion be deferred to the next Full Council meeting and that, in the meantime, the motion is referred to all the Council's OSCs for consideration, alongside the draft Corporate Plan. That the views of the OSCs on the motion be included in the report to the next Council on the Corporate Plan.

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ECONOMY AND REGENERATION O&S COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 39. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members, the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning stated that the Corporate Plan would have targets and these would be expanded on in more detail in the Departmental Plan. There would be measures in place for ongoing monitoring.

Members made the following suggestions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan:

- Addressing child poverty needs to be one of the main priorities. The Chair confirmed that the Working Group on Child Poverty would report to this Committee as well as to the Children and Young People O&S Committee.
- Housing – Make one of the targets around the issue of affordable housing and mortgage support schemes for first time buyers.
- ‘Improve access to employment and skills....’ - there was a need to be more specific with an emphasis on level 3 attainment in apprenticeship schemes and at least a level 2 in functional skills regarding employment readiness.
- ‘Position Wirral as a leading, vibrant global location....’ – need to refer to being committed to the Liverpool City Region and Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Wirral Waters – there was a need to plan for the effects on existing retail and industrial areas of activity in the peripheral parts of Birkenhead which could suffer rather than just rely on a ‘trickle down’ effect from the Wirral Waters developments and make sure these areas benefit too.
- Retail – some centres are under stress and there was a need to plan ahead for interventions.
- The current draft plan gave no indication of the targets reached from the previous years’ plan and there was a need for headline priorities with start and end dates through a three year cycle with budgeting year on year.
- Looking at the phraseology used such as, ‘Ensuring that our young people have excellent skills and opportunities into employment,’ this could be phrased, ‘Ensuring that our young people have the best qualifications for whatever employment they want to go into...’
- ‘Continuing to improve our relationships with the private sector....’ – could these sectors be listed?
- Need for a measure of those co-ordinated resources for all business support services through Invest Wirral.

- ‘An increasing role for social enterprises in Wirral’s economy’ should be shown as a percentage.
- Wirral was over-dependent on the public sector for employment opportunities and there was a need for a re-balancing of this.
- There was a need to refer to the growth in the elderly population and the impact of this on every sector.
- Too many units of a certain type of housing stock.
- No sense of which priority was the driving force for the Council.
- No mention of the Council’s public health role, where it would sit within the Council structure and how it would be scrutinised.

The Chair suggested that it was also difficult to view the document in isolation without seeing any budget proposals or the Departmental Plan.

Resolved – That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING O & S COMMITTEE – 19 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 44. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members the Director of Adult Social Services stated that more detail would be provided in a Departmental Plan which would include targets and indicators along with the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Corporate Plan's aim was to provide a holistic picture of how the Council would meet the needs of its residents in a strategic manner. With regard to criticism of poor quality reports, the Director assured the Committee that this would be addressed and there would be adequate opportunity for the Committee to drill down into issues at whatever level of detail was required.

A Member suggested that if the Plan provided too much detail it would become unwieldy and would be less likely to engage the public.

Members made the following suggestions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan:

- In the goal, 'Enhance the quality of life of the people of Wirral who have care and support needs', the sentence, 'Providing integrated, high quality services.....' should state how this would be measured and therefore how it could be scrutinised.
- Need to mention work carried out with Carers' Associations.
- In the goal on 'safeguarding' there was no mention of the AKA Report, this could be incorporated as an addendum with the actions arising from it.
- There was a need to see where the Department was currently and how it was going to move on.
- There was a need to refer to the Alcohol Scrutiny Review as a reduction in alcohol harm needed to be a target.
- There was a need to refer to the duties that the Council would have under Public Health.
- There was no mention of:
 - Affordability of social care
 - An increasing elderly population
 - Personal Budgets
 - Empowerment
 - Continuing public consultation
- One reference to regaining independence but no reference to retaining independence.

Resolved – That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 49. CORPORATE PLAN 2012/13

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair invited comments from the Committee.

Responding to comments from Members the Acting Director stated that a full draft of the Children and Young People's Departmental Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan for the Children's Trust Board was also being developed and the Corporate Plan was to a template which had been issued across the Council from the Corporate Policy team. Referring to the section, 'Provide early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families', he said he had requested that the sentence, 'Ensuring every child is school ready', should read, 'Working towards ensuring....'

The Chair suggested that there needed to be a section after 'goals' showing measurable targets. One of the strengths of the Corporate Plan was that Child Poverty had its own section to highlight the importance of addressing this issue.

