

# COUNCIL

Monday, 27 April 2009

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Adrian Jones) in the Chair  
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Andrew Hodson)

Councillors	RL Abbey	K Hayes	S Quinn
	T Anderson	P Hayes	M Redfern
	C Blakeley	S Holbrook	P Reisdorf
	A Bridson	A Jennings	L Rennie
	S Clarke	P Johnson	D Roberts
	IO Coates	J Keeley	L Rowlands
	J Crabtree	S Kelly	J Salter
	G Davies	B Kenny	H Smith
	P Davies	D Kirwan	T Smith
	WJ Davies	D Knowles	W Smith
	F Doyle	I Lewis	P Southwood
	W Duffey	AR McLachlan	J Stapleton
	D Elderton	C Meaden	A Taylor
	G Ellis	D Mitchell	S Taylor
	S Foulkes	R Moon	C Teggins
	L Fraser	S Moseley	G Watt
	G Gardiner	S Mountney	R Wilkins
	P Gilchrist	S Niblock	J Williams
	JE Green	C Povall	P Williams
	J Hale	A Pritchard	K Wood
	T Harney	J Quinn	

Apologies Councillors J George M McLaughlin

## 138 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor welcomed Danielle Hesketh, a Year 6 pupil at Egremont Primary school, who gave a brief presentation on the issue of bullying. The members of the Council warmly applauded Danielle for a most informative speech.

The Mayor referred to the recent deaths of Dr David Caldwell, Liberal member of the former Wallasey Borough Council (1960 -1974) and subsequently of the Merseyside County Council and Mr E G (Gordon) Williams, Honorary Alderman of Wirral Borough Council, Labour member for the Bromborough ward 1982-1990 and a member of the former County Borough of Birkenhead 1957-1960, 1963-1969 and 1971-1974, and the Council stood in silent tribute to their memory.

The Mayor announced that the recipient of the Andy Day Memorial Award for 2008/09, which was presented annually in memory of a former colleague to confer recognition on a back-bench member of the Council who, in the Mayor's opinion, had demonstrated the qualities of dedication and selflessness possessed by the late councillor, would be Councillor Brian Kenny.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor George Davies on his completion of 21 years continuous service to the Council.

The Mayor thanked all the Councillors for their contributions at Council during his past year of office. The Leader of the Council (Councillor Foulkes) paid tribute to the outstanding work carried out during the year by the Mayor and Mayoress and to their contribution to the life of the Borough during their period of office. The Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups (Councillors Green and Holbrook) supported those remarks.

## 139 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillors Chris Blakeley, Bill Duffey, Leah Fraser, Karen Hayes, Paul Hayes, James Keeley, Ian Lewis, Suzanne Moseley, Simon Mountney, Tony Pritchard, Leslie Rennie, Sue Taylor and Kate Wood declared personal interests in minute 152 (Motion 4: Payment of Local Housing Allowance) by virtue of their membership of the local Conservative Party organisation which was a private landlord.

Councillor Jeff Green declared a personal interest in minute 158 (Motion 10: Local Transport Bill "Quality Contract") by virtue of his employment and left the chamber whilst the matter was considered.

Councillors Geoffrey Watt, Tony Pritchard and Chris Teggin declared prejudicial interests in minute 152 (Motion 4: Payment of Local Housing Allowance) due to them being private landlords and left the chamber whilst the matter was considered.

Councillors Karen Hayes and Paul Hayes declared personal interests in minute 152 (Motion 4: Payment of Local Housing Allowance) due to their relationship with a private landlord.

Councillor Holbrook declared a prejudicial interest in minute 154 (Motion 6: Air Quality) by virtue of his employment and left the chamber whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Kirwan declared a prejudicial interest in Minute 149 (Motion 1: Secretary of State's Intervention on Wirral Library Closures) and minute 153 (Motion 5: Investments in Wallasey) due to having been engaged in legal proceedings connected with the Strategic Asset Review and left the chamber whilst the matter was considered.

Councillor Kate Wood declared a personal interest in minute 150 (Motion 2: Nursery Classes and Sure Start Children's Centres) as a grandparent.

