

COUNCIL

Tuesday, 25 February 2014

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

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Councillors | RL Abbey | T Harney | C Povall |
| | C Blakeley | A Hodson | D Realey |
| | E Boulton | K Hodson | L Rennie |
| | A Brighthouse | M Hornby | D Roberts |
| | P Brightmore | M Johnston | 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 | A Sykes |
| | D Elderton | AR McLachlan | J Walsh |
| | G Ellis | M McLaughlin | G Watt |
| | L Fraser | C Meaden | S Whittingham |
| | P Gilchrist | B Mooney | J Williamson |
| | P Glasman | S Mountney | I Williams |
| | JE Green | C Muspratt | KJ Williams |
| | R Gregson | S Niblock | P Williams |
| | P Hackett | T Norbury | S Williams |
| | J Hale | M Patrick | |

Apologies Councillor P Hayes

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.

68 **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.

Councillors Steve Foulkes and Stuart Whittingham declared their personal interest in agenda item 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) by virtue of them being Board Members of Magenta Living.

Councillors Mrs Lesley Rennie and Jean Stapleton declared their interest in agenda item 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) by virtue of their membership of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor Denise Roberts declared her interest in agenda 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) by virtue of her being a member of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and a Board Member of Magenta Living.

Councillor Steve Niblock declared his interest in agenda item 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) by virtue of him being a member of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and a tenant of Magenta Living.

Councillor Jeff Green declared his interest in agenda item 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) in so far as it related to the Schools Budget, by virtue of his wife's employment as a teacher.

Councillor Les Rowlands declared his interest in agenda item 5C (Council Budget 2014/2015) in so far as it related to the Schools Budget, by virtue of his wife's employment in the Children and Young People's Department.

69 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor referred to the commemoration for HMS Birkenhead on 5 March 2014, to which all Members had been invited. He requested that any Member wishing to attend contact his secretary, who was finalising the arrangements.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Paul Hayes

70 **PETITIONS**

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

Councillor Stuart Whittingham on behalf of 164 signatories requesting the Council to stop the sale of two areas of land in Upton

Councillor Alan Brighouse on behalf of 30 signatories from the Oxtan area, requesting the resurfacing of Glenmore, Kylemore and Templemore Roads

Councillor Adam Sykes on behalf of 234 signatories from parents of Brackenwood Infant School, objecting to the school crossing patrol having to be funded from the school's budget

Councillor Ian Lewis on behalf of 382 signatories objecting to the sale of Fernbank Farm, Upton

Councillor Chris Blakeley on behalf of 189 signatories objecting to the sale of Fernbank Farm, Upton

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

71 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 December 2013 had been circulated to Members and, it was –

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

72 **PROCEDURE**

On a motion by Councillor Bill Davies and seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny, it was –

Resolved (Unanimously) – That Standing Order 9 be applied at 8.30pm

73 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

Five matters were submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 74 to 78 post)

The Mayor drew to Members' attention a letter dated 4 February 2014 that had been circulated from Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State – Department for Communities and Local Government, in relation to recorded votes at Budget Meetings. To take account of Brandon Lewis' representations in his letter concerning 'The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014' as far as practicably possible, the Head of Legal and Member Services had proposed that the Budget Council Procedure be amended so that card votes would be taken on the Cabinet budget recommendation, amendments to the Cabinet budget recommendation and the Council Tax report only.

74 **BUDGET COUNCIL PROCEDURE**

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

Resolved (63:0) (One abstention) – That minute 134 (Cabinet – 16 January 2014), related to the Budget Council Procedure, as amended, be approved.

75 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

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

Resolved (63:0) (One abstention) – That, for the purposes of the Budget Debate, the following standing orders be suspended –

- (a) Standing Order 12(1) insofar as it related to amendments**
- (b) Standing Order 12(9)**
- (c) Standing Order 12(10)**

76 **COUNCIL BUDGET 2014/2015**

In accordance with the agreed Budget Council Procedure, as amended, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Davies, moved the Cabinet's recommended Budget to Council set out in Cabinet Minutes 143 to 144 and 146 to 148 of 12 February 2014, duly seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan (Deputy Leader) –