Members made the following comments on the Corporate Plan:

- There needed to be references to foster care and adoption.
- There was no reference to deprivation.
- There was a need to know how things would be measured.
- No reference to further education or higher education.
- There was a vague reference to Sure Start but no mention of enhancement as there had been in the previous year.

It was then moved by Councillor Hayes, seconded by Councillor Povall that –

“This Committee believes that the draft Corporate Plan contains many well meaning sentiments but few tangible targets by which the people of Wirral can scrutinise the progress of their council.”

It was then moved as an amendment by Councillor Dodd, seconded by Councillor W Smith that –

“Cabinet be asked to provide and identify some measurable targets within the Corporate Plan.”

Councillor Hayes agreed to accept this as a friendly amendment and it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – This Committee believes that the draft Corporate Plan contains many well meaning sentiments but few tangible targets by which the people of Wirral can scrutinise the progress of their council. Cabinet be asked to provide and identify some measurable targets within the Corporate Plan.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES O&S COMMITTEE – 30 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 62 CORPORATE PLAN 2012/2013

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair sought comments from Members.

A Member made a number of general points in relation to the Corporate Plan and some specific issues that were relevant to the work of the Sustainable Communities O&S Committee. The Chair also commented that the Corporate Plan lacked detail in relation to specific targets.

On a Motion by Councillor Wilkins and seconded by Councillor Hale, it was –

Resolved (10:0) – That the following comments form the basis of this Committee’s response to the Corporate Plan –

A. General Points

- (1) There are dozens of priorities that have been either omitted from the current corporate plan or so severely watered down as to be meaningless.
- (2) It shows a loss of commitment to engagement, consultation and involvement – these are scarcely mentioned.
- (3) In particular there is no mention of any annual budget consultation.
- (4) There is no mention of the Strategic Change Programme, or of the need for the Council to change.
- (5) There is no reference to reducing the costs of running the council / bureaucracy.
- (6) There is no reference to delegation or devolved decision making or budgets.
- (7) There is no mention of Area Forums.
- (8) There is no mention of the Voluntary and Community Sector, or of grants.

B. Some Key Issues Relevant to this Committee

- (9) There is no mention of Libraries

- (10)** There is no mention of 20mph zones
- (11)** There is no mention of Alcohol Harm, despite recent public health reports saying how bad Wirral is for alcohol related hospital admissions and conditions. (Cabinet agreed on 17 March that the recommendation of the Alcohol Scrutiny Review (*Tackling Alcohol Harm*) be picked up in the Corporate Plan).
- (12)** There is no mention of Green Technology / Solar Energy. The pledge in the current plan “we will make sure all future Council projects incorporate green technology and sustainable products and urge private developers to do the same” has been deleted.
- (13)** There is no mention of Community Justice.
- (14)** That the Plan contains no detail in relation to targets

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE O&S COMMITTEE – 31 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 76 CORPORATE PLAN 2012/2013

In accordance with Council minutes 77 and 78 (12 December, 2011), the Committee considered those parts of the Corporate Plan within its remit. The Committee had also had sight of a motion which had been referred to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees by the Council at its meeting on 12 December, 2011 (minute 76 refers) and which was considered in connection with the Corporate Plan.

The Draft Corporate Plan and report of the Chief Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 8 December were considered by the Committee and the Chair sought the views of Members. He commented also that the Council Excellence O&S Committee had a coordinating role in relation to the overall production of the Corporate Plan and he had requested that the views of the other themed O&S Committees were presented for Members' consideration. The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted the following minutes –

- Minute 39 – Economy and Regeneration O&S (16 January 2012)
- Minute 44 – Health and Well Being O&S (19 January 2012)
- Minute 49 – Children and Young People O&S (26 January 2012)
- Minute 62 – Sustainable Communities O&S (30 January 2012)

The Chair referred to an email he had circulated to Members of the Committee, which contained extracts of the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessments of Wirral from December 2002 and from December 2005, both of which contained comments in relation to the development of the Corporate Plan.

Members expressed a diverse range of views in relation to the Corporate Plan, including –

- That although it is a very important document, it should be more concise.
- That if it does not contain clear and quantifiable targets, it will do nothing to improve performance.
- That the Plan is aspirational and lacks clear targets.
- That the Plan contains no reference to the Strategic Change Programme.