## 140 **PETITIONS**

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

(a) Councillor David Elderton on behalf of 60 residents of Macdona Drive, Heath Close and adjacent culs de sac in West Kirby requesting urgent resurfacing of roads in the area as promised six years ago;

(b) Councillor Walter Smith on behalf of 264 signatories objecting to the introduction of speed bumps along Higher Bebington Road and Pulford Road, Bebington;

(c) Councillor Leah Fraser on behalf of 162 signatories requesting the provision of a free period of parking in Liscard to facilitate those residents wishing to shop in Liscard Town Centre;

(d) Councillor Ann McLachlan on behalf of 195 signatories objecting to a planning application for the erection of mobile telephone communications equipment adjacent to Aldi, Laird Street, Birkenhead.

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

#### 141 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 March, 2009 had been circulated to members and it was –

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

#### 142 LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council requested that Standing Order 8 (1) be waived to allow him to move an emergency motion.

**Resolved (unanimously) - That Standing Order 8 (1) be waived to allow the submission of an emergency motion.**

#### 143 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HILLSBOROUGH DISASTER

On a motion moved by Councillor Steve Foulkes, seconded by Councillor Paul Hayes and supported by Councillor Frank Doyle, it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That -**

**(1) This Council solemnly remembers the tragic death of 96 men, woman and children, who died as a result of the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster on April 15 1989, including the death of twelve citizens of this borough.**

**(2) Council notes the courage and dignity of the friends and families of those who died and who continue to fight for truth and justice on behalf of those they lost.**

**(3) Council repudiates the views of those who continue to peddle myths about the involvement of Liverpool fans in the disaster and acknowledges that the actions of many Liverpool fans on that day helped to save lives.**

**(4) Council therefore resolves:**

**(i) To request the Chief Executive, on behalf of the council, to write to the Hillsborough Support Groups and convey this Council's support for their campaign to secure justice for their loved ones who died as a result of the disaster, and to express our thanks for the work they have done and continue to do, to ensure such a disaster is never repeated.**

**(ii) To request the Chief Executive, on behalf of the council, to write to the Home Secretary, welcoming her decision to release documents relating to the disaster, and to seek assurances that what will follow will be the complete disclosure of all documents relating to the disaster as soon as possible.**

**144 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

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

Two matters, Cabinet minute 415 (19 March) (Constitutional amendments) and Cabinet minute 471 (23 April) (Overview and Scrutiny Committees), were submitted for approval but were the subject of amendments (see minutes 155 and 157 below).

**Resolved – That the following matters be approved:**

**(i) Cabinet minute 406 (19 March) – Nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2009/10 (This minute will require approval by the Annual Meeting of the Council)**

**(ii) Cabinet minute 407 (4) (19 March) – Asset Management Update (nomination to Community Fund Working Group)**

**(iii) Cabinet minute 425 (19 March) – Mersey Gateway Bridge Project Group Representative**

**(iv) Cabinet minute 450 (9 April) – Partnerships Framework and Toolkit**

**(v) Cabinet minute 451 (9 April) – Determination of Planning Applications and Planning Related Matters (amendment to Scheme of Delegation)**

**(vi) Cabinet minute 453 (9 April) – Response to the Current Economic Conditions (amendment to Scheme of Delegation for business support)**

**(vii) Cabinet minute 470 (23 April) – Members' Allowances**

**145 MATTERS FOR NOTING**

**Resolved - That the following matters be noted, as required by the Constitution:**

**(i) Cabinet minute 426 (19 March) – Wirral Housing Needs and Market Assessment and Strategic Economic Viability Assessment – Re-engagement of Consultants (Reason: compliance with Contract Procedure Rule 5.2).**

This minute was also subject to a correction and should have included reasons for the decision and should read as follows (*additional wording in italics*):

The Director of Regeneration sought approval of the appointment of Fordham consultants - to carry out work in relation to an update of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Borough and to undertake a Strategic Economic Viability Assessment (SEVA) to provide the evidence base for the preparation of the Local Development Framework - without the need to obtain written quotes pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules.

