



Council

Town Hall
Wallasey

6 December, 2013

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.15 pm on Monday, 16 December 2013** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects :

Contact Officer: Andrew Mossop
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Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant 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 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

3. PETITIONS

To receive petitions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 21.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To deal with questions from members of the public, in accordance with Appendix 1 to Standing Orders.

5. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 30)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 14 October, 12 November and 2 December, 2013.

6. MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL (Pages 31 - 50)

To consider any recommendations of the Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet Member and Committees which require the approval of the Council. The relevant minutes or reports are attached or will be circulated; copies of the related reports can be provided for Council members on request.

A. Cabinet – 10 December, 2013

Minute on Budget Options
Minute on Council Tax Base
(These minutes will be provided in a supplement to the Council summons)

B. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances

The Council is required to consider the recommendations of the Panel.

C. Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee – 26 November, 2013

Minute on Revisions to the Council's Constitution and schedule 2 relating to these proposed revisions are attached.

7. LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND CHAIRS REPORTS (Pages 51 - 80)

To receive the written reports of the Leader, Cabinet Members and Chairs of the Policy and Performance Committees and receive questions and answers on any of those reports in accordance with Standing Orders 10(2)(a) and 11.

8. MATTERS FOR NOTING (Pages 81 - 84)

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).

A. Cabinet – 10 October, 2013

Minute 67 – Financial Monitoring 2013/14 (Month 4)
Minute 68 – Financial Monitoring 2013/14 (Month 5)

B. Cabinet – 7 November, 2013

Minute 85 – Financial Monitoring 2013/14 (Month 6)

9. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

To consider Members' general questions to the Mayor, Cabinet Member or Committee Chair in accordance with Standing Orders 10 (2)(b) and 11.

10. MATTERS REFERRED FROM POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEES

To consider and determine any references from the Policy and Performance Committees.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION (Pages 85 - 86)

Notices of motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1), are attached. They are listed in the order received, and the full text of each motion is attached. The Mayor, having considered each motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) has decided that they will be dealt with as follows:

- (i). **Wirral Council Improvement Board** (To be debated)
- (ii). **Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control** (Mayor to refer to the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee)
- (iii). **Wirral Labour's Cost Of Living Rises** (To be debated)

12. VACANCIES (Pages 87 - 88)

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.



Head of Legal and Member Services

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 5

COUNCIL

Monday, 14 October 2013

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Dave Mitchell) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Steve Foulkes)

Councillors	RL Abbey	T Harney	C Povall
	C Blakeley	P Hayes	D Realey
	E Boulton	A Hodson	L Rennie
	A Brighthouse	K Hodson	D Roberts
	P Brightmore	M Hornby	L Rowlands
	W Clements	M Johnston	J Salter
	A Cox	AER Jones	H Smith
	J Crabtree	C Jones	T Smith
	G Davies	P Kearney	W Smith
	P Davies	S Kelly	J Stapleton
	WJ Davies	B Kenny	M Sullivan
	D Dodd	A Leech	A Sykes
	P Doughty	I Lewis	J Walsh
	D Elderton	AR McLachlan	G Watt
	G Ellis	M McLaughlin	S Whittingham
	P Gilchrist	C Meaden	J Williamson
	P Glasman	B Mooney	I Williams
	JE Green	S Mountney	KJ Williams
	R Gregson	C Muspratt	S Williams
	P Hackett	S Niblock	
	J Hale	T Norbury	

Apologies Councillors L Fraser P Williams

Prior to the first item of business, in the absence of his chaplain the Revd Beth Glover, the Mayor invited her curate, the Revd Maureen Coats to lead the Council in prayers.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary and/or any other relevant interests in connection with any matters to be determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

Councillors S Niblock, L Rennie, D Roberts, and J Stapleton declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 – Recommendation from the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee: Notice of Motion ‘Cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service’ (see minute 40 post) by virtue of their appointment to the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor A Sykes declared his non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 – Leader’s, Executive Members’ and Policy and Performance Committee Chairs Reports (see minute 33 post) by virtue of him being a school governor of Thingwall Primary School.

30 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred to the sad news of the recent death Sylvia Hodrien, former Labour Councillor for Upton ward.

He referred also to the sad news of the death of Jim Edwards, former Labour Councillor for Egremont ward in 1972 and who, upon reorganisation, represented Moreton Ward until 1978. Jim was re-elected to the Council in 1980 representing Leasowe Ward and was a former Mayor of Wirral in 1990/1991.

The Council stood in silence, as a mark of respect.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Leah Fraser and Pat Williams.

31 **PETITIONS**

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

- (i) Councillor Les Rowlands on behalf of 74 signatories objecting to the proposal to sell a plot of land at the corner of Boundary Lane and Telegraph Road, Heswall.
- (ii) Councillor Stuart Kelly on behalf of 110 signatories requesting the Council to improve the lighting on the pathway from the Holmlands area to Woodchurch High School and Woodchurch Leisure Centre.
- (iii) Councillor Phill Brightmore on behalf of 237 signatories requesting the renewal of pavements in Heywood Boulevard, Thingwall.
- (iv) Councillor Pat Hackett on behalf of 100 signatories objecting to a proposal to sell off the car park in Field Road, New Brighton.

Resolved – That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with Standing Order 34.

32 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 15 July and 19 September 2013 had been circulated to Members and, it was –

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

33 **LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS**

The Leader of the Council presented his summary report upon matters relevant to his portfolio. He responded to questions from Councillors Green,

Roberts, Kelly, Blakeley, Whittingham, A Hodson and Johnston and made a number of additional comments, including –

- He referred to the success of the recent delegation he had led to Taicang, Wirral's sister city in China, and was confident that Wirral would see considerable investment associated with the International Trade Centre. He was pleased that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had recognised the impact the Chinese economy in the global market and had followed Wirral's example in also sending a recent trade delegation to China.
- With regard to the Scrutiny Review that had been undertaken in relation to the International Trade Centre, he confirmed that the ITC was a key priority for both the Council and Peel. He anticipated that a cross party working group would soon be put in place to take forward the scrutiny recommendations.
- A school teacher exchange was also an element of the recent delegation to China and he would report to a future meeting upon the development of educational links.
- He referred to the protocol of exchanging gifts with Chinese delegates and indicated that a number of gifts that had been unable to be delivered had been returned at no additional cost and would be kept for future visits to Wirral by Chinese officials.
- He confirmed that a report would be presented to an early meeting of the Cabinet upon the support to SME's and the strategic approach to partnerships.
- He was pleased that Members had found the Elected Member Annual Conference to be beneficial and he had been encouraged by positive comments that had been received from a number of speakers.
- In recognising the recent appointment of Esther McVey as Minister for Employment, he hoped that she would endeavour to influence changes to Government policies which had been so damaging to Wirral residents.
- With regard to a question which sought information related to a reported substantial payment to a Member of staff, the Leader indicated that he had nothing further to add to a communication on the matter from the Chief Executive that had been sent to all Members of the Council.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Phil Davies be noted

Councillor Chris Jones presented her Cabinet portfolio report on Adult Social Care. Her response to questions from Councillors Kelly, Mountney, Leech and Gilchrist included the following comments –

- There had been a significant improvement in services through transformational changes in the way that services in Adult Social Care were delivered and commissioned and she commented that the improvements had been largely as a result of the hard work and commitment of officers. She confirmed that it was intended that the service would be delivered without the use of zero hour contracts.
- She was pleased that changes to a number of residential and day services agreed by the Cabinet in June had been delivered on time and within budget and she confirmed that those people affected by the

development of a smaller service at Moreton, who had been relocated to other services, had settled well.

- With regard to the impact of the new domiciliary contracts, there was a significant emphasis to support the principles of the “Ethical Care Charter” and appropriate monitoring would be undertaken.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Chris Jones be noted.

Councillor Adrian Jones presented his Central Services portfolio report and agreed to provide written responses to questions from Members concerning –

- Further information requested upon the implementation of the Welfare Reform Programme (Councillor Walsh)
- Following a number of recent IT outages, what action is to be taken to avoid further disruptions to Members IT services (Councillor Blakeley)
- To provide additional information in relation to pay increases to the top ten Council officers from 2010/2011 to the present, as part of an overall saving (Councillor Ellis)
- To provide assurance that office accommodation will continue to be provided for trade union staff in the light of a forthcoming Cabinet report on asset management (Councillor Mooney)

In response to a question from Councillor Sykes with regard to the site of the former Stanley School in Thingwall, Councillor Jones affirmed that he would be pleased to work with the adjacent Thingwall Primary School to ensure the Stanley School site was put to good use.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Adrian Jones be noted.

Questions were then invited to Councillor Tony Smith on his Children’s Services portfolio report and his responses to questions from Councillors W Smith, Sykes and Brightmore included the following comments –

- He was very pleased to report that, once again, this year Wirral schools and colleges had attained excellent results, particularly those in inner city areas. He praised the hard work of students, parents and staff and commented that the achievements in Wirral were set against a decline elsewhere in the country.
- He welcomed the additional early years funding for 2 year olds and hoped that it would contribute to continued improvement in educational standards.
- He provided a summary of the impact of Wirral’s intensive family intervention programme, the main focus of which was to improve school attendance, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour and increase the number of parents in employment. He referred to a recent visit by Louise Casey, national lead for the Troubled Families programme who had recognised that progress was good, with a large number of families achieving positive outcomes.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Tony Smith be noted.

Councillor Hackett then presented his Economy portfolio report and his responses to questions from Councillors Elderton, Gregson, Watt, Doughty and Blakeley included the following comments –

- An increase in parking charges had been as a result of government cuts to local authority funding. However, the impact of parking charges upon the viability of town centre businesses was part of scrutiny work being undertaken and he noted that there had been no involvement in the scrutiny work by Conservative Group members.
- Approval for the continued delivery of the Apprenticeship Programme was given in August and he was pleased to report that 55 placements in Wirral businesses had been secured for young people not currently in education, employment or training.
- In the light of reports that the provision of superfast broadband in Wirral was put back to 2014/2015, he reported that a contract had been signed with BT to deliver the Broadband UK project across Merseyside. The detailed implementation was now being finalised and the project would focus on those areas where superfast broadband was not provided by the private sector.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Pat Hackett be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Brian Kenny on his Environment and Sustainability portfolio report. His responses to questions from Councillors Rennie, Doughty, Gilchrist, Williamson and Norbury included the following comments –

- Tackling dog fouling, smoking related litter and litter arising from fast food outlets would be a key focus of the Litter Reduction Strategy. However, cuts forced upon the Council by the government had impacted upon the number of dog wardens and upon the number of prosecutions. Nevertheless, each of the new Constituency Committees would be allocated £10k to tackle litter reduction in their areas as they considered appropriate.
- Some 35000 households had signed up to the garden waste scheme, which had been praised by other local authorities for its operation and cost effectiveness. He commented that considerable work had been undertaken to encourage home composting and he advised that tenders would soon be sought for the removal of unwanted brown bins. He proposed to provide a written response (to Councillor Gilchrist) in relation to the brown bin collection contract as it progressed.
- The long term planning for the defence of the coastal environment and associated infrastructure was an important part of the Council's responsibilities as a maritime authority. The Council could not afford not to implement the Coastal Strategy and the Strategic Director: Regeneration and Environment had been requested to explore funding opportunities to maximise government grants and other income to undertake the important works.
- He was pleased to report that following a public meeting in the Reeds Lane area of Leasowe, which had been subject to flooding during severe weather, United Utilities had allocated £5m to address the problem.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Brian Kenny be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Ann McLachlan on her Governance and Improvement portfolio report and her responses to questions from Councillors Rennie, Blakeley, W Davies, Stapleton and Lewis included the following comments –

- It was anticipated that the increased openness and transparency across the Council would result in a reduced number of Freedom of Information requests. For the months of July and August, the targets set by the Information Commissioner had been met and a review was underway to ensure that necessary resources were made available to ensure that the Council continued to build on the improvements made in addressing the significant number of FoI requests it received.
- The Improvement Board was undertaking a review to consider the progress that the Council had made against the original priorities for the Board and how best to support continued improvement against strategic outcomes. She was pleased to report that the Board had recognised that considerable improvement had been made in Wirral and a report on the outcome of the review would be made publicly available following its consideration by the Improvement Board.
- The recently established officer led Information Governance Board would review the Council's information governance arrangements and would provide advice and guidance to all staff and elected Members to ensure they had a clear understanding of their obligations so as to help ensure that information held by the Council was managed, secured, and used properly.

In response to a question in relation to a failure by officers to provide information requested by a Member, which then resulted in a FoI request, Councillor McLachlan proposed to investigate the matter and to provide a written response (Councillor Blakeley).

In response to a further question regarding the appointment of Assistant Cabinet Members, Councillor McLachlan agreed to provide a written response with those details (Councillor Lewis).

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Ann McLachlan be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Chris Meaden on her Health and Wellbeing portfolio report and her responses to questions from Councillors Elderton, Povall and Cox included the following comments –

- The issue of charging for car parking in Wirral's Country Parks would be addressed in the ongoing 'What Really Matters?' consultation and would be considered in due course when the priorities identified at the conclusion of the consultation were known.
- Libraries in Wirral were a key part of local communities and there was no proposal at the present time for any to be closed.

In response to a question concerning an open letter to Wirral Council by Diane Asher of Wirral Autistic Society, in respect of Wirral's progress in the implementation of the Autism Act 2010, Councillor Meaden proposed to

provide a written response (Councillor Povall), as the question related to a matter not included within her report.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Chris Meaden be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Harry Smith on his Highways and Transportation portfolio report. His responses to questions from Councillors Sullivan, Rennie and Green included the following comments –

- He was pleased to advise that the Dock Bridges Scheme, for the full replacement of two bridges on the Dock Road ('A' and 'C' bridges) were in the top 12 projects approved, as part of the Local Transport Body Major Schemes prioritisation exercise, to go forward to full major scheme business case development. He outlined the serious concerns regarding the continual deteriorating condition of the bridges, which formed part of a key route to the M53 and Mersey Tunnels.
- That any reduction in relation to winter maintenance arrangements would be in direct response to government budget cuts. However, operational arrangements, including winter gritting were expected to be handed over to the new contractor with a smooth transition from April 2014.

In response to a comment made at the recent Annual Council Conference in relation to Highways Maintenance Funding and the role of Constituency Committees, Councillor Smith indicated that a report had not yet been prepared and he would provide a written response in due course (Councillor Green).

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Smith be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor George Davies on his Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement portfolio report. His responses to questions from Councillors Kelly, Lewis, Glasman and Blakeley included the following comments –

- He provided an update on the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and outlined the reasons for the delay in the production of a final report detailing the findings of fieldwork and analysis. However, progress was being made and an update report would be presented to the Cabinet in due course.
- He confirmed that he would be pleased to attend a meeting with residents and Ward Councillors in Leasowe and Moreton East to discuss energy efficiency activity and to provide details in relation to slippage in the window replacement scheme.
- He referred to the Alcohol Strategy, which aimed to tackle problems associated with the misuse of alcohol, particularly amongst young people, and commented upon a proposal by Merseyside Police to designate parts of Birkenhead as alcohol-free, in relation to street drinking. He supported the proposal and hoped to secure Home Office funding to help address alcohol misuse and underage drinking.
- Revised Neighbourhood Plans were being worked on to support the process of commissioning activity for the £50,000 that had been

allocated to each of the Constituency Committees. He indicated that the funding would be increased with contributions from the Police, Fire and Health and he anticipated that funding would be increased in future years, so as to allow the Constituency Committees to operate similarly to the local Committees in Sunderland.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor George Davies be noted.