Members commented also –

- That the Corporate Plan is all-encompassing and detailed enough for members of the public to engage with and that there is clear indication of where to access specific more detailed information.
- The Plan should not contain specific targets or high levels of detail, but should give an indication as to the general direction of the Council.
- That, being a 3 Year Plan, it should contain goals for the life of the Plan, rather than targets. Future reports from officers will then include specific targets for the achievement of the goals set out in the Plan.
- That the need for change is clearly set out in the introduction to the Plan

On a motion by Councillor Gilchrist and seconded by Councillor Brighthouse, it was

–

Resolved –

- (1) That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Cabinet.**
- (2) That the Council Excellence O&S Committee welcomes the principal of the Corporate Plan as a Statement of the Council's Priorities.**
- (3) That Committee looks forward to the Plan being produced in a more accessible format.**
- (4) That Committee looks forward to targets being provided, in order for the Plan to become a more meaningful document and to allow progress to be measured.**
- (5) That the Committee welcomes the comments contained within the Corporate Plan in relation to poverty.**

MATTERS FOR NOTING

CABINET – 12 JANUARY 2012

MINUTE 259 – REPORT ON VISIT TO CHINA – SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2011

A report by the Acting Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning outlined the activities undertaken during the visit to China in September/October 2011. It also identified further actions to be taken to build upon the contacts made and the opportunities that existed now and in the future.

The Cabinet was informed that the Council had been developing Sister City arrangements with Taicang since 2008 and it had been requested by the Mayor of Taicang that the two areas now formally sign an agreement for co-operation.

The Leader of the Council had also been invited to the Suzhou Mayoral Conference to discuss Economic Development and Regeneration issues that were faced globally. Unfortunately, due to urgent Council issues, the Leader had been unable to attend and the Deputy Leader of the Council had attended on his behalf.

A visit to JiangYin had also been organised to meet with the Partner's of Peel Holdings in the development of the International Trade Centre and to identify areas of close working between Wirral and JiangYin. It had also been arranged that presentations would be delivered to Chamber of Commerce members in Suzhou and Taicang to promote the International Trade Centre. Representatives of Peel Holdings had accompanied Council representatives on the visit.

The delegation had arrived in China on Sunday, 25 September 2011 and had departed for the UK on Thursday, 6 October 2011. The itinerary was set out in the report for the Cabinet's information. It was reported that the visit had been a success, in terms of further developing economic links within China and promoting the International Trade Centre proposals.

The signing of the Sister City Agreement with Taicang had also been a further step in developing economic ties between the two areas. A delegation from Taicang was now planning to visit Wirral in March/April 2012 to take forward actions agreed in the Sister City Agreement and Suzhou Government officials had outlined their proposals for a visit to Wirral later in the year.

Peel's partner in JiangYin had agreed to take forward the opportunities for further economic links between that area and Wirral and would act as the bridge between both areas.

The Head of UKTI (China) had visited Wirral in November 2011 and, as part of that visit, had toured the International Trade Centre in order that a more clear vision of the opportunity could be gained. Peel Holdings had continued to have private commercial discussions following the visit, both at home and abroad, with potential partners and end users and it was expected that there would be follow up visits to Wirral by various parties over the coming months. It was known that a major International Import Expo was to take place in Jiangsu Province at the end of March

2012 and government officials had invited representatives from Wirral to the event. Officers were considering the opportunities this event presented.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet notes the details of the visit to China by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Officers and the signing of Sister City agreement with Taicang, Metropolitan area of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province; and**
- (2) the report be referred to Council for information.**

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 12TH JANUARY 2012

SUBJECT:	REPORT ON VISIT TO CHINA– SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR – REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the activities undertaken during the visit to China in September/October 2011. It also identifies further actions to be taken to build upon the contacts made and the opportunities that exist now and in the future.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the details of the visit to China by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Officers and the signing of Sister City agreement with Taicang, Metropolitan area of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province.
- 2.2 That the report be referred to Council for information.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Visits to China are to be reported to subsequent Cabinet and Council meetings upon return.

4.0 BACKGROUND TO REPORT

- 4.1 The Council has been developing Sister City arrangements with Taicang since 2008 and it was requested by the Mayor of Taicang that the two areas now formally sign an agreement for co-operation.
- 4.2 The Leader of the Council was also invited to the Suzhou Mayoral Conference to discuss Economic Development and Regeneration issues that are faced globally. Unfortunately, due to urgent Council issues, the Leader of the Council was unable to attend and the Deputy Leader of the Council attended on his behalf.
- 4.3 A visit to JiangYin was also organised to meet with the Partner's of Peel Holdings in the development of the International Trade Centre and to identify areas of close working between Wirral and JiangYin.