*The reasons for that recommendation were that:*

*(i) having undertaken the Council's current SHMA, Fordham was considered to be the only company that had the detailed knowledge to update the assessment within the timescales required;*

*(ii) to seek and engage an alternative consultant to undertake the work would significantly increase the cost of the commission and the time taken to do it;*

*(iii) there was also an urgent need to progress with the SEVA because of recent legal cases and the necessity of having the assessment to inform planning applications regarding affordable housing;*

*(iv) because the viability assessment was closely related to the SHMA then detailed knowledge of the latter was very important to the production of the former assessment.*

**Resolved:** - That the appointment of Fordham consultants to carry out the work identified in the report, without the need to obtain written quotes pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules, be approved *and the Council be advised accordingly.*

**(ii) Cabinet minute 434 (19 March) – Sale of land at Woodhall Avenue / Royston Avenue, Wallasey (Reason: waiving of call-in).**

#### 146 **QUESTIONS**

No questions having been received from members of the public, nor any written questions from Council members it was:

**Resolved (unanimously) – That Standing Order 11 be suspended and question time be dispensed with.**

#### 147 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

No specific references had been made from overview and scrutiny committees.

#### 148 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

The matters listed for debate in accordance with Standing Order 5(1) (I) were dealt with as indicated in minutes 149 to 158 below.

The Leader of the Council requested that Standing Order 7 (8) be applied from 8.30pm.

**Resolved (unanimously) – That Standing Order 7 (8) be applied from 8.30pm.**

149 **MOTION: SECRETARY OF STATE'S INTERVENTION ON WIRRAL LIBRARY CLOSURES**

Proposed by Councillor Green  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rennie

(1) Council notes:

(i) the continued and consistent opposition of the Wirral public to the Labour/Liberal Democrat administration's plans to close 11 of the Borough's libraries;

(ii) the lack of any thorough or meaningful consultation on its closure programme and the attempt to prevent Council staff from expressing their views and engaging with the public on the implications of the closure programme;

(iii) the Secretary of State's decision to intervene in the dispute regarding library closures in Wirral, stating as he does the concerns of the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council (MLA), whom he asked the Council to work with in February 2009;

(iv) the MLA's statement that it has been concerned about the Wirral Labour/Liberal Democrat administration's plans for Library Services and that they have been working with the Council behind the scenes in the hope that they could get the plans adapted.

(v) that the MLA has chosen to make public its concerns about the situation in Wirral.

(vi) that the Secretary of State has called for an Inquiry which will be the first of its kind since 1991;

(vii) that the budget amendments put forward by the Conservative Group and members of the Liberal Democrat Group demonstrated that the library closure programme is unnecessary to create a sustainable council budget.

(2) Council believes:

(i) that ready access to high quality libraries for all is absolutely central to a truly public service;

(ii) that the ill thought through and savage attack on Wirral's much loved and valued Library Service, its supporters and users has brought national shame on Wirral Borough Council and that, if the Labour/Liberal Democrat administration had been prepared to listen to the Conservative Group, the MLA (as it now transpires), the public and even some of its own members, this national shaming of Wirral Borough Council would have been avoided.

(3) Council therefore calls on the Labour/Liberal Democrat Cabinet to:

(i) permanently withdraw its library closure proposals;

(ii) halt any marketing of libraries marked for closure to businesses or other groups;

(iii) demand that its senior officers work with current library staff, users and supporters in a new and genuine partnership to identify a vision for its library service as a matter of urgency;

(iv) draw up a specific, measurable, achievable and realistic action plan on how it will use the current library network to ensure they play a central role at the heart of our disparate communities, providing a rich source of information, wisdom and learning.

(4) Council further expresses its view that, if the current Labour/Liberal Democrat Cabinet cannot or will not accept this notice of motion, it should resign immediately and allow the formation of a new Cabinet that will.

**Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):**

Proposed by Councillor Holbrook

Seconded by Councillor Moon

Delete part (1) (i) to (vii)

Retain part (2) (i) and renumber as (1)

Delete the remainder and add new paragraphs (2) and (3) as indicated below:

(2) Therefore Council welcomes the decision of the Secretary of State to hold an inquiry into Wirral's plans to modernise its library service; and will co-operate fully with it.