The Mayor referred to the Policy and Performance Committees that had met since the last meeting and indicated that reports of the Committee Chairs were set out in a covering report of the Head of Policy and Performance/Director of Public Health.

Questions were invited for Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Chair of the Coordinating Committee. No questions were posed and it was then –

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Whittingham be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Wendy Clements, Chair of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee. Her response to questions from Councillors Green and Niblock included the following comments –

- Given the scope and remit of the Committee and it only having six meetings during the year, including two budget meetings, the Chair was concerned at the ability of the Committee to be able to effectively scrutinise decisions and hold the Cabinet to account in relation to Adult Social Services, Children and Young People and Sport and Recreation.
- Discussions had been held with colleagues from Health in relation to risks associated with electronic cigarettes. Although there was limited evidence at present, the matter would be kept under review.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Clements be noted.

Questions were invited for Councillor Alan Brighthouse, Chair of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee. No questions were posed and it was then –

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Brighthouse be noted.

Questions were then invited for Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Chair of the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee. In response to a question from Councillor Blakeley he included the following comment –

- That, in the light of recent problems with the Council's IT system, and in particular with Members' email, he agreed to bring forward a report on the impact of IT failure and upon measures to prevent recurrence.

Resolved – That the report of Councillor Whittingham be noted.

34 **MATTERS FOR NOTING**

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor McLachlan, it was –

Resolved – That minute 49 (Cabinet – 19 September 2013) – Financial Monitoring 2013/2014, be noted.

35 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 10 (2)(b), notice had been given of a question from Councillor Phil Gilchrist to the Leader of the Council in respect of the 'What Really Matters?' consultation.

Councillor Phil Davies responded accordingly.

36 **MATTERS REFERRED FROM POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEES**

A referral was made from the former Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee (minute 76 – Elected Member Development (26 March 2013) refers), which requested the Council to reaffirm its commitment to the training and support of elected Members. It was then –

Resolved – That the recommendation of the former Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed and the Council's commitment to the training and support of elected Members be reaffirmed.

37 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Notices of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1) were reported to the Council. The Mayor, having considered each Motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) had decided that the Motions would be dealt with as follows –

- (i) Tackling Financial Exclusion – to be debated
- (ii) Bedroom Tax – to be debated
- (iii) Improving Wirral's Sites for Jobs – referred to the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee

Resolved – That the Notice of Motion 'Improving Wirral's Sites for Jobs' be referred to the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee.

38 **MOTION - TACKLING FINANCIAL EXCLUSION**

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

Council notes that many Wirral people, particularly those on low incomes, cannot easily access mainstream financial services such as bank accounts, low cost loans and cash withdrawal facilities.

This lack of access results in financial exclusion for people and can mean that the cost of many of their financial transactions are higher, resulting in stress, poor health and increased risk of debt and poverty and the need to access short-term credit by sub-prime or payday lenders.

Council, therefore, calls on Cabinet and the Chief Executive to put in place a strategy to promote financial inclusion, such a strategy to include measures to:

1. Highlight the issue of access to automatic cash machines (ATMs) to enable people to withdraw money without being charged a fee (ranging from £1.50 to £2.00 per withdrawal), effectively a tax on withdrawing money, by working in partnership with other organisations, including those representing retailers, to promote ways of expanding the network of free ATMs and to examine the possibility of providing free ATMs in Council offices (One Stop Shops/Libraries) in areas of high deprivation.
2. Raise awareness and promote the use of Credit Unions as a means of building savings and accessing low cost credit, including;
 - an evaluation of a scheme being introduced by Glasgow City Council which aims to support financial education by depositing £10 in a community Credit Union account for every new secondary school student each year.¹
 - consideration of how Wirral MBC can contribute to the Archbishop of Canterbury's initiative to build up Credit Unions to help people with financial problems keep away from usurious payday money lenders.²
3. Work with the new 'Move Your Money' organisation to encourage residents and businesses to move their bank accounts to get better terms.³

Council further welcomes changes made by the Government to make it easier to create new banks and notes the possibility of the creation of a 'Bank of Liverpool' by Liverpool CC with a long-term aim to expand to become a retail bank in which local residents and businesses from the City Region can invest and use the services of and asks Wirral officers to ensure Wirral is able to contribute and benefit from such a development.⁴

Links

¹ Link to Glasgow City Council scheme –
<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10084>

² Link to Arch Bishop of Canterbury initiative –
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23433955>

³ Link to Move your Money UK Organisation –
<http://www.moveyourmoney.org.uk/>

⁴ Link to Liverpool City Council minutes –
<http://councillors.liverpool.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=93553>

An amendment was then submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), which had been circulated around the Chamber.

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Add the following after final paragraph:

“Whilst supporting the measures listed above, Council believes that the Liberal Democrats should accept responsibility for a number of the measures implemented by the coalition government, of which they are part, which have directly contributed to financial exclusion and poverty that they now seek to mitigate. These include the following –

- trebling of tuition fees for higher education
- abolition of Education Maintenance Allowance
- reorganising the NHS which puts profits before patients
- introduction of the Bedroom Tax and other benefit cuts
- unprecedented cuts to local government funding
- introducing a tax cut for millionaires

Council calls on local Liberal Democrats to lobby their national leaders to do more to stand up to the increasingly extremist agenda being proposed by the Tory-led government.”

To enable consideration of the amendment by the political groups; and to also enable consideration of an amendment circulated in relation to the Bedroom Tax Motion (minute 39 post) –

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8.35pm for 10 minutes

The meeting resumed at 8:50pm

The Mayor requested the movers of the motion and amendments to speak to their proposals followed by seconders. Following a debate and Councillor Kelly having replied, the amendment proposed by Councillor Phil Davies was put and carried (36:25) (One abstention).

There being no further amendments, the substantive motion was put and carried (61:0) (One abstention)

Resolved (61:0) (One abstention) –

Council notes that many Wirral people, particularly those on low incomes, cannot easily access mainstream financial services such as bank accounts, low cost loans and cash withdrawal facilities.

This lack of access results in financial exclusion for people and can mean that the cost of many of their financial transactions are higher, resulting in stress, poor health and increased risk of debt and poverty and the need to access short-term credit by sub-prime or payday lenders.

Council, therefore, calls on Cabinet and the Chief Executive to put in place a strategy to promote financial inclusion, such a strategy to include measures to:

1. Highlight the issue of access to automatic cash machines (ATMs) to enable people to withdraw money without being charged a fee (ranging from £1.50 to £2.00 per withdrawal), effectively a tax on withdrawing money, by working in partnership with other organisations, including those representing retailers, to promote ways of expanding the network of free ATMs and to examine the possibility of providing free ATMs in Council offices (One Stop Shops/Libraries) in areas of high deprivation.
2. Raise awareness and promote the use of Credit Unions as a means of building savings and accessing low cost credit, including;
 - an evaluation of a scheme being introduced by Glasgow City Council which aims to support financial education by depositing £10 in a community Credit Union account for every new secondary school student each year.¹
 - consideration of how Wirral MBC can contribute to the Archbishop of Canterbury's initiative to build up Credit Unions to help people with financial problems keep away from usurious payday money lenders.²
3. Work with the new 'Move Your Money' organisation to encourage residents and businesses to move their bank accounts to get better terms.³

Council further welcomes changes made by the Government to make it easier to create new banks and notes the possibility of the creation of a 'Bank of Liverpool' by Liverpool CC with a long-term aim to expand to become a retail bank in which local residents and businesses from the City Region can invest and use the services of and asks Wirral officers to ensure Wirral is able to contribute and benefit from such a development.⁴

Links

¹ Link to Glasgow City Council scheme –

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10084>

² Link to Arch Bishop of Canterbury initiative –

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23433955>

³ Link to Move your Money UK Organisation –

<http://www.moveyourmoney.org.uk/>

⁴ Link to Liverpool City Council minutes –

<http://councillors.liverpool.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=93553>

Whilst supporting the measures listed above, Council believes that the Liberal Democrats should accept responsibility for a number of the measures implemented by the coalition government, of which they are part, which have directly contributed to financial exclusion and poverty that they now seek to mitigate. These include the following –

- **trebling of tuition fees for higher education**
- **abolition of Education Maintenance Allowance**
- **reorganising the NHS which puts profits before patients**
- **introduction of the Bedroom Tax and other benefit cuts**
- **unprecedented cuts to local government funding**
- **introducing a tax cut for millionaires**

Council calls on local Liberal Democrats to lobby their national leaders to do more to stand up to the increasingly extremist agenda being proposed by the Tory-led government.

39 **MOTION - BEDROOM TAX**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

This Council believes that the Bedroom Tax introduced by the Tory/LibDem coalition government is morally wrong as well as being financially inefficient.

Council therefore welcomes the recent announcement by Ed Miliband that one of the first acts of the next Labour Government will be to repeal the Bedroom Tax. This will be paid for by reversing George Osborne's recent tax cut for hedge funds announced in Budget 2013; reversing George Osborne's shares for rights scheme which has been rejected by business, has opened up a tax loophole and will lead to £1bn being lost to the Exchequer according to the Office for Budget Responsibility; and tackling disguised employment in the construction industry.

In Wirral 3,800 Registered Provider tenants are affected by the Bedroom Tax.

Council is concerned that the Government has never carried out a proper financial analysis of the hidden costs of the Bedroom Tax. Forcing people to move from a socially owned property to a privately owned property costs more in housing benefit. Chasing people for small debts can cost a lot more than it brings in. Evicting people for not paying rent and re-housing them is extremely expensive. Some Councils and housing associations are no longer able to let out three bedroom properties and this is reducing rental income and our ability to finance more property building.

Council notes that the Bedroom Tax is disproportionately hitting disabled people, 420,000 people who need space for carers, washing space and equipment are being affected by it. People are getting into arrears which is causing them anguish. They are forced to move out of their neighbourhoods and away from their support base because there is a shortage of one-bedroom properties – a situation that has built up because Councils listened to governments of all parties and built properties big enough for families.

The Government gave local authorities discretionary housing payments but that money only covers £1 in every £5 cut from the benefit changes and in many Councils it has already run out.

The Bedroom Tax is forcing people who cannot work and those on low incomes out of their homes and into debt. It is hitting the most vulnerable in society the hardest and is forcing people to loan sharks and food banks. At the same time, the Tory/Lib Dem Government is giving a tax cut to millionaires.

Council calls for urgent action in Wirral to deal with the growing demand on advice services and one stop shops by residents affected by the Bedroom Tax which is approaching crisis point and agrees to allocate an additional £25,000 to Wirral advice agencies to be paid for by the under-spend identified in the month 3 monitoring report.

Council also calls on all parties to write to the relevant minister to request an immediate suspension of the Bedroom Tax to allow for independent research to be undertaken to assess its impact on the most deprived parts of the country.

An amendment, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows –

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

“Delete paragraphs 1 and 2

In (new) paragraph 5, delete final sentence (“At the same time, the Tory/Lib Dem Government...”) and delete (new) paragraphs 6 and 7

After (new) paragraph 5 (ends “.....and food banks.”), add the following new paragraphs:

Council recognises that the steps taken to reduce under occupancy in recent years, affecting tenants in both the private and social sector, when combined with changes to benefit levels, are affecting the most vulnerable in society. Changes for help with housing costs in the private sector, equivalent to a bedroom tax, were introduced when Labour was last in Government.

Council notes that:

- (a) delegates at the recent Liberal Democrat Conference called for an immediate evaluation of the impact of the policy and
- (b) the Leader of the Labour Party has announced that, in the event of a Labour Government being elected, the policy would be repealed
- (c) the savings envisaged with the introduction of the bedroom tax are not likely to be achieved.

Council is aware of evidence that the reduction of help with housing costs, based on under occupancy, is leading a high proportion of tenants of social housing into debt.

In addition to this Council, recognises that:

- (i) the range of local housing stock that would allow people to move to smaller properties does not exist and
- (ii) the increase in the funds for Discretionary Housing Payments from £60m in 2012/13 and £155m in 2013/14 may assist tenants, but the additional funding at a local level is unlikely to meet local need.

Accordingly, Council believes that the case for changing a policy that is damaging and not achieving its objectives must now be developed.

Council believes that Wirral's political parties have a responsibility to make the relevant Government Ministers aware of the local impact with as accurate information as can be put together.

Council, therefore, considers that the work of the Liverpool City Region Strategic Housing and Planning Board and any successor body should be informed by an immediate impact assessment on how the bedroom tax affects vulnerable tenants in both social and private rented housing and the extent to which smaller properties are available, this assessment to be drawn up in consultation with those representing vulnerable groups such as the poor, the disabled, the elderly and children. This would enable the region to respond to the failure of successive governments to meet the demand for housing and bid for future funding.

In the meantime, Council agrees

1. to allocate an additional £25,000 to Wirral advice agencies to ensure that affected tenants are able to access advice, to be paid for out of the projected under-spend of £320,000 reported in the Month 5 revenue monitoring report.
2. to immediately lobby Government ministers to ensure that any household where someone lives with a severe disability is exempted from the bedroom tax".

A further amendment was then submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), which had been circulated around the Chamber

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

"Delete paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9

Replace 'Bedroom Tax' with 'Spare Room Subsidy'

Keep (new) paragraph 1 'In Wirral 3,800 Registered.....etc

Insert (new) paragraph 2: 'There are around a quarter of a million over crowded households in England and 1.8 million households * on the social housing waiting list. Council believes that this is not acceptable while there are approaching a million extra bedrooms being paid for by working age Housing Benefit in the social sector alone. Lack of alternative accommodation is part of this problem and Council welcomes Government action to redress

this balance by encouraging better use of social housing stock and the building of appropriately sized housing.’

Keep (new) paragraph 3: ‘Council calls for urgent action.....etc’

Insert (new) paragraph 4: ‘Council notes that prior to the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy it was subject to full Impact and Equality Impact Assessments’.

* figure from DWP”

The Mayor advised that, in accordance with the Council’s Constitution, each amendment would be dealt with in turn. He requested the mover of the Motion (Councillor Phil Davies) and the mover of the first amendment (Councillor Phil Gilchrist) to speak to their proposals, followed by seconders.

Following a debate and Councillor Davies having replied, the amendment proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist was put and lost (4:56) (Two abstentions).

The Mayor then requested the mover of the second amendment (Councillor Jeff Green) to speak to his proposal followed by his seconder.

Following a further debate and Councillor Davies having replied, he, along with four other Members asked that a ‘card vote’ be recorded in respect of the amendment moved by Councillor Green. The Council then divided as follows –

For the amendment (19) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, J Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, S Mountney, C Povall, L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, G Watt and S Williams

Against the amendment (42) Councillors R Abbey, A Brighthouse, P Brightmore, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, D Dodd, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Gilchrist, P Glasman, R Gregson, P Hackett, T Harney, M Johnston, A Jones, C Jones, S Kelly, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, D Realey, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams and J Williamson

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The amendment was therefore lost (19:42) (One abstention)

In respect of the substantive motion, Councillor Phil Davies along with four other Members asked that a ‘card vote’ be also recorded. The Council then divided as follows –

For the motion (38) Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, D Dodd, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Glasman, R Gregson, P Hackett, M Johnston, A Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T

Norbury, D Realey, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams and J Williamson

Against the motion (23) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, P Gilchrist, J Green, T Harney, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, S Kelly, S Mountney, C Povall, L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, G Watt and S Williams

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The motion was therefore carried (38:23) (One abstention)

Resolved ((38:23) (One abstention) –

This Council believes that the Bedroom Tax introduced by the Tory/LibDem coalition government is morally wrong as well as being financially inefficient.