- 4.4 It was also arranged to deliver presentations to Chamber of Commerce members in Suzhou and Taicang to promote the International Trade Centre.
- 4.5 Representatives of Peel Holdings accompanied Council representatives on the trip.
- 4.6 The delegation arrived in China on Sunday 25th September and departed for the UK on Thursday 6th October.
- 4.7 **Sunday 25th October** – Arrived in Shanghai.
- 4.8 **Monday 26th October** – Collected by officials from Suzhou and travelled to Suzhou. Afternoon and evening meetings with Suzhou Government Foreign Affairs officials to discuss future developments.
- 4.9 **Tuesday 27th October** – Suzhou Mayoral conference and meetings with Government Officials. Discussion held between the Mayor of Suzhou and the Deputy Leader of Wirral. Visits to Suzhou Industrial Park and Suzhou New District. Evening reception for Chinese National Day.
- 4.10 **Wednesday 28th October** – Visits to Suzhou, accompanied by Government Officials and presentation to Suzhou Chamber of Commerce regarding International Trade Centre. Travel to Taicang in the evening and meetings with Deputy Mayor and Government Officials.
- 4.11 **Thursday 29th September** – Presentation to Taicang Chamber of Commerce regarding International Trade Centre. Visits to Taicang Port and local businesses. The formal signing of the Sister City agreement took place between the Mayor of Taicang and the Deputy Leader of the Council. The agreement detailed that “ **The two sides agree to make concerted efforts, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, to promote people to people friendly contacts and economic and trade interflow between the two cities, and actively carry out exchanges and cooperation in the fields of science and technology, culture, sports, health, education, etc**”.
- 4.12 **Friday 30th September** – Visit LOFT Industrial Design facilities in Taicang to see samples of potential goods that could be sold in the International Trade Centre. Depart Taicang for Shanghai. Evening meetings in Shanghai with potential Investors/Developers from Shanghai and Beijing and Head of UKTI (China).
- 4.13 **Saturday 1st October** – Shanghai. Met with Peel Holdings representatives in China.
- 4.14 **Sunday 2nd October** – Travel to JiangYin. Meetings with local businesses and banks. Presentation re International Trade Centre and discussions re opportunities for investment in Wirral.
- 4.15 **Monday 3rd October** – Further meetings with local businesses and other businesses from across China to discuss International Trade Centre and

investment opportunities. Met with JiangYin Government Officials to discuss potential areas for future cooperation.

4.16 **Tuesday 4th October** – Visited Port facilities at JiangYin. Met with further business people and visited potential sites for future presentations on International Trade Centre to large groups of Businesses from across South East China. Travelled back to Shanghai.

4.17 **Wednesday 5th October** – Shanghai.

4.18 **Thursday 6th October** – Depart for UK.

4.19 The trip was a success in terms of further developing economic links within China and promoting the International Trade Centre proposals.

4.20 The signing of the Sister City Agreement with Taicang was also a further step in developing economic ties between the two areas. A delegation from Taicang is planning to visit Wirral in March/April 2012 to take forward actions agreed in the Sister City Agreement and Suzhou Government officials outlined their proposals for a visit to Wirral later in the year.

4.21 Peels partner in JiangYin has agreed to take forward the opportunities for further economic links between that area and Wirral and will act as the bridge between both areas.

4.22 The Head of UKTI (China) visited Wirral in November and as part of that visit, a tour of the International Trade Centre was given in order that a more clear vision of the opportunity could be gained.

4.23 Peel Holdings have continued to have private commercial discussions following the visit, both at home and abroad, with potential partners and end users and it is expected there will be follow up visits to Wirral by various parties over the coming months.

4.24 A major International Import Expo is to take place in Jiangsu Province at the end of March 2012 and government officials have invited Wirral to the event. Officers are considering the opportunities this event presents.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 None identified in this report.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None identified in this report.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Not applicable

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 None identified in this report

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 The Cost of the visit in September/October 2011 was £6,428.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None identified in this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 *None identified in this report.*

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required?