(3) Council anticipates the inquiry will provide a further opportunity for the public to make representations; and, in order not to prejudice the outcome, supports the suspension of any library closures pending its completion.

Following a debate, during which the Council adjourned for 15 minutes at 7.15pm, the amendment was put and carried (37:24).

**Resolved (37:24) -**

**(1) Council believes that ready access to high quality libraries for all is absolutely central to a truly public service.**

**(2) Therefore Council welcomes the decision of the Secretary of State to hold an inquiry into Wirral's plans to modernise its library service; and will co-operate fully with it.**

**(3) Council anticipates the inquiry will provide a further opportunity for the public to make representations; and, in order not to prejudice the outcome, supports the suspension of any library closures pending its completion.**

**150 MOTION: NURSERY CLASSES AND SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

Proposed by Councillor Kenny

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

(1) Council welcomes the commitment of this Government to the welfare of young children and recognises the major advances that have been made in the provision of nursery school classes, with every three and four-year-old now able to take up a nursery school place, and in the provision of help for younger children and their families.

(2) In particular, Council notes that ten years ago there were no Sure Start Children's Centres and that today there are 19 on the Wirral and nearly 3,000 nationally, thanks to over £7 billion funding from a Labour government.

(3) Council further notes that, from April 2009, funding for Sure Start Children's Centres nationally will top a billion pounds a year and notes with pleasure that we can see the real impact this radical reform is having on children and families throughout the Wirral.

(4) Council expresses its real dismay that all this would be put at risk if the Tories were elected into power and that David Cameron's stated plans to cut these services would leave families without the support they need and would be a devastating blow to parents and children in communities across Wirral.

(5) Council recognises that Sure Start Children's Centres make a massive difference to parents and under-fives, throughout the Wirral, and welcomes the fact that every family within the Wirral will have access to a Children's Centre by March 2010.

(6) Council is therefore appalled that the Conservative Party's plans to cut £200m each year from the Sure Start budget could see at least four Children's Centres on Wirral forced to close their doors.

(7) Council further notes with concern that the Conservative Party is also committed to restricting the Department for Children, Schools and Families budget to a 1% real terms increase from April this year - representing a £300 million cut - and that, although no announcement of where these cuts will fall has been made, there is a real possibility that this could mean further cuts to Sure Start Children's Centres in the Wirral.

(8) Council wishes to place on record its thanks to everyone concerned with making the Sure Start Children's Centres programme such a success in the Wirral, to the benefit of many thousands of children and their families, and agrees to do even more to publicise their services throughout the Wirral.

**Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):**

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke  
Seconded by Councillor Karen Hayes

Delete the whole of the motion and substitute:

(1) This Council notes:

(i) the entire Council's commitment to improving the life chances of all young children;

(ii) the Conservative Group's full support over a long period for Wirral's Sure Start programme;

(2) Council expresses its disappointment that, with so many issues facing Wirral, the Labour Group has chosen to falsely accuse the Conservatives of planning to cut these services by reducing £200 million (almost 20%) from the Sure Start budget.

(3) Council believes that Sure Start should be more 'Health-led', noting that under the current Government the number of trained health visitors has reduced by 2000.

(4) Council welcomes the Conservative Party's initiative to use money set aside for outreach workers to pay for 4200 health visitors, enabling all parents to be better supported through the crucial early years of their child's life.

(5) Council believes that the Labour Group would be better working for the introduction of more effective ways of helping families rather than seeking to play on their fears.

The amendment was put and lost (24:37). The motion was put and lost (17:44).

151 **MOTION: EU FUNDING FOR ENGLISH REGIONS**

Proposed by Councillor Holbrook  
Seconded by Councillor Kelly

(1) This Council condemns the refusal by the Government to apply for a six-month extension for European ERDF funding for English regions, while allowing Scots, Welsh and Irish to apply for such an extension.

(2) This Council notes that the extension offer from the European Union was designed to enable all regions receiving ERDF funds to spend their unused money on tackling the recession.

(3) This Council believes the consequent loss of much needed funding for Merseyside will be about £25m, most of which will find its way back to the Treasury, at a time when our small businesses are crying out for help.