Council therefore welcomes the recent announcement by Ed Miliband that one of the first acts of the next Labour Government will be to repeal the Bedroom Tax. This will be paid for by reversing George Osborne's recent tax cut for hedge funds announced in Budget 2013; reversing George Osborne's shares for rights scheme which has been rejected by business, has opened up a tax loophole and will lead to £1bn being lost to the Exchequer according to the Office for Budget Responsibility; and tackling disguised employment in the construction industry.

In Wirral 3,800 Registered Provider tenants are affected by the Bedroom Tax.

Council is concerned that the Government has never carried out a proper financial analysis of the hidden costs of the Bedroom Tax. Forcing people to move from a socially owned property to a privately owned property costs more in housing benefit. Chasing people for small debts can cost a lot more than it brings in. Evicting people for not paying rent and re-housing them is extremely expensive. Some Councils and housing associations are no longer able to let out three bedroom properties and this is reducing rental income and our ability to finance more property building.

Council notes that the Bedroom Tax is disproportionately hitting disabled people, 420,000 people who need space for carers, washing space and equipment are being affected by it. People are getting into arrears which is causing them anguish. They are forced to move out of their neighbourhoods and away from their support base because there is a shortage of one-bedroom properties – a situation that has built up because Councils listened to governments of all parties and built properties big enough for families.

The Government gave local authorities discretionary housing payments but that money only covers £1 in every £5 cut from the benefit changes and in many Councils it has already run out.

The Bedroom Tax is forcing people who cannot work and those on low incomes out of their homes and into debt. It is hitting the most vulnerable in society the hardest and is forcing people to loan sharks and food banks. At the same time, the Tory/Lib Dem Government is giving a tax cut to millionaires.

Council calls for urgent action in Wirral to deal with the growing demand on advice services and one stop shops by residents affected by the Bedroom Tax which is approaching crisis point and agrees to allocate an additional £25,000 to Wirral advice agencies to be paid for by the under-spend identified in the month 3 monitoring report.

Council also calls on all parties to write to the relevant minister to request an immediate suspension of the Bedroom Tax to allow for independent research to be undertaken to assess its impact on the most deprived parts of the country.

40 **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

At its meeting held on 15 July 2013 (minute 21 refers), the Mayor had referred a Notice of Motion 'Cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service' to the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee. The motion was duly considered at the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2013 (Regeneration and Environment – minute 15 refers).

In accordance with Standing Order 7(5), the Council was invited to consider the recommendation of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee, which advised that it fully supported the Notice of Motion and had invited the Chief Fire Officer to attend the Committee to highlight the potential impact of Government proposals on residents of Wirral.

The Mayor indicated that any debate should take place on the recommendation of the Committee and there should be no separate debate on the motion itself.

With regard to a further motion 'Local Investment in Rail – High Speed2 and Borderlands Railway', that had been referred by the Mayor to the Leader of the Council, the Leader advised that he would present a report to the next meeting of the Council.

Resolved – That, in the light of the views of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee, the motion in relation to 'Cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service' be supported in the following terms –

- (1) Wirral Council recognises the excellent work undertaken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and applauds the commitment of its frontline and support staff. This Council also notes that those individuals' ability to protect the people of Wirral is being jeopardised by the Government cuts to funding as well as undermining staff morale.**

- (2) This Council is deeply concerned by the findings of the Ken Knight review of fire and rescue services which makes the case for further huge cuts, mergers with other Authorities or Police Crime Commissioners and most worryingly privatisation. The Ken Knight review gives very little recognition of the very difficult decisions taken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority to date in managing the deepest cuts inflicted on any Authority in the Country and instead advocates its replacement by a PCC without any evidence whatsoever to prove that this would improve the service delivered to the residents of this city region.
- (3) This Council notes with serious concern the Government's alarming proposals to privatise part if not all functions of the fire and rescue service, along with yet further cuts to their grant funding which will impact on their ability in protecting residents from fire, road traffic collisions and other emergencies within the Borough of Wirral.
- (4) This Council is deeply worried that the Government has lost sight of the fire service's main purpose, to protect residents from fire, road traffic collisions and other emergencies and their devastating impact on our communities and that it threatens to put private profit ahead of the need to save lives and help people feel safe in their homes and community.
- (5) This Council further notes that the Government's proposals are in the context of a programme of ill-conceived efficiencies to fire and rescue services. The impact this will have on the communities of Merseyside is extremely worrying and places vulnerable residents in danger.
- (6) This Council also notes due to Government cuts which has seen Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service suffer cuts totalling £19.2m over the 4 year spending review with 180 fire-fighters posts deleted and a reduction in Fire engines from 42 to 28 by 2015.
- (7) The Government's proposal for further huge cuts in 2015 will have devastating effects on operational response and the community safety and prevention work delivered by the Authority to such an excellent standard.
- (8) This Council therefore calls on the Government, in particular the Secretary of State for Local Government and the Chancellor's department to cease their ill conceived and irresponsible cuts to our fire and rescue services and pledge instead to protect the public from further risk of fire by protecting this front line emergency service from further cuts and threats of privatisation.

41 VACANCIES

The Council was requested to deal with the following matters in respect of appointments to Committees and outside organisations.

COMMITTEES

(i) **Pensions Committee**

Councillor Paul Doughty to replace former Councillor Sylvia Hodrien

(ii) **Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee**

Vacancy to replace former Councillor Sylvia Hodrien

(iii) **Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee**

Councillor Phill Brightmore to replace former Councillor Sylvia Hodrien as deputy

(iv) **Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee**

Councillor Anita Leech to replace former Councillor Sylvia Hodrien as deputy

(v) **Birkenhead Constituency Committee (18 Councillors)**

Bidston and St James Ward Councillors –
Jim Crabtree, Ann McLachlan, Harry Smith
Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward Councillors –
Phil Davies, Brian Kenny, Jean Stapleton
Claughton Ward Councillors –
George Davies, Steve Foulkes, Denise Roberts
Oxton Ward Councillors –
Alan Brighthouse, Stuart Kelly, Pat Williams
Prenton Ward Councillors –
Paul Doughty, Tony Norbury, Denise Realey
Rock Ferry Ward Councillors –
Bill Davies, Chris Meaden, Moira McLaughlin

(vi) **Wallasey Constituency Committee (18 Councillors)**

Leasowe and Moreton East Ward Councillors –
Ron Abbey, Anita Leech, Ian Lewis
Liscard Ward Councillors –
Darren Dodd, Bernie Mooney, Janette Williamson
Moreton West and Saughall Massie Ward Councillors –
Chris Blakeley, Simon Mountney, Steve Williams
New Brighton Ward Councillors –
Patricia Glasman, Rob Gregson, Pat Hackett
Seacombe Ward Councillors –
Adrian Jones, Chris Jones, John Salter
Wallasey Ward Councillors –
Leah Fraser, Paul Hayes, Lesley Rennie

(vii) **Wirral South Constituency Committee (15 Councillors)**

Bebington Ward Councillors –
Christina Muspratt, Walter Smith, Jerry Williams
Bromborough Ward Councillors –
Steve Niblock, Joe Walsh, Irene Williams

Clatterbridge Ward Councillors –
Peter Kearney, Cherry Povall, Adam Sykes
Eastham Ward Councillors –
Phil Gilchrist, Tom Harney, Dave Mitchell
Heswall Ward Councillors –
Andrew Hodson, Kathryn Hodson, Les Rowlands

(viii) Wirral West Constituency Committee (15 Councillors

Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward Councillors –
Wendy Clements, Tony Cox, Mike Hornby
Hoyle and Meols Ward Councillors –
Eddie Boulton, Gerry Ellis, John Hale
Pensby and Thingwall Ward Councillors –
Phillip Brightmore, Mark Johnston, Michael Sullivan
Upton Ward Councillors –
Tony Smith, Stuart Whittingham and Vacancy
West Kirby and Thurstaston Ward Councillors –
David Elderton, Jeff Green, Geoffrey Watt

In respect of the above Constituency Committees, the Council was requested to approve that a maximum of up to six community representatives may be appointed on a co-opted basis.

OUTSIDE BODIES

(i) ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Liverpool Airport Consultative Committee

Councillor Steve Niblock to replace Councillor Rob Gregson

(ii) HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Tam O'Shanter Cottage Trust

Councillor Chris Meaden to replace Councillor Jim Crabtree

Resolved –

- (1) That the appointments and amendments to the membership of the Committees and outside bodies, listed above, be approved.**
- (2) That each of the Constituency Committees be authorised to appoint up to a maximum of six community representatives on a co-opted basis.**

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COUNCIL

Tuesday, 12 November 2013

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Dave Mitchell) in the Chair

Councillors	E Boulton	AER Jones	T Smith
	P Brightmore	C Jones	W Smith
	W Clements	P Kearney	J Stapleton
	G Davies	A Leech	M Sullivan
	P Davies	AR McLachlan	A Sykes
	WJ Davies	M McLaughlin	J Walsh
	P Doughty	C Meaden	G Watt
	D Elderton	B Mooney	S Whittingham
	G Ellis	S Niblock	I Williams
	P Glasman	T Norbury	KJ Williams
	P Hackett	M Patrick	P Williams
	T Harney	D Realey	S Williams
	P Hayes	D Roberts	
	M Johnston	H Smith	

Apologies

Councillors	RL Abbey	K Hodson
	C Blakeley	M Hornby
	A Brighthouse	S Kelly
	A Cox	B Kenny
	J Crabtree	I Lewis
	D Dodd	S Mountney
	S Foulkes	C Muspratt
	L Fraser	C Povall
	P Gilchrist	L Rennie
	JE Green	L Rowlands
	R Gregson	J Salter
	J Hale	J Williamson
	A Hodson	

42 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 October, 2013, having been circulated to all Members, it was:

Resolved – That the minutes be approved and adopted.

43 YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The young people and Councillors assembled in the Council Chamber at 6.15pm. The Mayor expressed his thanks to Maureen McDaid, former Principal Manager, Children and Young Peoples Department who had now left the Authority, for all the hard work she had undertaken with the Youth Service. The Mayor then welcomed the young people and thanked Lindsay Davidson, Senior Locality Manager – Youth Support, her team and the officers for organising the event. The Mayor explained the purpose of the evening and gave a brief outline of proceedings.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Davies, welcomed everyone, particularly the young people, to the meeting. He acknowledged the time spent in research and preparation for the debates and wished everyone an enjoyable meeting. Councillor Wendy Clements and Councillor Pat Williams endorsed the Leaders comments and looked forward to hearing the young peoples' contributions.

The Mayor then invited Upton Hall to present their first proposal.

The following proposal was put by Upton Hall's proposer, Sophie McCrory-Crowther.

Michael Gove is destroying the educational system of this country.

Upton Hall's Opposing proposal was put by Olivia Mannix.

The debate was then opened to Councillors and young people for their contributions.

The Upton Hall seconder Mel Howard then closed the debate.

The proposal was put and carried (22:6).

The following proposal was put by Wirral Youth Theatre Creative Development proposer, Nicole Buntain:

Media literacy should be taught in all schools to enable young people to understand and interpret what they see to ensure that negative and sexualised marketing does not affect their self esteem and identity.

Wirral Youth Theatre Creative Development Opposing proposal was put by Beth O'Donnell.

The debate was then opened to Councillors and young people for their contributions.

The Wirral Youth Theatre Creative Development seconder Kieran Howard then closed the debate.

The proposal was put and carried (20:10).

The following proposal was put by South Wirral Young People's proposer, Warren Ward.

The new Youth Zone proposed to be built in central Birkenhead will cost Wirral Council £2 million of capital funding and a further £400.000 each year to support its running costs. Do you not think that the money would be better spent upgrading existing youth facilities across Wirral?

South Wirral Young People Opposing proposal was put by Charlotte Wealthy.

The debate was then opened to Councillors and young people for their contributions.

The proposal was put and carried (17:9) (5 abstentions).

The following proposal was put by Weatherhead High School's proposer, Isobel Wilton:

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) should be brought back into schools, funded through cuts to MP's salaries and expenses.

Wirral Grammar School for Boys Opposing proposal was put by George Anderson.

The debate was then opened to Councillors and young people for their contributions.

The proposal was put and carried (31:3) (1 abstention).

The following second proposal was put by Upton Hall's proposer, Mel Howard:

I agree with Russell Brand that the current political system is broken and revolution is the only way forward.

Upton Hall's Opposing proposal was put by Katie Everson.

The debate was then opened to Councillors and young people for their contributions.

The proposal was put and carried (15:11) (4 abstentions).

The debate concluded with speeches from the party groups (Councillors Phil Davies, Wendy Clements and Pat Williams) who paid tribute to the young people and thanked them for the very high standard of the debate. The young people were also encouraged to complete the evaluations forms after the meeting.

The Mayor closed the meeting by thanking all those present for their participation. He thanked the party groups, Lindsay Davidson, staff of the Youth Service and teachers for enabling this Parliament and the young people for their attendance and contributions to the debate.

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COUNCIL

Monday, 2 December 2013

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Dave Mitchell) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Steve Foulkes)

Councillors	RL Abbey	J Hale	C Povall
	C Blakeley	T Harney	D Realey
	E Boulton	P Hayes	L Rennie
	A Brighthouse	K Hodson	D Roberts
	P Brightmore	M Hornby	L Rowlands
	W Clements	AER Jones	J Salter
	A Cox	C Jones	H Smith
	J Crabtree	P Kearney	T Smith
	G Davies	S Kelly	W Smith
	P Davies	B Kenny	J Stapleton
	WJ Davies	A Leech	M Sullivan
	P Doughty	I Lewis	J Walsh
	G Ellis	AR McLachlan	G Watt
	L Fraser	M McLaughlin	S Whittingham
	P Gilchrist	B Mooney	J Williamson
	P Glasman	S Mountney	I Williams
	JE Green	S Niblock	KJ Williams
	R Gregson	T Norbury	P Williams
	P Hackett	M Patrick	S Williams

Apologies Councillors D Dodd C Meaden
D Elderton C Muspratt
A Hodson A Sykes

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant 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.

No such declarations were made.

45 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that he had received apologies for absence from Councillors Dodd, Elderton, A Hodson, Meaden, Muspratt and Sykes.

He was pleased to inform the Council that for the fourth consecutive year, North West in Bloom had recently awarded a silver medal in the Best Small Village Category to Bidston Village Green. The award encouraged communities to improve and care for their local environment through imaginative planting of trees, shrubs, flowers and landscaping. Bidston had also been awarded the Amberol Trophy and the Mayor thanked Councillor Jim Crabtree, who had helped the village achieve the award.

He commented also upon the success of the Youth Parliament and offered his thanks for the support that had been received from Council staff, Members and particularly all the young people who took part.

The Mayor referred to various events that were taking place as part of the Wirral Youth Theatre Arts Festival and commended a musical event that he had attended last week.

He advised the Council that Councillor Mike Sullivan had recently completed his 51st marathon. He congratulated Councillor Sullivan for his achievement and thanked him for the funds he had raised for the Mayor's Charity.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor welcomed Councillor Matthew Patrick to his first meeting of the full Council and congratulated him on his recent election success.

46 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL

Three matters were submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 47 to 49 post)

47 CORPORATE PLAN

The first matter requiring approval related to the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2014 – 2016 and the recommendation from the Cabinet which had met earlier on 2 December, 2013.