No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

Yes (specify date) / No (*delete as applicable*)

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 *None identified.*

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 *None identified.*

REPORT AUTHOR: *Kevin Adderley*
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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet- World EXPO	5.11.09
Cabinet- International Investment meeting	23.9.10
International Links (Delegated decision- Council Leader)	8.9.11
Cabinet – Report on Visit to China – October 2010	13. 1 11

Council – 13 February 2012

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 8(1) and are listed in the order received. The actual order in which they are debated will be determined by the party groups in accordance with Standing Order 5(3).

1. IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF SEVERANCE DEALS.

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston

Seconded by Councillor Tom Harney

1. Council believes that “compromise deals” can help release employees from the work force, can be an effective tool and have a part to play in Human Resources management.
2. However, Council also believes that “compromise deals” should be used only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, not a routine tool, and that any process should be democratically accountable, open and transparent.
3. Currently, under the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officers (part 3, schedule 4, page 111, paragraph 28), Chief Officers have the right to make compromise deals with staff to end their employment. Such deals only have to be reported to the Employment and Appointments Committee and Members can only have a vote on the matter if there is a pensions cost.
4. Council notes that current use of “compromise deals” can lead to the perception that deals are being done behind closed doors without the oversight of the Employment and Appointments Committee or Elected Member scrutiny.
5. Council strongly believes that “compromise deals” that offer financial or other types of incentive, should not be used to remove poorly performing staff from the Council work force. Training, support and, ultimately, the disciplinary procedure are the correct tools to be used in relation to poorly performing staff.
6. Council also believes that “compromise deals” should not be used to cover up underlying problems, situations of concern or to remove staff quietly and quickly. To do so has the potential to put the Council’s reputation at risk.
7. Therefore, Council insists that all future “compromise deals”, that include an element of financial or other incentive, are subject to a full democratically accountable process. Council asks that the Employment & Appointments Committee are tasked with forming a Sub-Committee to assess and sign off any compromise deals before any such offer is made to employees. The process and scope of reporting to be agreed by this Sub-Committee. Members for this Sub-Committee are to be co-opted from the list of Members available for the Appeals

Sub-Committee with a proportionality of 1:1:1. The Chair for any such meeting can be decided by agreement of the Sub-Committee.

8. Council would also ask that all such “compromise deals”, once agreed by the Sub-Committee, are reported to the next meeting of the Employment and Appointments Committee, under exempt items if the details are of a sensitive nature.

2. LIBRARIES PAY THE PRICE FOR PARKS

Proposed by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Seconded by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

1. Council expresses its concern at the lack of transparency over the use of £500,000 of money, part of a capital allocation previously set aside for essential works to libraries and sports centres, for gardening equipment.
2. Council strongly believes that, if additional money was required for the purchase of new grass-cutting equipment to meet the shortfall in funding arising from the Labour Cabinet’s decision to keep park maintenance ‘in house’, the Capital Programme should have been increased by an appropriate sum.
3. Council is dismayed that re-designating £500,000 from the cultural services capital allocation for gardening equipment will deprive other cultural assets of much needed investment.
4. Council is reminded that, when Labour came back into office, the Leader promised that libraries would be ‘safe in their hands’. Council is outraged that, by the evidence so far, the Administration’s management of the council’s assets means Wirral’s library buildings, sports centres and museums may now be in danger of neglect and decline.
5. Council is also reminded that, in 2009, when previously in office, Labour started the process to transfer the Council’s Parks maintenance to a private contractor to improve and modernise the service and save money. Yet, when they came back into office in 2011, they did a u-turn on this policy - after around £250,000 had already been spent in preparation work.
6. The effect of this mismanagement has been to place the Council in a position where it has to incur additional costs or risk not being able to cut the grass in our parks and roadsides.
7. Finally, Council notes that, had park maintenance been assigned to an external contractor, this half a million pounds of additional costs for equipment would have been built into the contract price as part of a contract and still saved money on the overall cost of providing the service.
8. Council, therefore, denounces this shocking waste of money by the Labour Administration (already £750,000 on this matter alone and still counting), and

their actions, which are putting much loved libraries and sports centres at risk of decline and decay.