(4) This Council therefore calls on HM Government to:

- (i) apply the money it has confiscated from the Regions back into the regional economies, and not use it to subsidise general government spending, and
- (ii) ensure that the North West is fully reimbursed so that our small- and medium-sized enterprises can receive help as originally intended by the European Union.

(5) This Council also calls upon Wirral's MPs and North West MEPs to lobby the Government on the Council's behalf.

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

**Resolved (unanimously): That the motion be approved.**

152 **MOTION: PAYMENT OF LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE**

Proposed by Councillor Blakeley  
Seconded by Councillor Leah Fraser

(1) This Council notes that Wirral is successfully administering the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), following its introduction in April 2008 and congratulates officers and staff in the Finance Department for their work.

(2) Council, however, notes that the Government has excluded the option of the LHA being paid direct to tenants using their existing Department for Work and Pensions Benefit Account.

(3) Council is concerned that this restriction results in many tenants without any form of bank account receiving their LHA by cheque, and that companies cashing their cheques typically charge 15% commission, as well as increasing the risks of fraud and theft for some of the most vulnerable people in society.

(4) Council therefore requests that the Chief Executive and Wirral's Members of Parliament lobby for the restrictions on the LHA payments to tenants to be lifted.

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

**Resolved (unanimously): That the motion be approved.**

153 **MOTION: INVESTMENTS IN WALLASEY**

Proposed by Councillor Abbey  
Seconded by Councillor Salter

(1) Council welcomes major new investments in Wallasey, with a brand new primary school serving the communities of Seacombe and Liscard being built at Park Primary, at a cost of £6.4m, and £13.6m spent on the New Primary Care centre at VCH, with a further £2m being invested in extensions to GP practices at St. George's Medical Centre and Somerville Medical Centre and another £8.7m of public money being spent on an extensive major Extra Care Housing scheme.

(2) Council believes that the people of Wallasey benefit most from this kind of positive action and that the persistent negative campaigning of the Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, which included opposing the proper use of surveillance to effect successful prosecutions for anti-social behaviour and for rogue traders, can only damage the interests of the people she says she wishes to serve.

**Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):**

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser  
Seconded by Councillor Kate Wood

Delete paragraph (2) and replace with:

(2) Council, however, regrets the loss of local, community-based facilities in the Wallasey constituency, notably:

nine Post Offices

Wards 6 and 7 at Victoria Central Hospital

the Central Cutting Unit at Remploy

the loss of green space, such as the Moreton AFC pitch and Webster's Market Gardens.

(3) Council also notes with alarm the on-going Strategic Asset Review and the potential to decimate the Council's cultural and community services in the town including Wallasey Village Library and Seacombe Library.

(4) Council instructs the Cabinet to listen more carefully in future to the people of Wallasey who, at every opportunity, have demonstrated their opposition to the loss of services and facilities in their communities.

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

The amendment was put and lost (24:37). The motion was put and lost (17:44).

154 **MOTION: AIR QUALITY**

Proposed by Councillor Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Harney

(1) This Council

(i) notes that a wide range of locations in Wirral are being used for the collection of data on nitrogen dioxide levels and welcomes the fact that during 2008 additional sites were selected in the Eastham area, both near to industrial sites and along the New Chester Road, and that a clearer picture of pollution levels is being obtained;

(ii) recognises that in 2008 environmental health officers, together with officers from the Environment Agency, attended meetings organised by the Eastham Village Preservation Association and explained the arrangements for the control and monitoring of air pollution in the area, along with the steps required to investigate emissions from existing and proposed processes in the area.

(2) Council believes that these steps have been important in creating and building confidence in the procedures and controls currently in place, but believes that consideration should now be given to the establishment of an Air Quality Management Area to meet residents' concerns about the concentration of industry and traffic in the area.

(3) Council therefore requests officers to consider and report upon whether an Air Quality Management Area can be established in the Eastham area having regard to the available data and to the Policy Guidance (PG09) issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in February 2009.