In respect of Cabinet minute 109 (2 December, 2013) – Corporate Plan 2014 – 2016, it was moved by Councillor Phil Davies and seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan that the recommendations of Cabinet be approved.

It was moved by Councillor Green and seconded by Councillor Rennie, that –

“Council notes the sentiments expressed in the proposed Corporate Plan 2014-2016, which it believes to be so bland as to be bordering on banal. Given the use of meaningless management jargon and this Administration's tendency to talk to itself instead of the Wirral public it is not surprising that the proposed plan is bereft of any opportunity for Officers or Councillors to be held to account for its delivery by the public.

Council believes that any plan should have specific measures of success and is therefore disappointed but not surprised that they are missing from the Corporate Plan proposed this evening. Instead we are supposed to accept vague promises that 'A coherent set of performance measures and targets are being developed to ensure priorities are achieved over the two year period covered by this plan'.

Council further believes that if the Administration truly want this Corporate Plan to be a blueprint for the Council's improvement, they need to be open and honest with Wirral residents about which specific measures they are working towards before embarking on any 'expedition' with their money.

Council therefore defers adoption of the Corporate Plan 2014 – 2016 in its current form until a 'coherent set of performance measures' have been developed and discussed with elected Members for inclusion within the Corporate Plan. Council believes this approach will provide the public the opportunity of open and honest appraisal with the prospect of measuring true performance thus holding any administration to account".

To enable consideration of the amendment by the political groups –

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6.20pm for 10 minutes

The meeting resumed at 6.30pm

The Mayor requested the movers of the motion and amendments to speak to their proposals followed by seconders. Following a debate and Councillor Phil Davies having replied, the amendment proposed by Councillor Green was put and lost (24:34) (One abstention).

There being no further amendments, the substantive motion was put and carried (34:24) (One abstention)

Resolved (34:24) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within Cabinet minute 109 be confirmed and the Corporate Plan 2014 – 2016, as amended, be adopted.

48 **DRAFT COMMITTEE CALENDAR FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014/15**

The second matter requiring approval related to the draft Committee Calendar 2014/2015 and the recommendation from Cabinet which had met earlier on 2 December, 2013.

In respect of Cabinet minute 110 (2 December, 2013) – Draft Committee Calendar for Municipal Year 2014/2015, the Head of Legal and Member

Services informed the Council that the calendar would remain in draft form until 11 March 2014, unless otherwise amended prior to that date.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies and seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan, it was –

Resolved (34:24) (One abstention) – That the recommendations of Cabinet in respect of the Draft Committee Calendar 2014/2015, including the suggested amendments, be approved.

49 **WIRRAL CORONER SERVICE**

The third matter requiring approval related to proposed interim changes to the Wirral Coroner Service and the recommendation from Cabinet which had met earlier (minute 111 (2 December, 2013) refers).

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies and seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan, it was –

Resolved (58:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendations of Cabinet in respect of the Wirral Coroner Service, be approved.

WIRRAL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES October 2013

Introduction

1. The Independent Panel on Members' Allowances met on Monday 7th October 2013 to undertake a periodic review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel comprised:

Don Latham, Private Local Government Consultant (Chairman)
Nunzia Bertali, Italian Consul
Pauline Brown, Eclipse Executive Ltd
Ray Allan, Solicitor (Retired)

2. The Panel was made fully aware that the Council currently faces a budget shortfall of £27.5million and that in a time of austerity it is vital to ensure that public money is well spent and that all allowances are justified and merited. Members have given a lead on this and, with the support of the Panel, have previously elected to take a 5% cut in basic allowance which was reduced from £9,171 to £8,712. We also noted that in line with staff pay there has been no increase in allowances over the last two years.

3. The Panel recognises that the allowances awarded to Members in Wirral MBC are in the lower quartile when compared to other similar Councils and that some Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) might justify an increase. But, given the financial situation being faced by the Council, we do not recommend any significant change to the Scheme at this time. We do believe that, if and when the financial climate allows, due consideration should be given to reinstating the 5% austerity cut in the basic allowance. This would cost £30,294 (i.e. £459 x 66 Members).

4. We considered the published material and comparisons with other Councils similar to Wirral MBC concerning remuneration of councillors including independent studies undertaken for other authorities. We noted the National Census of Local Authority Councillors and also took into consideration the requirements of Government Regulations on Member Allowances.

5. We would thank Graham Burgess the CEO for presenting his views to the Panel at the commencement of our review meeting and in particular on the issue of pensions. We would especially like to record our thanks to Shirley Hudspeth, Democratic Services Manager, who supported the Panel throughout the review. Also to Joe Blot (Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources) and Surjit Tour (Head of Legal and Member Services) who also attended to provide information and to answer our questions.

6. The Leader of the Council - Councillor Phil Davies (Labour); Leader of the Conservative Group – Councillor Jeff Green, and Phil Gilchrist (Liberal Democrat)

Leader of the Group also attended and presented their views to the Independent Panel.

Summary of Findings

7. The Panel's recommendations are as follows:

- In the light of the continuing time of austerity that no change be made to the basic allowance or SRAs.
- When the financial climate allows, due consideration should be given to reinstating the 5 % austerity cut in the basic allowance.
- The allowances paid to the Mayor (£10,700) and Deputy Mayor (£1,500) should remain unchanged.
- No SRA be paid to a chairs of the new Constituency (Area) Committees until they are up and running and can be properly evaluated with a suggested timetable for review of twelve months.
- The payment of an SRA (£2,751) to the chair of Employment and Appointments Committee be discontinued.
- Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA.
- The NJC award for staff pay continue to be used as the basis for updating allowances.
- The option to allow Members to participate in the local government pensions scheme (LGPS) should not be reconsidered again until the completion of the current Government/Treasury consultation exercise - which is anticipated to happen in 2014.
- There be no change in the basis of payments for travel and subsistence.
- The process of approving training expenses be streamlined.
- The Caring Allowance should continue to be kept in line with the minimum wage – currently £6.31.

General Commentary and Findings

8. The Panel reviewed the National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2010 and noted that Councillors have various differing roles and work to carry out also that Councils have different decision making structures. We considered the census information in the changing context in which local government works, with economic and social pressures, and a growing public scrutiny in a time of austerity.

9. There is now an increasing focus on councillors as community leaders and the main findings of the census showed that councillors as individuals are dedicated people who devote a great deal of their own time to serving their communities. Councillors spend on average 23 hours per week on Council business and this is consistent with surveys previously undertaken in both 2004 and 2006. The Panel believes that the situation in Wirral MBC reflects this national position.

Basic allowance

10. The Panel recognises that had the normal inflationary factors been applied the basic rate could have risen to £9,500. But that the Cabinet had recognised the

need to show restraint in the public finances in these difficult times and had determined not to increase the allowance for inflation. The result is that the current basic rate is now in the lower quartile of comparator authorities. Having discussed the situation with Group Leaders, in the light of the challenges being currently faced by the Council, the Panel proposes that, at this time, no change is made to the basic allowance of £8,712.

Mayor and Deputy Mayor

11. The Panel were asked to include these allowances in future reviews. No evidence was supplied that would suggest an increase could be justified. We recommend that the allowances paid to the Mayor (£10,700) and Deputy Mayor (£1,500) remain unchanged.

Special Responsibility Allowances

12. The Panel were asked to review the awarding of a separate special responsibility allowance to the Chairs of the four Constituency (Area) Committees. The Panel recommends that no SRAs be paid to the chairs of the new Constituency (Area) Committees until they are up and running and can be properly evaluated with a suggested timetable for review of twelve months.

13. We noted that the number of Policy and Performance Committees had been reduced from six to four and the number of SRAs (£4,585 x 2) reduced accordingly.

14. We were informed of the substantial changes in the terms of reference of the Employment and Appointments Committee. Delegations have been made to the Chief Executive Officer and the Committee now only meets ad hoc. The Panel, therefore, recommends that the payment of an SRA (£2,751) to the chair of Employment and Appointments Committee be discontinued.

15. We believe that SRA's are soundly structured. We recommend, in line with good practice, that the use of the basic allowance as a building block for SRA calculations should continue and we consider that SRA's are currently set at an appropriate, if minimum, level.

16. The Panel recommends, in line with current practice, that Members should continue to be restricted to one SRA.

Updating

17. The Panel recommend that the NJC award for staff pay should continue to be used as the basis for updating allowances.

Pensions

18. Strong representations were made to the Panel that Members should be allowed to join the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS). We particularly noted the fact that the administrator of the Pension Fund - Wirral MBC - is the only

Merseyside Authority whose Members are not allowed to participate. Nevertheless, the views of the Panel remain unchanged That it is not appropriate to introduce pension provision at this time as it is felt that the overall package of allowances is sufficient and that the addition of a small pension, at quite considerable potential cost to the Council and council taxpayers, would not particularly encourage younger people to stand for Councillor. Panel members had previously expressed concern that the provision of pensions also implied employment rather than public service where a large voluntary component is integral to the role of the Councillor.

19. Nevertheless, because of the strength of the arguments previously made to the Panel we agreed that we would reconsider if we could be provided with more evidence and an estimate of potential cost. Information was supplied to the Panel suggesting that if there were a similar level of 'take up' in Wirral MBC to that of other Merseyside authorities (i.e. 24%) the cost could be upwards of £30,000. The Panel, continuing to be mindful of the Council's need for financial prudence, has not changed its position. But we believe that when the financial climate allows, due consideration should be given to the restoration of the 5% austerity cut (£30,294) in the basic allowance which would benefit all Members.

20. The Panel has noted that on 19th December 2012 the Local Government Minister, Mike Brandon Lewis, made a statement to the House of Commons setting out the Department's intention to remove access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014 (see Annex) and that a separate consultation paper is to be issued as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS.

21. The consultation paper contains arguments the Panel would support against councillor involvement in the LGPS and we, therefore, believe that the option to allow Members to participate in the local government pensions scheme should not be reconsidered again until the completion of the current Government/Treasury consultation exercise on pensions - which is anticipated to happen in 2014.

Travel and Subsistence

22. The Panel fully endorse the Councils arrangements for travel and subsistence, especially the use of 40p for member mileage. Councillor David Elderton made a strong case in writing to the Panel that the HMRC rate of 45pence, as used by the Officers, should also apply to Councillors because of the high costs of travel. Because of the austerity being faced by the Council the Panel propose no change in the basis of travel and subsistence allowances other than that they should be increased appropriately each year for inflation.

Training Expenses

23. We were asked by officers to give consideration to agreeing a maximum amount of expenses that could be payable to Members who wished to attend training courses outside the Borough (often at short notice) because of the elaborate process they currently have to go through e.g. support from the Member Training Steering Group and with that permission from the relevant Portfolio Holder.

24. The Panel considers this to be an internal matter for the Council itself and that if the process currently in place is too laborious, then the Council should change it.

Caring Allowance

25. The Panel recommends that the hourly rate be kept in line with the minimum wage. (Currently £6.31)

Independent Panel
October 2013

Annex

Written Ministerial statement of 19 December 2012 on Councillors Pensions

On 12 September 2001, the then Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions announced plans to give taxpayer - funded pensions to councillors, through access to the LGPS. The proposals came into force in 2003. The Councillors' Commission report of the last administration noted that 912 councillors in England had joined that pension scheme by 2004. A Taxpayers' Alliance survey in February 2009, across the whole United Kingdom, found that 3,527 councillors had pensions as of 2007 to 2008; a further survey in January 2012 found that figure had increased to 4,548 councillors by 2010 to 2011. The trend is clear.

Abolition of Taxpayer-Funded Pensions

Ministers in this government take a fundamentally different view to the last administration. We do not believe that taxpayer-funded pensions are justified. Councillors are volunteers undertaking public service; they are not and should not be employees of the council on the municipal payroll. They are not professional, full-time politicians, nor should they be encouraged to become so. Councillors do not receive a salary; rather, they receive allowances to compensate for their out-of-pocket expenses. Yet following changes made by the last administration, allowances have slowly become a form of salary, a situation worsened by the state-funded pensions. This is a corrosive influence on local democracy and independent thought, blurring the distinction between council staff and councillors. Every bit of the public sector needs to do its bit to help pay off the deficit inherited from the last administration. Local government grants are being reduced. Ministers have cut and then frozen their salaries. Public sector pensions, including parliamentary pensions, are being reformed to reduce the burden on taxpayers. It is only right that councillors do their bit as well. We do not believe that an occupational pension scheme intended for employees, and paid for by taxpayers, is an appropriate vehicle for councillors.

Existing Pension Rights

Subject to consultation, we propose that there will be no access for councillors to the LGPS in England from April 2014. In the interests of fairness, those councillors already in the scheme would have their accrued rights up to April 2014 fully protected, but would not be able to accrue any further benefits after that date in the existing scheme. This will not prevent councillors contributing to a personal pension: if they put aside part of their (taxable) allowances into such a pension, then that is a matter for them; they will continue to receive income tax relief like any ordinary member of the population, subject to the prevailing tax rules. Although central records on councillors' participation in the scheme are not held by my department, initial rough estimates suggest that this could save £7 million a year in taxpayers' money. There is absolutely no case for increasing councillor allowances to compensate. Instead, councils may want to consider earlier,

voluntary closure of the scheme to their councillors as a sensible saving.

Civic Duty

Eligibility regulations for the LGPS are overseen by my department. Although this is a centrally mandated change (as was its original introduction), we believe these reforms will assist localism and local democracy by encouraging a greater separation between councillors and officers. Robust local scrutiny of council spending requires councillors to be substantively independent of means and of thought from the body they are overseeing. Civic duty should not be bought. We do not believe it will have any detrimental effect on people choosing to become councillors. The best thing we can do to encourage more people to take part in municipal public life is to decentralise power to local communities so being a councillor is a meaningful and rewarding role.

Elected Mayors

We recognise that there is a greater expectation that an elected mayor is a full-time position. We therefore propose to consult on allowing elected mayors to remain in the scheme as a voluntary option (but not as an expectation), subject to local scrutiny, challenge and determination. The salaries of the Mayor of London, Members of the Greater London Assembly and Police and Crime Commissioners will remain pensionable.

Timing

Statutory consultation is required and will commence in due course, as part of the planned consultation on the wider reform of the LGPS. We will consult with the Welsh Assembly government in respect of access to the LGPS for councillors in Wales.

As a former councillor myself, I would like to pay tribute to their often unsung and ongoing work in standing up for their local residents. We hope these reforms will further strengthen the integrity and independence of councillors and increase the respect within their communities for the voluntary work they undertake as champions of the people.

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STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
26 NOVEMBER 2013

8 REVISIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

A report by the Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources informed the Committee that the Council's Constitution was a 'living document' which needed to be kept under review to reflect changes in the Council and changes in the way the Council delivered services and went about its business. Regular reviews were necessary to:

- ensure the Constitution remained relevant and effective;
- identify changes required to ensure clarity and consistency; and
- provide an opportunity for the Council's constitutional arrangements to be continuously improved.

The Committee was responsible for keeping the Council's Constitutional arrangements under review. It could make minor changes to the Constitution as it considered appropriate and make recommendations on possible changes to the Council. Any changes made should be made in order to better achieve the purposes set out in Article 1 of the Council's Constitution.

The Director's report informed that the Monitoring Officer had carried out a preliminary review of the Constitution under his delegated powers and minor changes were required to address for example simple continuity issues, changes/corrections to officer titles and other names.