3. FAILURE TO ACT

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

1. Council is extremely concerned that many actions approved by Council as part of the current year's (2011-12) Budget Resolution, many of which also form part of the current (2011-14) Corporate Plan, have not been carried out.
2. These failures to implement include (Council Minute 104, 1/03/2011 refers):
 - (a) "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"
 - (b) "A thorough evaluation of the results and economic impact of our 'Keeping It Local Initiative' will be reported to an appropriate meeting of Cabinet."
 - (c) "'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 is after all, their Council's priorities. 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 Administration's approach of listening, engaging and consulting with our residents."
 - (d) "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 2011-12."
 - (e) "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"
3. Council believes that failure to carry out these actions (or failure to seek elected member approval for alternative courses of action) represents examples of current and continuing failures of corporate governance.
4. Council recognises that any change of Council Administration is likely to result in a change of priorities and of policies. However, Council believes that it is incumbent on the incoming Administration to seek the support of Full Council for

changes to the Budget and Policy framework of the Council and notes that this has not been done.

5. Council condemns the current Administration for their failures to act on the current Budget and Policy Framework.
6. Council also condemns the lack of transparency by the current Administration for failing to set out or seek approval for their policies and spending priorities.
7. Council believes that this shows a cavalier disregard by the current Administration for good corporate governance and the principles of transparency and accountability.
8. Therefore, it is the view of Council that the Labour Party has learnt nothing from the issues reported to Cabinet in September on Corporate Governance.

4. FREEMASONRY

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Anne McArdle

This Council believes that, in the interest of free and open government, and in order to avoid any accusations of a failure to be open and transparent in their dealings with the Council and the public, that any member of the Freemasons be obliged to declare their interest, and to this end:

- (i) Instructs the Chief Executive to make urgent arrangements so that all Council Members who are Freemasons declare the membership in the register of interest immediately.
- (ii) Instructs the Chief Executive to establish an employees' register of interest in which all who are Freemasons declare their membership immediately.

5. NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

Proposed by Councillor Ian Lewis

Seconded by Councillor Sheila Clarke

Council:

- (1) Believes that younger people in Wirral have an important role to play in the life of the Borough and notes that many are already playing a part in community and voluntary organisations with people of all ages.
- (2) Notes the visit by the Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd MP to Leasowe Recreation Centre to meet participants in a pilot scheme for National Citizen Service during 2011 and congratulates those young people who took part, and those who organised it.

- (3) Therefore welcomes the decision by the Coalition Government to offer 30,000 places to young people from around the UK in the next stage of National Citizen Service.
- (4) Requests that all Council Departments be made aware of the programme and for those staff working with young people to promote the opportunities for 16 year olds to take part this year.
- (5) Instructs the Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Minister to express its support for National Citizen Service.

6. COUNCIL TAX

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council:

- (1) Notes that, between 1997 and 2010, Council Tax more than doubled, hitting pensioners and those on low incomes particularly hard.
- (2) Therefore welcomes the offer from the Coalition Government to make an additional £3.3million available to freeze Council Tax in Wirral for a second year.
- (3) Disagrees with the Shadow Local Government Minister in his remarks that the freeze is 'a gimmick'.
- (4) Also welcomes the decision to replace capping of Council Tax by the Government with the opportunity of a local referendum on Council Tax rises exceeding 3.5%.
- (5) Recommends that any of its Members on precepting and levying Boards vote against any increase above 0%.

7. BENEFITS CAP

Proposed by Councillor Andrew Hodson

Seconded by Councillor Les Rowlands

- (1) Council notes that some people are receiving more in benefits than those who work and with average earnings of £26,000 per annum.
- (2) While Council believes that support and help must be protected and improved for those who cannot work due to age or illness, Council does not believe it is right that the earnings of those who do work is sometimes less than the incomes of those who do not work.

- (3) Council welcomes the introduction by the Coalition Government of a 'Benefits Cap'.
- (4) Council, however, is concerned that proposals by the Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary for a lower cap for claimants in the North West and other regions outside of London and the South East, are going too far and too fast.

8. NATIONAL CUTS

Proposed by Councillor David Elderton

Seconded by Councillor John Hale

Council:

- (1) Notes the failure of the previous Government to end 'boom and bust' and that increases in public sector spending were outstripping economic growth in the rest of the economy.
- (2) Believes that we are all in this together and that all parties must recognise the scale of the debt crisis facing the economy if urgent and necessary action to restore public finances is to succeed.
- (3) Therefore welcomes the decision by Ed Miliband and Ed Balls to accept the reductions in public spending being made by the Coalition Government and calls on Labour politicians in Wirral to accept the need for reductions in public spending.
- (4) Also notes that the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Chancellor have also committed to support the limits on public sector pay and wishes them success in persuading their paymasters in the trade unions to also accept this pay restraint.