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

**Resolved (unanimously): That the motion be approved.**

155 **AMENDMENT: CABINET MINUTE 415 (CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS)**

Moved by Councillor Green  
Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rennie

Delete paragraph (1) and substitute:

(1) This Council does not agree to the delegation of all non-key decisions to portfolio holders.

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

**Resolved (24:37) – That the amendment be not approved and minute 415 be confirmed accordingly.**

156 **MOTION: CONSERVATIVE 'DO NOTHING' APPROACH TO POLITICS**

Proposed by Councillor Ann McLachlan  
Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts

(1) This Council condemns the Conservative “do nothing” approach to politics both nationally and locally.

(2) Council notes that:

this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that left our schools run down and dilapidated, our children without books to learn from or materials to work with and teachers demoralised and exhausted with large class sizes;

this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that slashed affordable house building programmes and sold off the nation’s stock without replacing it;

this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that preached that wealth would “trickle down” from the richest in society to the poorest;

this is the bankrupt Conservative policy whose non-intervention saw the highest levels of unemployment ever.

(3) Council believes that the only thing the Conservatives have learnt from their period in the wilderness is how to create a new wilderness, both locally and nationally.

(4) Council therefore condemns local and national policies that seek to persuade the electorate that in a time of economic difficulty nothing need change and no intervention is necessary, and which promise to do what they believe will gain them votes while making plans to cut the very finances that would be needed to deliver on those promises.

(5) Council believes, with regret, that ultimately Conservative politics will always be dominated by the in-built drive to protect those in positions of privilege at the expense of the more vulnerable in society.

**Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):**

Proposed by Councillor Green (7 minutes)

Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rennie (3 minutes)

Delete all after 'This Council' in paragraph (1) and substitute the following:

(1) .....is surprised that, in the Notice of Motion that this amendment seeks to change, the Labour Group has chosen to accuse Conservatives locally and nationally of doing nothing and notes with interest the comments of Frank Field MP:

"Week after week MPs have been turning up but with almost no serious work to do. There is the odd bill, to be sure. But there is no legislative programme to speak of. Even the debates that are put on to fill in time are ones that deny MPs a vote. The whole exercise is vacuous.

Labour MPs are left staring into the abyss - that nothingness of Harold Wilson's statement. There is a wish amongst all sections of the PLP for the government to start governing. We wouldn't care too much whether the ideas were Blairite or non-Blairite, as long as we could give the impression of supporting a government that was using the next year to mark out why we should stay in office."

(2) Council is also surprised that the Notice of Motion that this amendment seeks to change uses the word 'bankrupt' four times when even Vince Cable has pointed out that Labour has lost its moral authority, that economic failure has killed the New Labour brand. Just as good banks are being separated from bad banks, there is a separation in progressive politics, and Labour is the bad bank with a legacy of toxic policies and failed management.

(3) Council believes that:

(i) whatever the Budget spin, Gordon Brown can't get away from the fact that he has run out of money and saddled Wirral families with massive debt. Only months ago, the Prime Minister was calling for huge extra spending, but he has had his credit card ripped up by the Governor of Bank of England. Council is therefore drawn to the conclusion that, like every other Labour government, this one has run out of money, and no amount of spin can cover it up.

(ii) the e-mails from No 10 Downing Street show a terrible misappropriation of Government time when the country is struggling to get through a recession. It makes it look like the priority of the team around Gordon Brown is not about saving jobs but is instead about saving the Prime Minister's skin, and, in the words of Chris Hulne:

"The Prime Minister doesn't get that British politics needs more than tinkering, it needs to be fundamentally fixed."

(4) Council expresses the hope that the Labour Party locally disavows smearing its opponents and spinning its activities to Wirral residents and will demand that the Labour Party nationally does the same.

(5) Council calls on the Wirral Labour Group to abandon their juvenile tactics and start using its opportunities to put down Notices of Motion in the Council Chamber to highlight issues of concern to Wirral residents and offer suggestions on how to improve their quality of life.

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

The amendment was put and lost (24:36) (One abstention). The motion was put and carried (36:24). (One abstention).