The report also set out proposals to amend the Council's Constitution by the Committee itself or to recommend approval to the Council to ensure that the Constitution remained effective. The Monitoring Officer's review had centred on addressing continuity, updating titles of bodies and officers, updating references to legislation, and addressing specific operational issues that had been identified. There were two Schedules appended to the report. Schedule 1 contained proposed amendments to the Constitution that were considered to be of a minor nature, and therefore approval of those changes fell within the remit/authority of the Committee. Schedule 2 contained other proposed amendments to the Constitution that it was considered should be approved by Council.

The report contained the history and background to the review work carried out, detailed issues for the Committee's consideration and set out a summary of proposed key amendments in respect of:

- The Council's Procedural Rules;
- Constituency Committees;
- The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee's Terms of Reference;
- Schemes of Delegation; and
- The Call-in Procedure.

The Committee noted that it was intended that a whole scale review of the Constitution would commence in early January 2014. A Members' survey would be undertaken as part of this exercise which would canvass the views of all Members on, not only the effectiveness of the current Constitutional arrangements, but also on what each Member considered could/should be improved. The outcome of this review together with recommendations/proposals on changes to the Council's Constitution would be reported back to this Committee and/or to the Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor L Fraser moved the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor C Blakeley:

'If the Committee is unable to agree any of the amendments set out in Schedules 1 and 2 to the report they be included in the consultation exercise to be undertaken with Members in early January 2014.'

Councillor R Abbey reported that it was his understanding that the Schedules contained interim measures to be taken to ensure the Council was operating properly until the whole scale review had been undertaken.

The Head of Legal and Member Services sought to clarify the position by informing that Schedule 1 contained proposed changes that the Committee had authority to change and Schedule 2 contained proposed changes that the Council had authority to change but the Committee was able to recommend to the Council that the changes be made. The changes in Schedule 1 would be permanent if the Committee agreed them and the changes in Schedule 2 required the Council's approval and could be further reviewed and changed as part of the whole scale review of the Council's Constitution.

The Committee as part of the debate discussed a number of issues and concerns with regard to the Agenda and the proposed changes to the Constitution.

Councillor C Blakeley informed that he had spoken to the Chief Executive about the report and its Schedules. The Chief Executive had been clear that if there were any contentious issues or any disagreements over what was being proposed they could be referred to the forthcoming consultation. His Political Group wanted to defer the whole report.

Councillor M McLaughlin told the Committee that there were a significant number of proposed changes to the Council's Constitution to be considered but that did not make them contentious. She also informed that she understood that all the proposed changes had been agreed the by Political Group Leaders. Therefore, she proposed that the Committee continue to make decisions on the report.

The Head of Legal and Member Services reported that he had spoken to the Chief Executive that afternoon and it was his view that if the Committee could not unanimously agree the changes then it may wish to refer them to the wider review to be undertaken in January 2014.

Councillor T Harney informed that he was unhappy because the report and Schedules were intended to assist Members to agree amendments to the Council's Constitution. He considered that the paperwork for the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee should be meticulous but unfortunately, this was not the case here. Councillor Harney reminded Members that in the past the Council and its Committees had often suspended Standing Orders but that it was not good practice. It was important for the Constitution to be right and adhered to. Firstly, the Committee must understand all of the issues and if some were considered urgent he wanted to know why and then a vote should be taken. He suggested that each amendment be considered in turn.

The Head of Legal and Member Services reported that it was for the Committee to decide which aspects of the report it wished to discuss, having regard to all the representations that had been made. If Members were content with some of the proposed changes they could be identified along with any it wished to discuss at a later date.

Councillor L Fraser informed that she was unhappy with the agenda and supporting papers sent to the Committee which clearly showed a printing error. She noted that whilst some of the proposed changes were 'housekeeping' e.g. updating acts etc, there were also some big important issues to be determined.

Councillor M McLaughlin proposed that the Committee agree Councillor T Harney's proposal and consider and vote on each proposed amendment.

Councillor C Blakeley raised concerns that he had asked the Democratic Services Manager yesterday for a complete copy of the Council's current Constitution with the proposed changes marked on it but his request had been refused. He told the Committee that he considered that the proposed amendments were being rushed unnecessarily.

Councillor R Abbey enquired why some Members thought the Committee could not deal with the 'housekeeping' issues now.

Councillor C Blakeley responded stating that clearly this Committee had an important role to play. He had been presented with the majority of the proposed Constitutional changes earlier in the evening with no time to study and understand them. He was of the view that the report and Schedules should be part of the forthcoming consultation exercise and that the findings should be presented to the Committee in due course. He considered that the Council had managed without these proposed changes since May 2013 so it should be able to manage a little longer.

Councillor T Harney considered that as the Chief Executive should be invited to attend the next meeting.

Councillor M McLaughlin proposed that Members consider the Schedules and agree the amendments/recommendations that they could. However, Councillor C Blakeley informed that in conversations with the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal and Member Services he had suggested that the contentious items be taken out but they had not agreed to it.

The Head of Legal and Member Services informed that he did not have authority to remove matters from the Committee's consideration once the Agenda had been published. The Committee had discretion to agree or recommend to Council or reject any of the proposals set out in the Schedules.

Councillor C Blakeley reminded the Committee that a Motion had already been moved and seconded and would need to be voted on. Councillor Blakeley also commented that it was not acceptable that the Strategic Director for Transformation and Resources was not in attendance at the meeting.

Councillor M McLaughlin moved the following Amendment which was seconded by Councillor R Abbey:

'That given that the proposed changes are relatively minor, the Committee will give consideration to each one and agree which ones it can agree and identify which ones it cannot agree, making progress where it can.'

This Amendment was voted on and agreed (5 for, 3 against and 1 abstention). It then became the substantive Motion and was agreed (5 for, 1 against and 1 abstention). Councillors C Blakeley and L Fraser requested that it be recorded in the Minutes that they had voted against the substantive Motion.

The Head of Legal and Member Services began to take the Committee through the detail of the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution as detailed in the report.

Councillor C Blakeley referred to the Summary of Proposed Key Amendments set out in the report (paragraphs 2.6 – 2.14). He drew Members attention to the word 'key' informing that the proposed changes were not minor. He informed that Members of his Political Group who were Members of the Committee could not support these changes being made to the Council's Constitution.

The Head of Legal and Member Services attempted to explain the reasons why it was recommended that these key amendments should be made.

Councillor L Fraser referred to the key amendments in respect of the Council's Constituency Committees. She considered that a piecemeal approach was being taken to them. She reminded the Committee that three of the Constituency Committees had only met once and the fourth one had not yet met. Councillor Fraser's view was that these Committees should be allowed to operate for a year before discussions over what worked and what did not work were held. She also raised concerns over proposals to amend the Call-in procedure.

Councillor T Harney drew the Committee's attention to Schedule 1 – Paragraph 15 – Special Urgency. He considered that it should be rewritten in 'plain' English. He told the meeting that he was unable to understand what the provision meant. Therefore, he requested a clear explanation of this paragraph.

The Head of Legal and Member Services explained that in relation to Executive decisions the Council was obligated to give 28 working days notice of any proposed key decision or proposed decision which relied upon exempt information. However, on occasion it was not possible to give 28 working days notice and so in such circumstances it was possible to still take the decision if agreement was obtained from the Chair of the relevant Policy and Performance Committee or in his/her absence the Mayor and in his/her absence the Deputy Mayor.

Councillor P Kearney informed that he was not happy with any of the wording in Schedule 1 to the report. He referred to Paragraph 15 – Special Urgency and pointed out that it had not been punctuated.

Councillor R Abbey proposed that the Proposed Key Amendments set out in the report be referred to the Council for its decision.

Councillor L Fraser informed that she had been happy with the proposed amendment to Paragraph 15 – Special urgency on Schedule 1 until she had heard Councillor P Kearney's comments which had allowed her to see it in a different light.

The Head of Legal and Member Services reported that in respect of the Access to Information Regulations 2012, the Council was obliged to comply with the Regulations. The amendment sought to bring the Constitution in line with these Regulations and reflect the legal framework which the Council had to observe in any event.

Councillor C Blakeley referred to Schedule 1 to the report and informed that he was content with the Head of Legal and Member Services changing the names of Officers. However, responsibilities could be listed under post holders. He was aware that the Committee was not making progress and proposed that the Committee refer the report to the Standards Working Group and that it become part of its work.

Councillor M McLaughlin considered that the Committee should accept those parts of the Constitution that it could and refer what needed to be referred to the Council.

Councillor C Blakeley informed that if these matters were referred to the Council he saw no point in this Committee. He considered that the democratic services process was being undermined.

Councillor C Blakeley moved the following Motion which was seconded by Councillor L Fraser:

'That Item No. 4 on the Committee's agenda be withdrawn and referred to the Standards Working Group to be considered with the assistance of Officers and a report on its recommendations be provided for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.'

Councillor M McLaughlin moved the following Amendment which was seconded by Councillor D Roberts:

'That in order to assist the smooth running of the Council, prior to the whole scale review of its Constitution

- (1) the proposed changes set out in Schedule 1 to the report be approved and the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly; and
- (2) the Council be **recommended** to approve the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution set out in Schedule 2 to the report.'

This Amendment was voted on and agreed (5 for, 4 against). It then became the substantive Motion and was agreed (5 for, 4 against). Councillors C Blakeley and L Fraser requested that it be recorded in the Minutes that they had voted against the substantive Motion.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the proposed changes set out in Schedule 1 to the report be approved and the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly; and**
- (2) **the Council be RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed changes to its Constitution as detailed in Schedule 2 to the report.**

Schedule 2 – Matters to be referred to Council for approval

Page No. (of the Constitution)	Section Changed	Description of amendments/Update	Authority for Change
18	Article 6 – Policy and Performance Committees	<p>Paragraph 6.3 (vii) Delete reference to “two” and “five” parent governor representatives and replace with “at least two parent governor representatives and two Diocesan representatives”.</p>	Council
23 and 25	Article 9 – The Standards & Constitutional Oversight Committee	<p>Paragraph 9.2 (a) bullet point two Delete “three” replace with “four”.</p> <p>Insert new paragraph 9.4 “The Committee shall have delegated power and responsibility to act on behalf of the Council as Trustee of the E.F Callister Youth Club”.</p>	Council
31	Article 10 – Constituency Committees	<p>Replace the first sentence in paragraph 10.2(iii) “The Constituency Committee have an advisory role” with “The Constituency Committee shall be a decision making committee”.</p> <p>Add in new paragraph “10.2 (iv) The Committee can appoint up to six Community Representatives (co-optees) with non-voting rights”.</p> <p>Add in paragraph “10.2 (v) Any Member of the Committee, including co-optees, may be appointed as the Chairperson of the Committee.”</p>	Council
36	Article 12 – Officers	<p>Paragraph 12.3 – Function of the Monitoring Officer Add “Paragraph (h) - The Monitoring Officer be responsible to the Authority for ensuring so far as reasonably possible that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with (as set out in the Code of Corporate Governance)”.</p>	Council
52	Table 2 – Responsibility for Council Functions	<p>Standards and Governance Committee Amend Committee title to “Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee”. Amend Functions to include “To carry out the functions, discharge the powers</p>	Council

Schedule 2 – Matters to be referred to Council for approval

<p>53</p>		<p>and undertake the duties of the Council as Trustee of the E.F Callister Youth Club”.</p> <p>Chief Officers Employment Disciplinary Sub-Committee Amend Committee title to read: “Investigatory and Disciplinary Committee (IDC)”</p> <p>Amend Membership to read : “ To be determined by the Employment and Appointments Committee</p> <p>Policy & Performance Co-ordinating Committee Add in “15” and delete”(Plus 4 voting and 1 other co-opted Members)”.</p>	
<p>70</p>	<p>Part 3 - Schedule 2</p> <p>Scheme of Delegation of (Non-Executive) Functions to Committees</p>	<p>Table B. Licensing & registration functions (pg 78) Amend paragraph 7 to read “Power to license sex establishments” and remove reference to “section 2 and Schedule 3”.</p> <p>Amend paragraph 26 (p80) to read “The Marriage Act 1949 and the Marriages (Approved Premises) Regulations 1995”.</p> <p>Delete paragraph 48 (p81) relating to the “power to register motor salvage operators”.</p>	<p>Council</p>
<p>91-97</p>	<p>Scheme of Non Executive Delegation of Functions to Officers</p>	<p>Schedule 4A Part 2 (1): The list of relevant legislation be amended to -</p> <p>Include: “Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010” “Mobile Home Act 2010” “Companies Act 2006” “Consumer Credit Act 1974, 2006 and 2009” “The Cancellation of Contracts made in a “Consumer’s Home or Place of Work etc Regulations 2008” “The Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000”</p>	<p>Council</p>

		<p>Delete: “Property Misdemeanors Act 1991” “Trade Descriptions Act 1968”</p> <p>Schedule 4A Part 2: Amend paragraph (2) to read “Institute legal action and or proceedings in respect of the enforcement of any legislation relating to trading standards, environmental health, environmental protection, food safety and health and safety.”</p> <p>Amend paragraph 4(b) – replace reference to “Trading Standards Manager” with “Senior Manager (Trading Standards)”.</p> <p>Amend paragraph 4(c) and (d) – replace reference to “Trading Standards Manager, Divisional Officer (Business Support), Divisional Officer (Community Support and Regulation)” with “Senior Manager (Trading Standards) and Trading Standards Operation Manager”.</p> <p>In relation to paragraph (15):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - delete reference to “(ii) Game Dealers Licences”; - amend (viii) to read “Notices given for temporary use of premises for gambling”; - delete reference to “(xviii) Motor Salvage operators”; and - amend (xxii) to read: “The enforcement of conditions relating to the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences, vehicle licences and operator’s licences, as allowed in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1976, including the suspension or revocation of driving licences, vehicle licences and operator’s licences. (Any actions to be reported to the next meeting of the Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee)”. 	
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Schedule 2 – Matters to be referred to Council for approval

<p>114-139</p>	<p>Rules of Procedure – Council Procedure Standing Orders</p>	<p>Page 118 - 5. Order of Business (Council Meetings), paragraph (2) (j) - Deleted and paragraphs then re-lettered.</p> <p>Page 119 – 5A. paragraph 2 (b) – Annual meetings of the Council, –Delete election and replace with “appointment”.</p> <p>Page 119 – 5A. paragraph 2 (d) to be added “Leader’s announcements – Appointment of Cabinet and Portfolios (unless to be confirmed as soon as practicably possible after the Annual General Meeting).”</p> <p>Page 119 – 5A. paragraphs 2(e) was the previous 2(d), all of (2) re-lettered.</p> <p>Page 122 – 8. Motions which may be moved without notice having been given under Standing Order 7 - (I) delete “36” replace with “22A”</p> <p>P123 – 10. Questions – paragraph (2) (a) delete 5.1 and replace with 5(2)(h)</p> <p>P125 – 12. Rules of debate for Council Meetings - paragraph (6) Right of Reply – Delete 8 replace with “7”</p> <p>AMENDMENTS - P126 - 12 paragraph (9) - Add in text</p> <p>“Where an ordinary Council meeting is scheduled to take place on a Monday, any amendment to a Notice of Motion submitted pursuant to Standing Order 7 must be submitted to the Head of Legal and Member Services (or his/her nominee) by no later than 10:00am on the Friday immediately preceding that ordinary Council meeting.</p> <p>In the case of any other scheduled ordinary Council meeting, any amendment proposed to a Notice of Motion must be submitted to the Head of Legal and Member Services (or his/her nominee) at least two clear working days prior to the relevant ordinary Council meeting unless the Chief Executive agrees that it is in the public interest to allow the submission of the amendment at an alternative date and time.”</p>	<p>Council</p>
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Schedule 2 – Matters to be referred to Council for approval

		<p>P127 – 12. paragraph (11) –Substantive Motion – delete “notified under Standing Order 5(1) (h)” and “notified as an objection”.</p> <p>P127 – 12. paragraph (12) – Withdrawal of amendment- title change delete and replace with “Withdrawal of Motion or Amendment” and add in “(See Standing Order 7(3)).”</p> <p>P127 – 12. paragraph (13) – Motions which may be moved in course of debate (d) - delete 7(8) replace with “9(1).”</p> <p>Page 131 – 18. paragraph (7) – Voting - delete 7(8) replace with “9(1).”</p> <p>Page 133 – Section 2 – Relating to Committees - Standing Order 23 – (h) delete 4 replace with “1”.</p> <p>Page 137- Standing Order 35 - Calling in of Decisions</p> <p>Standing Order 35(2) Delete the word “notice” and replace with “Minute(s)”. Delete “9a.m on the Thursday” and replace with “5:00pm on the final day of the call in period of five clear working days from the date of publication.”</p> <p>Standing Order 35(3) (a) – Delete “7 working days” replace with “15 working days”.</p>	
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COUNCIL - 16 DECEMBER 2013

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Phil Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO	Leader of the Council
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. CORPORATE PLAN

The updated Corporate Plan has been adopted by Council and will ensure that the Council's resources are aligned to deliver our vision and priorities. The Council's vision is shared with our partners:

“Wirral will be a place where the vulnerable are safe and protected, where employers want to invest and local businesses thrive, and where good health and an excellent quality of life is within the reach of everyone who lives here.”