**(i) Minute 143 (Cabinet – 12 February 2014)
Revenue Budget 2014/2017**

Resolved –

- (1)** That the savings 2014/2017, set out at Appendices A1 and A2 be confirmed.
- (2)** That the Budget Growth 2014/2017, set out in Appendix 2 be agreed and the detail be built into the Budget.
- (3)** That the fees and charges be noted and delegated authority be given to the Director of Resources to update the Council Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2014.
- (4)** That the level of General Fund balances recommended continues to be based on a locally determined approach to the assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future and that the Council maintains balances at, or above, this level.
- (5)** That the release of Provisions and Reserves by Directorates be agreed and that a Remodelling/Restructure reserve be created from the reserves released together with the amalgamation of the Budget Support 2014/2015 and Equal Pay reserves.
- (6)** That the Chief Financial Officer Statement regarding the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Budget and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves (Appendix 6) be noted.
- (7)** That the following Budget Resolution be agreed and recommended to the Council:

BUDGET RESOLUTION 2014/2015

National Context

Wirral Council continues to face unprecedented cuts in its budget by central government. By the end of 2016 the Council's main revenue grant will have been cut by over 50% since 2010. At the same time, we are facing increasing demand for services such as social care and residents are being hit by the government's decision to cut welfare benefits, introduce iniquitous measures such as the Bedroom Tax, and allow energy companies to impose huge increases in energy prices. To make matters worse, since May 2010 prices have risen faster than wages. As a result, real wages have fallen by £1,600 since the last election. This amounts to a cost of living crisis for people in Wirral and across the country.

Whilst it is accepted that measures are required to control the national debt, it cannot be fair or equitable that the government has forced through massive cuts to local government funding in areas with the highest levels of deprivation.

A recent, in depth analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation entitled "Austerity" concludes that:

“Cuts in spending power and budgeted spend are systematically greater in more deprived local authorities than in more affluent ones, cuts are also generally greater in the North and Midlands than in the south of England, and in the west rather than the east of Scotland.

Reductions in spending tell only part of the story as authorities also have to cope with rising costs and demands.”

Wirral Challenge

Cabinet believes that the scale of cuts required by Wirral Council is not sustainable and reflects no consideration of true need. Authorities with a large proportion of band A to C properties are unfairly disadvantaged by grant reductions as a higher proportion of their income comes from central government compared to those with a high number of band H properties.

Wirral is estimated to lose £627 per person by 2017/2018 compared to those in the South East, where Councils lose £305 per person. A disturbing comparator is the reduction in spending power for Wirral compared to the local authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne – the very person imposing these swingeing cuts. Based on the spending power figures published by DCLG, whilst Wirral lose 4.2 percent in 2014/2015 and 3.3 percent in 2015/2016; Cheshire East lose 1.7 percent and gain 0.8 percent over the same period. It also cannot be fair that Wirral has lost £152 per person compared to just £2 per head in wealthy North Dorset.

We will continue to lobby government in the strongest possible terms to reverse these disgraceful policies and deliberate targeting of poorer areas.

Our budget gap in the Medium Term Financial Strategy published in March 2013 highlighted a figure of £109 million over the three years to 2016/2017. We are a responsible Administration and have risen to this challenge in the best interests of our residents. To refuse to make the savings forced upon us would be to the longer term disadvantage of our most vulnerable people. Our hard work in identifying savings which protect front-line services as far as possible means this gap is now down to £44.2 million over the next two years following this budget (2015/16 – 17). In December 2013 we agreed a series of savings amounting to £27.5 million to close the gap for 2014/2015. We now have before us the full suite of budget papers to enable us to agree Council Tax and set a balanced budget.

OVERALL COMMENTS

Cabinet is proud of the fact that this Administration has progressed from a situation where we inherited an overspend of £17 million, to a stable, achievable in-year budget.

Link to Strategic Priorities

The 2014/2015 budget has been strongly influenced by the strategic priorities as set out in the new Corporate Plan agreed by Council on 2 December 2013:

- Attracting investment and jobs
- Protecting vulnerable people and communities
- Narrowing the gap in inequalities

Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles for setting the budget have been consistent over the past two years, i.e.