**Resolved (36:24:1) –**

**(1) This Council condemns the Conservative “do nothing” approach to politics both nationally and locally.**

**(2) Council notes that:**

**this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that left our schools run down and dilapidated, our children without books to learn from or materials to work with and teachers demoralised and exhausted with large class sizes;**

**this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that slashed affordable house building programmes and sold off the nation’s stock without replacing it;**

**this is the bankrupt Conservative policy that preached that wealth would “trickle down” from the richest in society to the poorest;**

**this is the bankrupt Conservative policy whose non-intervention saw the highest levels of unemployment ever.**

**(3) Council believes that the only thing the Conservatives have learnt from their period in the wilderness is how to create a new wilderness, both locally and nationally.**

**(4) Council therefore condemns local and national policies that seek to persuade the electorate that in a time of economic difficulty nothing need change and no intervention is necessary, and which promise to do what they believe will gain them votes while making plans to cut the very finances that would be needed to deliver on those promises.**

**(5) Council believes, with regret, that ultimately Conservative politics will always be dominated by the in-built drive to protect those in positions of privilege at the expense of the more vulnerable in society.**

157 **AMENDMENT: CABINET MINUTE 471 (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES)**

Moved by Councillor Green

Seconded by Councillor Mrs Rennie

(1) Council notes the Labour/Liberal Democrat Executive's desire to alter the arrangements for scrutinising their activity.

(2) Council believes that its scrutiny function should hold the Executive accountable for its decisions and be sufficiently understandable to the public so that it acts as their forum where their views and opinions can be aired and discussed.

(3) Council believes that the changes recommended do not meet that aim and that scrutiny committees aligned to the Council's departmental structure would ensure a greater level of accountability. This would produce five committees:

Adult Social Services

Children and Young People

Corporate Services combined with Regeneration (under the title Regeneration and Leisure) and incorporating the Crime and Disorder function

Finance combined with Law, HR and Asset Management

Technical Services.

(4) That, if it is appropriate to have a Scrutiny Programme Board, with responsibility for call-ins, then it should be a stand-alone committee

(5) That the chairs of scrutiny committees should not be allocated to parties represented on the Executive.

(6) That, subject to the Council accepting the above, the remainder of the Cabinet's recommendations relating to overview and scrutiny committees, namely those set out in minute 415(3) and minute 471(1) and (5), be accepted.

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

**Resolved (24:37) – That the amendment be not approved and minute 471 be confirmed accordingly.**

158 **MOTION: LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL "QUALITY CONTRACT"**

Proposed by Councillor Knowles

Seconded by Councillor Harry Smith

(1) This Council notes that in November 2008 the Labour Government enacted the long awaited Local Transport Bill.

(2) Council further notes that one of the main tenets of the Act is the ability for local authorities to regulate bus services by the use of a "Quality Contract" when other forms of partnership agreements fail.

(3) Council condemns the fact that nationally the Conservative Party have threatened, if elected to office, to rescind this part of the Act, even if the travelling public, the bus operators and local authorities all find that the contract is working.

(4) Council calls on local Conservatives to oppose their shadow transport minister and join their colleagues across the country in condemning this threat.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(3):

Proposed by Councillor Blakeley  
Seconded by Councillor Lewis

Delete paragraph (1) and replace with:

(1) This Council notes that in November 2008 Parliament enacted the Local Transport Bill

Delete paragraphs (3) and (4) and substitute:

(3) This Council urges future governments to support the Quality Contracts element of the Local Transport Act 2008.

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

The amendment was put and lost (23:37). The motion was put and carried (37:23).

**Resolved (37:23) –**

**(1) This Council notes that in November 2008 the Labour Government enacted the long awaited Local Transport Bill.**

**(2) Council further notes that one of the main tenets of the Act is the ability for local authorities to regulate bus services by the use of a “Quality Contract” when other forms of partnership agreements fail.**

**(3) Council condemns the fact that nationally the Conservative Party have threatened, if elected to office, to rescind this part of the Act, even if the travelling public, the bus operators and local authorities all find that the contract is working.**

**(4) Council calls on local Conservatives to oppose their shadow transport minister and join their colleagues across the country in condemning this threat.**

## 159 **VACANCIES**

There were no nominations to vacancies submitted.