The content of the Corporate Plan has been extensively consulted upon with staff, elected members and partners and an Elected Members' event to discuss the draft plan was held on 27th November. A number of amendments were proposed by Members and have been incorporated into a revised version which was debated and agreed at Policy Council on 2nd December 2013.

As in previous years, a delivery plan will now be developed with performance measures and targets which will be subject to regular and robust monitoring and management. The development of directorate plans will also underpin and support the delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities.

2. BUDGET

We continue to lobby government about the disproportionate affect on Northern authorities and the precarious financial position of many local authorities recently highlighted by the Local Government Association. It is estimated that the average council in the North West will lose £627 per person by 2017/18 with a greater loss of £632 expected in Wirral, compared with £305 in the South East and an English average of £487 according to a report by the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (SIGOMA).

The level of funding and the savings requirement is unprecedented and puts at risk the delivery of key statutory and essential services. The Council will need to identify further savings of £30.7 million in 2015/16 and £25.1 million savings in 2016/17.

There is only so far we can go with efficiencies savings and a challenge on discretionary spend; there is a link between much discretionary spend and the delivery of statutory/essential services and we must challenge all spend in a way that ensures sustainability over the longer term.

We are seeking ways to make savings and provide best value in all our corporate support services and continue to work on plans with Cheshire West and Cheshire to share services, pool expertise and develop sustainable systems to support the Council in the future through collaboration and making savings through economies of scale.

3. STRATEGIC FINANCE

The main focus of strategic finance has been on ensuring that financial forecasts and assumptions are sound, planning for 2014/15 budget setting process and providing visibility on the challenge moving into 2015/16 and beyond.

We have made improvements in our reporting processes and the level of scrutiny on financial matters. In addition we have sought to align the financial plans to the Corporate Plan and are working on the Commissioning Strategy and plans for the Council.

4. BEDROOM TAX

Following the notice of motion agreed by Council on the 14th October, a useful initial meeting took place involving Councillors Gilchrist and Lewis to discuss practical steps to help those residents who are being adversely affected by the Government's Bedroom Tax. A follow-up meeting will take place shortly with a view to agreeing an action plan.

5. COMBINED AUTHORITY

Government has commenced the statutory consultation period following the submission to establish a Combined Authority. The consultation closes on the 22nd January 2014 and if there is support for the proposal, an order will be laid before Parliament to create the Combined Authority. There will a further opportunity to consider the proposal at a meeting of Council in March 2014 where Elected Members will be asked to approve the creation of a Combined Authority with effect from April 2014.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Christine Jones
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Adult Social Care
CO-ORINDATING CHIEF OFFICER	Director of Adult Social Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

This update focuses upon the arrangements being put in place, and progress being made to deliver greater integration of health and social care services. A more coherent, joined up health and social care system is required that responds to the needs of the whole person. Funding reform proposals are an important lever in transforming change; Wirral is creating a framework to respond to the challenge built around the key leadership role of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

A Strategic Commissioning Group, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board, has been put in place by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that key commissioning decisions support better use of resources and more effective outcomes for the people of Wirral.

Vision 2018 brings together commissioners and providers across the health and social care economy under the governance of the Health and Wellbeing Board to understand the implications of the financial challenge across the system and to drive change around a set of defined work-streams. These include enablers such as information communication technology and workforce issues, as well as models of care, population needs and outcomes.

Examples of the types of changes being made in support of integration are given throughout the rest of this report.

1. BETTER WORKING AT THE HOSPITAL “THE PULL PILOT”

The “Pull Pilot” is a collaborative initiative supported by Wirral University Teaching Hospital (WUTH), The Community Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Department of Adult Social Services (DASS).

This pilot was established following concerns that often individuals would present at Accident & Emergency with a combination of problems (health and social care) but a lack of quick response and failure to utilise community based services can lead to admission into an inpatient bed. This is neither good for the individual and leads to significant costs and a potential disruption to elective health care provision.

The pilot consists of practitioners from a variety of disciplines including medical staff seeking better individual solutions.

- Most recent outcomes are that from 52 people being referred 46 were not admitted into hospital and were provided with alternative support and or advice. This equates to 88%.
- The quickest turn around time was approximately one hour.
- Out of the number not being admitted 19% were referred to the Short Term Assessment & Reablement (STAR) team and 22% returned home with either a new package of care or existing services. One person was admitted into a short term care bed via DASS and the rest were supported to return home either through referral to another agency.

2. COMMISSIONING FOR MORE EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES

Intermediate Care Services and Reablement

As part of the new funding arrangements around health and social care agreement was required with regard to the use of the reablement grant. This offered the opportunity to deliver efficiency but also to deliver more effective outcomes from a jointly commissioned service between DASS and the CCG. The new service model provides a continuum of care including 35 Intermediate Care beds, 35 Transitional Care beds, Supported Extra Care and Reablement at home. The tender will commence week beginning 9th December 2013. A strong emphasis has been placed on access via General Practitioners and the avoidance of unnecessary hospital admissions. A key outcome measure will also be reduced reliance on admissions into residential and nursing care beds.

Investment has been moved around to enable an expanded dedicated multi disciplinary team, including an integrated management post, social workers, reablement officers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and medical cover. The full service will be in place for April 2014.

Mobile Nights

Pilot service commissioned and in place; take up is increasing. This service fills a critical gap in Wirral for people requiring support at night. Funding is in place until March 2015 outcomes will be fully evaluated in relation to its effectiveness during 2014.

Early Intervention and Prevention

Tender completed. Interviews for awarding contract taking place in December 2013. £400K efficiency achieved. Exploring further Joint Commissioning with CCG and Public Health.

The examples given above provide a very small snapshot of integration activity, but hopefully give elected members practical illustrations of how integrated commissioning and integrated care can deliver better outcomes to people.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Adrian Jones
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Central and Support Services
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Strategic Director – Transformation and Resources

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. IMPACTS OF WELFARE REFORM

The Authority continues to implement the Government Welfare Reform programme and overall we are seeing no slowing down in the increased level of contacts. The number of front of house (Call Centre, One Stop Shop and web) and back office (Revenues and Benefits direct contact including mail) contacts continue at nearly 25% higher than last year. The current weekly total is over 12,000 contacts per week – last year it was about approximately 9,600 per week.

Impacts of the welfare reforms continue to be met by staff in all Customer Services areas. In October 2013, 321 food bank vouchers were issued 82 more than the previous month and a significant increase to October 2012 when just 11 vouchers were issued. We are looking to see how we can most appropriately work with customers to help them address their debt issues. The libraries and One Stop Shops have collected 584kg of donations from April to October 2013 and passed to the Food Bank.

The Under Occupancy Regulations

This weekly deduction of benefit of either 14% or 25% is now 3,579 down from 4,200 homes. This has been due to staff identifying carers, disabled persons and other eligible categories that allow a bedroom to be exempt and this work continues. Wirral Council continues to encourage any who qualify to apply for this.

Local Welfare Assistance Scheme

Set up by Wirral Council, this replacement for the previous national Community Care Grant and Social Fund has now given help of nearly £300,000 to over 2,750 since it started in April giving emergency support for food, fuel, white goods and helping people get re-established in the Community. This scheme is applied for on line and can be accessed at our computers and kiosks at libraries and one stop shops and applications are increasing as more people access it.

Discretionary Housing Payment

£440,000 has been paid out with a further £100,000 already committed to year end which sees over 1200 people having received help from the Government grant of £980,000. Council officers are currently undertaking a scheduled review of spend, awards and needs trends which will see a further escalation in take-up activity.

Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Support

In October the Council set aside a sum of £50,000 to help the most extreme circumstances where people are unable to pay their Council Tax. Applications are now being received and being considered. The sum available through these schemes does not match the total shortfall our residents face. By being considered together, our officers are able to see which support may be best applied and if there is more that can be done for each applicant. It also ensures that Council focuses limited resources in the greatest areas of need.

2. BUDGET MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PROCESSES

We have made improvements to our budget management and monitoring processes by engaging and training budget holders, setting up a budget steering group, introducing an officer strategic budget group and robust monthly reporting and monitoring to highlight key issues, reinforce accountability and improve the budget management processes.

3. INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) UPDATE

In ICT the main focus is on improving the stability of the main Council ICT services and refreshing the ICT equipment and roll out of Windows version 7. There are capacity issues to address to ensure that we are able to provide the right level of support to services to maximise the use of technology to support business improvement and smooth delivery.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Council has completed the management of the people implications of the budget 2013/14, reducing its workforce by nearly 25% in the past year. In total 410 posts have been deleted and 276 staff have left the Council, 33 of whom were made compulsorily redundant. The Council was able to redeploy 36 members of staff into alternative positions.

We continue our statutory collective consultation with the trades unions regarding the potential impact of the 2014/15 budget. The Council's leadership development programme has launched as part of the strengthening of capacity across the Council.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tony Smith
CABINET PORTFOLIO	Children and Family Services
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Director of Children's Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. **INSPECTION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS**

This new Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) framework was published and became live in November 2013. Inspections will be undertaken with one day's notice, and last for four weeks. All authorities will be inspected over the next three years. Key features are:

- A focus on front line practice, evidencing that interventions make a difference;
- Scrutiny of the impact of the help given, including the effectiveness of inter-agency working and how well partners take account of children's views;
- Tracking 25–30 children's cases, and auditing a number of our own cases during the inspection, evidencing the robustness of our own analysis;
- A graded review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Within this framework, initial priorities for the new Children's Services leadership team include:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of children's child protection plans;
- Quality assuring the robustness of social workers' supervision arrangements;
- Strengthening partnership arrangements to deliver preventative services which make sure that the right children receive the right services, at the right time.

2. **REPORT OF SHORT QUALITY SCREENING (SQS) OF YOUTH OFFENDING WORK IN WIRRAL**

Wirral's Youth Offending Service was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation between 30th September and 2nd October 2013. This involved consideration of a sample of 34 recent cases dealt with by the service.

The Inspectorate concluded that it found a "very positive picture in Wirral Youth Offending Service". Substantial improvement was required in all areas of work when the service was inspected four years ago. "It was pleasing to see that significant progress had been made. Staff were well supported and committed. They produced good quality reports, assessments and plans and had access to a range of

services". The two areas for development were to continue to improve the quality of children's risk and vulnerability plans.

3. YOUTH VOICE CONFERENCE AND YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The theme for this year's Youth Voice Conference, held on 15th October, was Respect; the theme was identified following consultation with 79 young people from Youth Hubs, Youth Clubs and Youth Outreach provision. In addition to the workshops, planned and facilitated in partnership with young people (peer educators), there was a hot seating panel, comprising councillors and senior leaders from different organisations answering questions from young people.

Comments from the 71 young people attending the event included:

- I learned about tackling issues and getting further understanding of the topics
- A sense of solidarity among the general youth public on issues relating to bullying and respect
- Been made aware of how young people can have a say – and all the things I can do

The Youth Parliament, held on 12th November 2013, involved 49 young people this year, representing eight secondary schools and seven youth groups. Thoroughly enjoyed by all, some of the young people's comments included:

- Other people's opinions are different. I learnt that I may not like their opinion but it's not about me – it's about the Wirral
- That the youth really do have a voice
- How to successfully debate as part of the parliament

Both events successfully engaged young people in positive and productive activities and their views expressed will inform service development.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Pat Hackett
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Economy
CO-ORINDATING CHIEF OFFICER	Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. HOYLAKE GOLF RESORT

The Council is undertaking a competitive dialogue procurement process for the Hoylake Golf Resort. There has been an encouraging response from national and international companies to the initial stages of the process. Bidders are now being evaluated and shortlisted for the next stage of the process. It is intended to identify a preferred partner by June 2014.

2. BIRKENHEAD TOWN CENTRE

A lock out agreement is now in place with Neptune Developments and they have started work on a master plan for the town centre which they hope to complete within the next twelve months.

3. NEW BRIGHTON

Neptune Developments are due to commence work shortly on the residential development adjacent to the Floral Pavilion and planning permission has just been given for an Iceland store in the Marine Point development. Discussions are on-going regarding improvements to the promenade and also with the owners of a number of privately owned sites about future developments.

4. WIRRAL WATERS

Significant progress continues to be made on Wirral Waters – and in particular progressing projects within the Enterprise Zone. Following successfully securing £8m of Local Infrastructure Funding, an additional £36m of funding bids have been submitted to catalyse early stage development along Tower Road (East Float) and the Mobil site (West Float). For the latter, Peel have contracted Technical Demolition Service (TDS), a Birkenhead based firm to clear the site of existing buildings and structures, making the site much safer. Work is anticipated to finish early 2014. It is anticipated that a number of funding decisions will be made in the next six to eight weeks.

5. OFFSHORE WIND

Progress has been made in delivering the Council's sector based strategies, particularly in relation to Offshore Wind. The Council has committed £832,000 of its £5m Regional Growth Fund Offshore Supply Chain development programme. This is committed against 4 projects, in total creating and securing almost 120 jobs. More projects are being developed into the pipeline. Work also continues to develop the Marine Innovation Campus to support the Offshore Wind sector. ERDF resources that have been secured for promoting key sectors in Wirral will be deployed on a series of high profile targeted campaigns for Offshore Wind and Automotive.

6. INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR BUSINESS

A number of projects are being progressed to secure events for Wirral during the period of the IFB. It is hoped to create a Wirral hub for manufacturing events in West Float and to focus on automotive sector and low carbon events.

7. REGIONAL GROWTH FUND

In addition to the Offshore Wind RGF programme, officers have built a steady pipeline of general business growth projects with one project being approved by Cabinet and two more being considered at Cabinet on the 10th December (worth a total of £890k for in excess of 245 new jobs). Officers are working with two private sector organisations who are considering applications for RGF round 5 (closing date 9th December).

8. LCR GROWTH PLAN/ NEXT EUROPEAN PROGRAMME

Work is being progressed with local authority partners on the Growth Plan for the Liverpool City Region and also the next European programme. Wirral's key projects are being promoted as appropriate. The Growth Plan is a key component of the development of the Combined Authority for the Liverpool City Region.