- We will spend less on the cost of running the Council
- Those with the broadest shoulders must bear the greatest burden
- Every effort will be made to mitigate the impact of savings on front-line services

The reports submitted to Cabinet and Council in December 2013 contain the base information for this budget resolution. We agreed the savings in December 2013 and we demonstrated that, despite having to make some difficult decisions, we did listen to the views of the public via the 'What Really Matters' consultation exercise on our budget options, one of the largest consultation exercises in the country.

The key measures we announced in December included the following –

Protecting the vulnerable and Reducing Inequality

- £7.6 million over the next three years to be spent on a range of measures to support older people, young people with learning disabilities and adopters and special guardians
- £1m over the next two years to be spent on enhancing early intervention and prevention services
- To progress from being a Living Wage Council to a Living Wage Borough

Responding to the Cost of Living Crisis

- The vast majority of our older residents will continue to receive a discount on their Council Tax. This will equate to 5% and will apply to properties falling within bands A, B, C and D where all members of the household are aged 70 and over.
- We will mitigate the government's Bedroom Tax by investing £100,000 in providing enhanced information and advice services for people on benefits.
- We will invest £300,000 to ensure that the poorest members of the community do not have to pay an increased proportion of their Council Tax.

Attracting Investment and Economic Growth

- We will invest £356,000 on the introduction of a Selective Licensing Scheme for private rented properties to ensure that every landlord is required to bring their properties to a high standard before they reach the market.
- To help unemployed people get back into the labour market we will invest £700,000 in continuing the excellent 'Reach Out' scheme.
- To attract additional investment and jobs to the Borough by investing £200,000 to create an economic development unit.
- We will further invest in our leisure facilities through £2 million of capital to upgrade Europa Pools, Guinea Gap and West Kirby and £200,000 in developing 2 3G football pitches in Seacombe.

Settlement Information

On 5 February the Government announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement. This confirmed the Provisional Settlement and the grant reductions reported in December and referred to in the Revenue Budget 2014/2017 report. Also confirmed were the Council Tax Referendum principles. A Referendum is required for increases of 2% and over, which could be held with the European Elections on 22 May. It included a simplifying of the calculation on which the 2% is based – a comparison to Band D Council Tax levels between years. It also specifically confirmed that the freeze grant element was included in the base position.

Cabinet is particularly disappointed by a number of items in the grant settlement:

- Local Welfare Support Funding is ending without consultation or a reduction in the expectation on local authorities.
- Early intervention grant, which is designed to protect the life chances of our young people, has been reduced by £1m per year.
- The cost of providing Council tax support and ensuring this keeps in line with inflation now falls on the local authority
- The timing of announcements by the government, particularly the delay in announcing the referendum level for 2014/2015, makes it inordinately difficult to plan finances in a strategic manner

CONTROL OF THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES

The Financial Monitoring report prepared by the Council's Section 151 officer, provides further evidence that the Council is managing and in control of its finances. The projections for 2013/2014 show an under spend approaching £1m which is being used to fund the clean-up and repair works to West Kirby and New Brighton following the storms last December and provide funds to support the future Council restructuring costs. Cabinet is concerned that the

Council is having to meet the costs of flooding in Wirral in contrast to other areas in the south of the country which are receiving funding from the government. Cabinet instructs the Chief Executive to write to the government seeking equal and fair treatment for Wirral.

The Revenue Budget 2014/2017 report further demonstrates the Council's desire to address the reductions in Government funding and set a Budget for 2014/2015 which is deliverable and sustainable and take steps to tackle the future years as well.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Government has stated that the reductions in funding will continue until at least 2018.

Remodelling Reserve

Given the magnitude of Government funding cuts, the current structure of the Council is not sustainable. In order to plan for the future, work is therefore underway to completely remodel the Council. We know that it is sometimes necessary to invest to save money and for this reason we have reviewed our reserve position to create a remodelling reserve of £9.9 million to provide for the costs of the substantial changes we will need to introduce in order to ensure that the Council can deliver its future priorities within a vastly reduced budget.

Waste Development Fund

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority has announced that, subject to the successful conclusion of a contract and the collective agreement of all Merseyside Authorities, a 'one-off' sum worth £6.7 million to Wirral should be available during 2014/2015. This funding is subject to a memorandum of understanding that it should be used to help achieve the principal targets in the overall Recycling and Waste Strategy.