9. MERSEYSIDE BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Wirral works with LCR partners to deliver a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funded business support programme that enables Invest Wirral to offer companies access to specialist advice services. Wirral outperforms the rest of the LCR partnership, already achieving programme targets with over 12 months of the programme still to run. This follows an independent report from PWC in November which noted significant economic performance in Wirral, showing it the best in the North West and amongst the top three seen in the Country.

10. MERSEY DEE ALLIANCE (MDA)

Wirral continues to play a significant role in the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA), supporting lobbying for key transport projects and other key projects. I will take the MDA chair in 2014.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Brian Kenny
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Environment and Sustainability
CO-ORDINATION CHIEF OFFICER	Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. STREET CLEANSING

Additional staff within the Waste and Environmental Services team have been trained by Keep Britain Tidy to carry out cleansing audits. Increased monitoring of standard of cleanse carried out by the contractor is now being carried out to reflect the changes to the conditions of contract. Early indications are that Biffa are managing to cleanse to acceptable standards with reduced resources despite areas going longer between cleanses. Currently both the Street Cleansing and alley way cleansing timetables are on schedule.

The leaf fall removal programme is also on schedule, with the Council receiving very few complaints compared to previous years. This is primarily due to the pro-active nature of the programme, driven by intelligence collated over a number of leaf fall seasons. Working in partnership with the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, the Council is also using its own Ivy Farm facility to "tip off" leaf fall and transfer it to a composting facility, enabling the cleansing crews to work more efficiently. Officers estimate this has saved the Council at least £25K.

A multi-agency and cross-council pilot project is being developed to tackle "alleyway dumping". A report will be presented to Cabinet early in the New Year outlining proposals. The project proposes to re-examine waste collection systems in two terraced areas and undertake extensive consultation with affected residents and property owners in order to improve environmental quality though encouraging communities to take ownership of the public space around their homes and businesses.

2. WASTE COLLECTION (GREEN AND GREY BINS)

All residents have been provided with new calendars showing collection dates (including changes over Christmas for some residents) for the next two years. The booklet also provided reminders of what waste goes in what bin, and tips for reducing waste. Wirral's best ever "compost bin promotion" was also launched in this leaflet and in three weeks over 500 compost bins have been purchased. This is more than has been sold in the

last 4 years. Officers will be following up on all sales to help residents to compost successfully and offering free workshops for those wanting to learn more about composting at home.

3. GARDEN WASTE

Garden Waste subscribers are now in excess of 36,000, with over 350 residents signing up in November as a result of the letters going out to non-subscribers offering to collect their unwanted brown bins. Early indications are that very little garden waste has ended up in the residual waste stream, with the majority of non-subscribers opting to take their garden waste to the household waste recycling centres. There has been an overall decrease in reported green waste fly tips compared to June–October last year. In October, the Council's kerbside scheme yielded 80% of the tonnage collected in the same month last year.

The brown bin take back project concluded on the 1st December. The vast majority of residents have opted to retain their bin to use as storage, for conversion into water butts, or in case they wish to have their garden waste collected at a later date. The Council have been contacted by a number of other Local Authorities, asking for guidance and information around the transition from a free to chargeable service. The Waste and Environmental Services Manager and myself as Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability presented to over 30 Local Authorities at an APSE conference in November.

4. ADOPTION OF NEW BYELAWS IN RELATION TO SKIN PIERCING ACTIVITIES

The Authority is currently in the process of adopting new combined byelaws in relation to tattooing, semi-permanent skin colouring, cosmetic piercing, electrolysis and acupuncture. Skin piercing activities pose a higher risk of contracting blood borne viruses such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis. The new byelaws will allow Environmental Health Officers to enforce a minimum standard of cleanliness for cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring. These statutory powers will ensure that minimum legal standards are maintained in tattoo parlours. However, to try and further improve standards Environmental Health Officers are exploring the possibility and practicalities of introducing a voluntary rating scheme for tattooists.

5. ADOPTION OF THE SUNBEDS (REGULATION) ACT

The Authority is also in the process of adopting the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010. The Act imposes a duty on anyone involved in carrying on a sunbed business to ensure that no person under the age of 18 years: uses a sunbed, is offered the use of a sunbed, or is present in a restricted zone. The health case for this legislation is clear: skin cancer incidence is increasing. The main cause of skin cancer is over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays. This may be from natural sunlight or artificial rays from the use of sunbeds and sunlamps. Skin cancer typically takes decades to develop, so may not become apparent until years after the damaging exposure. Significantly, malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer in 15–24-year-olds in the UK.

Adoption of the legislation will allow Environmental Health Officers to undertake test purchasing at premises offering sunbed services to ensure duty holders are compliant with the legislation.

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CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Ann McLachlan
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Governance and Improvement
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Director of Public Health/Head of Policy & Performance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the last report to Council in October there has been significant progress in delivering on our improvement and governance agenda.

1. IMPROVEMENT BOARD

At its meeting on 27th September, the Improvement Board requested a report which provided a full review of the Council's progress since the Board was established in February 2012. The Board convened a special meeting on 25th October to consider an early draft of the Improvement Board Review report. Feedback was provided and the report was updated following this meeting.

The Board agreed that this draft report should be subject to wider consultation with external stakeholders and the public to ensure their feedback was captured and incorporated within the review. The draft report was published on the Council's website and the consultation ran from 5th –15th November.

As part of the consultation, Members of the public were invited to provide a comment or raise a question at a public meeting on 15th November. Approximately 35 people attended the public meeting and six Wirral residents submitted questions; in addition the Chair received a letter by hand. The overall tone from the six people submitting questions or comments was to disagree with the review reports findings of considerable improvement in Wirral Council and in the main to ask the Improvement Board to remain.

Recognition of the significant progress made by the Council was received through feedback from a number of external stakeholders including Members of Parliament, other local authorities, partners and local businesses.

The Improvement Board met on the 29th November to consider the review which was updated to reflect the feedback received. They made the following recommendations:

1. The Improvement Board recognises the significant progress made by the Council but also recognises there is still significant risk going forward. However, taking into account the progress we have seen and the public consultation, it recommends that an Improvement Board in its current form is no longer needed

as the Council has the capability and capacity to manage its own improvement process.

2. Given the challenge both to Wirral and local government generally there should be a review of Wirral's progress in March 2014 by the external Board members as suggested in paragraph 85 of the report.
3. The Council and the Board recognise that improvement is a continuous journey. Therefore the Council will need to continue to drive improvement through the future actions suggested in the next steps section of the report.

2. GOVERNANCE

The Council adopted new constitutional arrangements in April 2013. It is therefore now timely to review these arrangements to examine if they are meeting their original intention. Members' views will inform a further review of the Constitution in readiness for the new municipal year. A survey which asks for members' perceptions and experiences will be launched on 18th December 2013 and close on 7th January 2014.

3. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Wirral had an undertaking with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to provide monthly updates about its request-handling performance. This was to be accompanied by a list of any overdue requests, for a three-month period. The period commenced with requests made on 1st July 2013 and ended with those made on 30th September 2013.

The undertaking required that, by the end of this monitoring period, at least 85% of requests be handled within the statutory time limits.

The ICO further required all overdue responses identified in Wirral's correspondence to the commissioner of 25th June 2013 would have received responses by the end of the monitoring period. I am pleased to report as of 1st November 2013, all overdue responses identified in Wirral's correspondence to the Commissioner of 25th June 2013 have now been answered.

FOI response figures for the monitoring period are as follows:

Month	Total FOI's received	Responded in time	Percentage
July 2013	131	114	87%
August 2013	107	94	87.8%
September 2013	96	82	85.4%
Total	334	290	86.8%

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Chris Meaden
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Health and Wellbeing
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Director of Public Health/Head of Policy & Performance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

1. REGENERATION AND PLANNING

Wirral Transport Museum

Good progress is being made on the asset transfer of the museum building and collection to local transport groups. The Council plans retaining ownership of the assets but will enter into a long lease which will enable the volunteers to run and develop the museum into the future. The Business Plan is close to completion and a date for transfer of 1st April 2014 is being targeted. The tramway from Taylor Street to Woodside will remain in Council ownership for operational and maintenance reasons.

Williamson Art Gallery

A number of local groups are currently meeting to discuss future opportunities for the operation of the Williamson Art Gallery. A Business Plan, outlining a range of options will be completed by the end of December 2013 and then this will be reviewed with the groups and the Cabinet Member. If the Business Plan is deliverable then we will seek member authority and a date for transfer will be identified and progress towards this made.

Floral Pavilion

Good progress is being made reviewing the operations of the Floral and identifying new ways of working and new income opportunities. New income streams, along with the increasing use of new technology, are being explored to reduce costs and do more business on line. A new Marketing Manager with considerable experience has recently been recruited to drive this part of the business forward in a more commercial way.

Birkenhead Priory

Officers are now gearing up to commence work on the Priory following the recent successful announcement of the Council securing almost £400,000 of Heritage Lottery Grant.

2. SPORTS AND RECREATION

The transforming leisure services programme is well underway with proposals for the centre improvements at West Kirby and Guinea Gap being finalised, and a programme to improve membership is being launched.

Best Bites have now opened a small cafeteria in the Bidston Tennis Centre and we are working with them to potentially develop their business in other areas. The second cohort of National Citizen Service (16 and 17 year olds) successfully reached the end of their course with the presentation ceremony held at the Light Cinema attended by the Mayor. Two Wirral swimmers (Isobel Thwaite and Thomas Nelson) from the Metro squad have been selected to attend 'England development camps' early in the new year.

3. PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE

The first meeting of the Wirral Parks and Countryside Partnership and Performance Board has taken place. This is an important new partnership body established as a key part of the Parks Modernisation programme to help drive performance forward.

Outdoor fitness equipment has been installed in the following locations, funded by the NHS: Arrowse Park, Central Park, Birkenhead Park, Victoria Park, Beechwood Estate, Woodchurch, New Ferry Park, Vale Park, Yew Tree Green, Lingham Park and Leasowe Estate.

The former Liscard Hall site in Central Park has been improved through working with the local community. A statue designed by local young people has been installed, along with planting, trees, seating and a performance area.

A horse riding trail has been installed in Arrowse Park and drainage improvement works for football pitches at Arrowse Park have been undertaken, funded by the Football Foundation.

The Life Expectancy outreach project led by Shrewsbury Diocese, supported by the Parks and Countryside team, has resulted in a number of volunteer Green Space Champions supporting people in Birkenhead North so that they can access local green spaces through walking together. This is providing positive health benefits and helping to tackle social isolation.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH

Recovery Convention

I attended the annual Recovery Convention on Tuesday 10th December held for local people recovering from alcohol and drug misuse. This is an important annual event that celebrates the journey to recovery that many local people are on and showcases how they are now contributing to their local community or the local economy, for example via the development of an angling club to obtaining full time employment for the first time in their lives. The focus of drug and alcohol treatment is now on recovery and moving

people through the treatment system to recovery as soon as clinically possible. The Convention is an opportunity to celebrate the successes of local people and skilled staff.

Healthy Take Aways

Public health and environmental health have joined forces to promote healthier options amongst sellers of fast food and their customers. Officers are piloting the 'Takeaway for a Change' scheme, which aims to raise awareness of healthier food, among local families in Rock Ferry over the next couple of months.

This scheme will dovetail with 'Eat Well Wirral' – a healthy eating award that encourages fast food outlets in the area to make changes to the way they serve their food that will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of their customers. The takeaway outlets that are taking part in 'Eat Well Wirral' are not being asked to radically alter their menu; they are simply being asked to introduce some small changes that will make a difference to the healthiness of the food they are serving, for example using salt cellars with fewer holes in to reduce the amount of salt that goes on to meals, or changing their frying techniques, using different cooking oils.

Public Health Annual Report 2012/13

This year's report focuses on social isolation in our community and explores the impact that feeling isolated over a prolonged period of time can have on people's mental and physical wellbeing. Along with highlighting examples of good practice in Wirral, the report makes recommendations as to how we might tackle this growing problem.

Owing to budget restrictions, we have not printed any hard copies this year. The report can be accessed via the council website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/social-care-and-health/health-wirral/public-health-annual-report>

5. LIBRARY SERVICES

The Central Library at West Kirby is getting ready to re-open shortly after the holiday period with its ground floor re-modelled to accommodate a merged Library One Stop Shop. This will again help consolidate functions and maximise use of our facilities in an area. The ability to offer local work with voluntary and community organisations as well as other public service bodies such as Citizens Advice Bureau colleagues will be further improved after this work.

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CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Harry Smith
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Highways and Transportation
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. DELIVERY OF THE HIGHWAY SERVICES CONTRACT 2014–2018

Procurement for a new contract for delivery of highway works and services has progressed through inviting tenders for the new contract and the evaluation processes of the three submitted bids. I presented the outcome of that procurement process to Cabinet on 7th November.

A decision was made by Cabinet to award the contract to the preferred bidder based on the price and quality criteria used, taking into account value for money analyses and reports carried out independently of the procurement to provide assurance that it had been effectively managed and that the investment decision to award the new contract was soundly based. At the time of preparing this report, the legally-required 'standstill' processes are ongoing, following which the appointment of the new contractor can be announced.

2. HIGHWAYS WINTER SERVICE

I had the opportunity in October to review and endorse the annual plan for the gritting and snow clearing operations, and can confirm that the Council had a full salt barn and gritters and their drivers ready from the first day of the plan at the beginning of November.

I am also pleased that a number of Members of the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee have taken the opportunity to visit the Rock Salt Mine at Winsford in Cheshire on 11th December, to improve our own understanding of the materials and logistics essential for this service.

3. DELIVERY OF THE STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

The highway maintenance part of the Council's Capital Programme – the Structural Maintenance Programme 2013/14 – was approved in January 2013, and includes a range of surface treatment and resurfacing schemes for both

footways and carriageways. I am pleased to report that approximately 95% of that programme has now been carried out.

4. TRAFFIC SIGNAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 2014 - 2018

The process to implement a new traffic signal maintenance contract is progressing and the contract will be in place by April 2014. Further updates will be provided as the tender process develops.

5. MAJOR SCHEME SUBMISSION – DOCK BRIDGES

A specialist consultant has been commissioned to undertake technical feasibility for bridge designs and life expiry modelling for the Dock Bridges. This work will feed into the process for commissioning the necessary Major Scheme Business Case which will be submitted to the Local Transport Body for consideration in the prioritisation of funding in December 2014.

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor George Davies
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement
CO-ORINDATING CHIEF OFFICER	Head of Neighbourhoods & Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION FOR 16/17 YEAR OLDS

Cabinet recently approved a scheme to provide six units of emergency accommodation for 16/17 year olds in Manor Road, Liscard. This will involve the Council working in partnership with 'Your Housing Group' in an initial two-year pilot.

The proposed scheme will allow for the delivery of emergency accommodation services with support to some of Wirral's most vulnerable young people in accordance with Homelessness and Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) statutory duties. This will be available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. This service will enable a full assessment of need together with the most appropriate referral route for the young person to move on in a planned way. The scheme will also enable efficiency savings within this area of work.

2. WIRRAL COUNCIL EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT

In this financial year, 43 small Empty Property Grants of up to a maximum of £3000 per grant have been completed. This has assisted in securing in the region of £350,000 of private match funding for the Council's investment. This has also resulted in 43 new homes for Wirral's residents and the removal of a significant number of blights to street scenes throughout the borough. There are a further 38 Empty Property Grants that we expect to complete in this financial year thus generating 38 new homes and leveraging in more than a further £300,000. These will contribute to an increased New Homes Bonus allocation.

3. NATIONAL EMPTY HOMES LOAN FUND

Wirral Council was recently accepted as a project partner to assist in the promotion and delivery of the new central government funded National Empty Homes Loan product administered by the Empty Homes organisation with support from Ecology Building Society. Loans are available for up to £15,000

repayable by the owner over a 5 year period at a fixed interest rate of 5%. Since becoming involved in this initiative, Wirral Council has been one of the most proactive local authorities in the region by assisting in the preparation and submission of more than 10 loan applications already with approximately £150,000 secured from this government fund with a further £50,000 of property owners' capital expected to be invested in Wirral's housing stock. Further efforts will continue to be made to raise the profile of this product and to encourage vacant property owners to apply for funds to refurbish their properties for occupation to provide much needed homes. These will also contribute to an increased New Homes Bonus allocation.

4. NEW DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, LAIRD STREET, BIRKENHEAD

I am pleased to be able to advise that work has now commenced on the redevelopment of a key HMRI site off Laird Street in North Birkenhead. The Council's private sector partner Keepmoat has started Phase 2 of its development programme and over the next three years will deliver 125 much needed new houses for both open market sale and for rent from Magenta Living. This multi million pound mixed tenure development will add to the success of the Phase 1 redevelopment at the St Josephs site and will continue the regeneration of this area. The earlier than expected commencement of the Phase 2 development work continues on the achievement of assembling the majority of the site and shows a growing confidence in the area.

5. WIRRAL SAFE AND WARM CAMPAIGN

A campaign to help people across Wirral to stay safe and warm in their homes during the cold winter months was launched at Wallasey Town Hall last month. The annual 'Stay Safe and Warm' campaign aims to raise awareness of the dangers faced by people who struggle to keep warm during the cold months, and highlight the help and support available to them. This can range from organising safe, temporary heating, to putting people in touch with specialist guidance on managing their fuel bills.

This is the second year the campaign has run in Wirral. Last year, a total of 132 people received one-to-one support to help them through the winter months. As well as a wide range of advice provided, last year's campaign also saw a total of 86 emergency heaters, 130 thermal blankets and 80 electric blankets supplied through partners to those in need.

Partners include housing providers, Merseyside Fire Support Network and Wirral based charities such as Age UK Wirral and Energy Projects Plus, who will be working together to identify people who are at risk and give them advice and support. The Council acts as a central co-ordinator for referrals through a Safe & Warm telephone advice line.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL

16 DECEMBER 2013

SUBJECT:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs' Reports
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	Policy and Performance Committee Chairs
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Ann McLachlan (Governance & Improvement)
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides Members of the Council with an update on the work carried out by each of the Policy and Performance Committees. The report includes contributions from each of the Committee Chairs. Members of Council are requested to consider any questions they have for the Committee Chairs.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Policy and Performance Committees were established as part of the constitutional changes agreed by Council on 30 April 2013. There are three committees aligned to the Council's Directorates and a fourth Coordinating Committee which is responsible for corporate and cross-cutting work.

2.2 The committees are responsible for discharging the Council's scrutiny function in terms of the following:

- Hold the Executive to account
- Hold partners to account
- Scan the horizon regarding new policy and initiatives
- Review and develop policy
- Examine decisions before and after being taken
- Review performance in terms of service delivery and budgets
- Carry out in-depth reviews

2.3 Formal meetings include performance management, budget monitoring and policy updates as standing items. Each committee has also developed a work programme which includes a combination of reviews conducted by smaller groups of committee members and requested officer reports.

3.0 COORDINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.1 Since the approval of the committee's work programme in September, two scrutiny reviews have been commissioned by this committee. A review into the Council's preparations for Individual Electoral Registration (IER) commenced in October and is now drawing to conclusion with the aim of reporting to the Committee in January. This is a good example of horizon-scanning scrutiny in that IER will not be implemented until July 2014. A second review began on the 18th November to examine a sample of the Council's budget options to help understand the impact they are having.
- 3.2 There was a special meeting of the committee on 13th November to discuss the Improvement Board Review. This report was commissioned by the Wirral/LGA Improvement Board to reflect on the progress the Council has made on its journey of improvement. This was to enable the Board to consider its future role and level of involvement.
- 3.3 There was broad agreement by Members of the Committee that the Improvement Board Review report is very positive. This reflects the significant progress the Council has made in the last 18 months and the Committee acknowledged the contribution of Members and Officers in these achievements. However, the Committee also highlighted the need to avoid complacency, encouraging all Members to engage in the next steps highlighted in the report. The Committee also pledged that it would play its full part in continuing that direction of travel.
- 3.4 The work being carried out across parties on this committee is I feel testament to the improvement of the scrutiny function in Wirral Council and is to be welcomed. As Chair I would like to thank colleagues of all parties and officers for their support.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

4.0 FAMILIES & WELLBEING CHAIR'S REPORT

- 4.1 Since the last Council the Families and Well Being Policy and Performance Committee has considered the Directorate's Budget Options in November and a meeting in December received reports on Fostering, Adoption, the Health and Well Being Strategy and the Leisure review.
- 4.2 The Committee has formed an Attainment Sub-Committee with an initial meeting in early December.
- 4.3 The Committee continues to work hard to meet the challenge of scrutinising a very wide agenda that deals with items of extreme importance to the children and vulnerable people who are at the heart of much of the work this Council undertakes.
- 4.4 **Work in progress**
- A Scrutiny Review to consider the Implications of the Francis Review for Wirral. This work commenced in June and is due to report to the Committee in January.

- A Task and Finish group on the Quality Assurance Framework and Standards in Care Homes is currently gathering evidence and hopes to report to Committee in January.
- A Task and Finish group looking into Domestic Violence will focus on the 16 – 18 year old cohort, gathering evidence in the New Year.

4.4 Pieces of work completed

- A scrutiny review entitled **The Outcomes for Looked After Children** was presented to the Cabinet in November. The recommendations of this review were all accepted by Cabinet. This review was commenced during the previous municipal year.

Councillor Wendy Clements

5.0 REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENT CHAIR'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee met on 5 November. There were two agenda items; the budget options and the report of a Task and Finish Group. There was a wide ranging discussion of all the budget options. The Committee was not however able to make any specific recommendations with regard to the various options. In future, it would be beneficial if a mechanism could be found to enable the Committee to give a clearer indication of its preferences.
- 5.2 The Committee endorsed the findings of the Task and Finish Group which examined the implementation of the current year's budget options and some of the potential savings for 2014/15. Following this report it is now proposed that a Task and Finish Group should do further detailed work on developing the Council's car park strategy. The challenge would be to recommend a strategy that achieves the necessary revenue while also taking account of the impact of car park charges.
- 5.3 Excluding the special budget meeting there is a 4 month gap between the last normal business meeting on September 17 and the next on January 27. This gap clearly emphasises the crucial role of Task and Finish Groups if meaningful examination of the Council's policy is to take place. It is therefore to be welcomed that four Task and Finish Groups are either currently in place or are planned. These groups will examine apprenticeships, street cleansing and the new highways contract as well as car parking. The Committee is also looking at ways to ensure there is adequate monitoring of the Council's response to the recommendations of Task and Finish groups.

Councillor Alan Brighthouse

6.0 TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES CHAIR'S REPORT

- 6.1 Since October, the Committee has met to review the budget options put forward by the Transformation and Resources Directorate. This provided the opportunity for Members of the committee to ask questions to the relevant heads of services in relation to the details behind these proposals. The committee agreed for a special meeting to be convened in December to review the results of the consultation. This is scheduled for December 9th.

- 6.2 A scrutiny review exploring the effectiveness of the Council's process for handling Freedom of information requests has recently started. A further review into the proposals with Cheshire west and Chester to enter into shared services arrangement for back office functions is also due to commence into the near future.
- 6.3 Two reports have been requested and are due to be presented at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee in January. One of these relates to the email service for elected Members following a number of concerns being raised. A further report will provide an update on the Council's performance in terms of sickness absence. This will provide the basis for the committee to decide if it wants to establish scrutiny review into the sickness absence and return to work process.
- 6.4 The work being carried out across parties on this committee is I feel testament to the improvement of the scrutiny function in Wirral Council and is to be welcomed. As Chair I would like to thank colleagues of all parties and officers for their support.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 N/A

8.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 N/A

10.0 OUTSTANDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED ACTIONS

10.1 N/A

11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

11.1 N/A

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

12.1 N/A

13.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 N/A

14.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(c) No because of another reason which is

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications.

15.0 CARBON REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

15.1 N/A

16.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16.1 N/A

17.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

17.1 Members are requested to consider the contents of this report and whether they have any questions for the Chairs of the Policy and Performance Committees.

18.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

18.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to ask any questions they have relating to this report.

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APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS/REFERENCE MATERIAL

N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council – Revisions to the Constitution	30/04/13
Council – Reports from Policy and Performance Committee Chairs	14/10/13

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MATTERS FOR NOTING

Cabinet – 10 October 2013

67 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/2014 (MONTH 4)

A report by the Interim Director of Resources detailed the Monitoring position for Month 4 (ending 31 July 2013). Attached to the report were separate appendices for Revenue and Capital.

RESOLVED: That

Revenue

- (1) the monitoring position of a forecast underspend of £270,000 for month 4 be noted;**
- (2) the spending freeze be continued until further notice to aid continued good financial management and note there were no rejected freeze items in the month; and**

Capital

- (3) the spend to date at Month 4 of £7.687m, with 33.0% of the financial year having elapsed be noted.**

68 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/2014 (MONTH 5)

A report by the Interim Director of Resources detailed the Monitoring position for Month 5 (ending 31 August 2013). Attached to the report were separate appendices for Revenue and Capital.

The Leader was heartened by the forecast underspend in both reports. He commented upon the importance to monitor those savings agreed in the previous budget and to ensure these were delivered. It was important to continue the spending freeze because of the savings to be delivered this year.

RESOLVED: That

Revenue

- (1) the monitoring position of a forecast under spend of £320,000 for month 5 be noted;**
- (2) the spending freeze be continued until further notice to aid continued good financial management and it be noted that there are no rejected freeze items in the month; and**

Capital

- (3) the spend to date at Month 5 of £9.518m, with 42.0% of the financial year having elapsed be noted.**

Cabinet – 7 November 2013

85 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14 (MONTH 6)

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Interim Director of Resources which detailed the monitoring position for Month 6 (ending 30 September 2013). Attached to the Director's report were separate appendices for Revenue and Capital.

Councillor Phil Davies informed the Cabinet that the report was very positive in its monitoring of finance and that there was a projected budget under spend of £592,000 that would be earmarked against the future restructuring costs. He also informed that £100,000 was being transferred from various reserves within Regeneration to enhance the existing Open Golf Reserve in respect of the Championship at Hoylake in 2014.

Councillor Phil Davies referred to car parking charges which had attracted a lot of interest across the Borough. Parking charges had been rationalised earlier in the year because of Government pressure and lack of other alternatives for revenue generation.

The Cabinet had noted that revenue had increased from £1.2m to £1.4m over the last year. This income had not been as much as had been projected and was evidence of a number of factors that had impacted on car parking ticket sales e.g. strong competition in some areas from off-street private parking contractors and a decrease in car use as people found other forms of transport. The country was still in recession and people had less money to spend and were being more careful about how they spent it.

Councillor Phil Davies requested that Officers look at best practice elsewhere and other evidence bases and report back so the Cabinet could make an informed decision on the budget.

Councillor Phil Davies made reference to opposition Members' criticism and urged them to be more responsible when commenting on car parking charges and the perceived damage being caused to local businesses, particularly as they were not putting forward alternative ideas that would generate income.

RESOLVED: That

Revenue

- (1) the monitoring position of a forecast under spend of £592,000 for month 6 be noted;**

- (2) the Cabinet approves the transfer of £100,000 of various reserves within the Regeneration and Environment Directorate to enhance the existing Open Golf Reserve;

Capital

- (3) the spend to date at Month 6 of £11.9 million, with 50% of the financial year having elapsed be noted;
- (4) the impact of the revised Capital Programme realising a one off saving of £0.8 million in 2013/14 be noted.
- (5) the revised Capital Programme of £44.185 million (Table 1 at 4.1 in the report) be noted;
- (6) the re-profiling of a number of schemes into 2014/15, totalling £5.551 million be noted; and
- (7) the use of additional grants (Sustrans £0.236 million, 3G sports pitches £0.230 million and HLF £0.395 million) to expand the respective programmes referred to in Table 2 be noted.

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Council – 16 December 2013

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 7(1) and are listed in the order received.

1. WIRRAL COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Proposed by Councillor Ann McLachlan
Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

- (1) Council welcomes the decision by the Improvement Board at its meeting held on 29th November, that Wirral has now reached a position where we can manage our own improvement process.
- (2) We are proud of what has been the quickest improvement of any Council in the country. However we recognise that there is still a great deal left to do and we are not complacent.
- (3) We remain committed to working with all Councillors, staff, partners and residents to continue our Improvement Journey towards becoming the outstanding Council we aspire to be.
- (4) Council would want to thank all employees of the Authority who have contributed to the enormous amount of work involved in addressing the priority areas set by the Board and who are now diligently working to continue our progress towards a transformed Authority. Further, that all elected Members will continue to be fully engaged via the Policy and Performance Committees and future Visioning events.
- (5) Council would like to record our thanks to Joyce Redfearn, Chair of the Improvement Board and other Members of the Board for the hard work, commitment and support that they have provided over the past twenty months.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECLARATION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

Proposed by Councillor Chris Meaden
Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts

- (1) Wirral Council commits itself to signing up to the local government declaration on Tobacco Control.

This declaration commits the council to:

- Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities and to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities;
- Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use;

- Participate in local and regional networks for support;
- Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities;
- Protect our tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees;
- Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results; and
- Publicly declare our commitment to reducing smoking in our communities by joining the Smoke-free Action Coalition, the alliance of organisations working to reducing the harm caused by tobacco.

(2) Council notes that this has the support of, among others, the Public Health Minister, Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England and that such declarations have already been signed by Salford City Council, Warwickshire County Council and Bath & North East Somerset Council.

(3) Such a declaration is aimed at reducing the single biggest cause of preventable deaths in the UK – with over 80,000 dying each year - more than obesity, alcohol, road accidents and illegal drug use put together.

3. WIRRAL LABOUR'S COST OF LIVING RISES

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Adam Sykes

Council notes that this Labour administration has presided over a series of astronomical cost of living increases including:

1. the raising of Council Tax and the rejection of £1.3 million of Government money to freeze Council Tax;
2. a 900% increase in charges for car parking in parts of the Borough with the standardisation of hourly tariffs and the abolition of the Free after 3pm scheme;
3. the introduction of a Brown Bin Tax;
4. an inflation busting 33% increase in the charge of the ERIC service

Council further notes that in total these Labour approved, locally determined measures have resulted in a whacking 624% increase in the cost of living for Wirral residents since 2011-2012.

Council is therefore shocked that Wirral's Labour Councillors will again be rejecting Government money to freeze Council Tax in 2014 -2015.

Council calls on Labour Councillors to accept responsibility for their decisions, change direction and put the reduction of the cost of living for hard pressed Wirral residents at the centre of their plans.

COUNCIL VACANCIES – 16 DECEMBER 2013

Committees

FAMILIES AND WELLBEING POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Mr Damian Cunningham to replace Mr Alex Scott as the Roman Catholic Diocesan co-opted representative (as from 1 January, 2014)

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