Balances

Clearly, the Council needs to have good financial resilience at a time of increasing financial pressures and in difficult economic times. The level of balances is part of this resilience and there is a commitment to maintain balances in line with the local circumstances.

REVENUE

In December 2013, the Council took early decisions on the savings in the Budget for 2014/2015 and beyond. This followed the extensive consultation and the report details savings of £40 million which are being implemented in 2014/2015 and a further £21 million over 2015/2017. These are summarised in Appendix 1 of the revenue budget report.

CAPITAL

Major investment is also proposed to deliver the aims of the Council. The Capital Programme 2014/2017 report includes investment into Extra Care

Housing and leisure centres including West Kirby, Guinea Gap and Europa Pool as well as using the successfully bid for Government funds to support businesses and bring investment into Wirral.

NEW PROPOSALS

New House Building Programme (£1.5 million)

Local authorities have a proud tradition of investing in physical assets which are essential to improving the quality of life of local residents. We know that we have challenging house building targets over the next five years. We also know that we have huge challenges in those disadvantaged areas of the Borough which lost out on new housing when the current Government axed the Housing Market Renewal programme. Cabinet therefore intends to invest £1.5 million from a combination of capital funding/reserves/loans to kick-start a substantial programme of affordable housing to be targeted at areas with the highest levels of deprivation. This funding should generate around 100 new homes. Cabinet asks for a report on this at the earliest opportunity which will set out how such a programme can be delivered.

Reinstate monthly cleaning of entries (£400,000)

In order to address the concerns of many residents that fly-tipping is a significant problem in many parts of the Borough, Cabinet intends to reinstate the monthly cleaning of entries. A two year programme is to be developed to tackle the issue of fly-tipping which is aligned with the work undertaken in taking forward the Recycling and Waste Strategy. This will be funded from the waste development fund.

Further developing Constituency Committees (£200,000)

As referred to in December, Cabinet agrees to the allocation of £200,000 for 2014/2015 to be devolved to the Constituency Committees. This is to enable the new approach to Neighbourhood Working to be further developed. This will be funded from reserves.

Constituency committees are already in a position to influence budgets and services across Wirral. This includes services which are important priorities for our local residents, such as reducing fly tipping and maintaining local parks in the borough, where committees can influence budgets of approximately £600k. The Council will continue over the next few years to focus on ensuring that the Constituency Committees are able to significantly influence spend on services in Wirral.

During the course of the new financial year, Cabinet asks for proposals to be developed to devolve further additional powers and budgets to each of the Constituency Committees.

Re-phasing the savings from Williamson Art Gallery (£100,000 of saving re-phased to 2015/2016)

The engagement of local people and 'Friends' groups has been welcomed in exploring new models for funding the Williamson Art Gallery in the future. It is acknowledged that more time is required to develop the proposals. Therefore

the saving of £400,000 is to be delivered over the next two years, i.e. £150,000 in 2014/2015 and £250,000 in 2015/2016. Cabinet strongly favours keeping the Williamson open. This will be funded from reserves in 2014/2015.

Schools Crossing Patrols

Cabinet believes the safety of children is paramount. In December Cabinet agreed to ask schools to take over the funding of school crossing patrols. Given the concerns expressed by a minority of schools, officers are instructed to continue discussions with schools with a guarantee that no funding is removed where agreement cannot be reached.

SCHOOLS

The Schools Forum has been instrumental in helping to prepare the Schools Budget for 2014/2015. Difficult decisions have had to be taken, and will continue in future years, to ensure that the young people of Wirral are able to maximise their potential. The budget report details how the £240 million has been allocated and is approved.

COUNCIL TAX

Council Tax to be frozen in 2014/2015

Our proposals in December 2013 assumed a Council tax increase of 2%. In previous years, in common with many other authorities we have felt unable to accept the freeze grant as this was not built into the Council's base budget and would, if we had accepted it, merely have created a hole in the following year's budget which could only be plugged by even greater cuts.

Having lobbied the government hard on this issue, there is a very clear reassurance that the freeze element will be part of the base budget for at least the next 2 years. Cabinet therefore proposes that:

- This Council accepts the Council tax freeze grant (£1.3 million).
- The cost of implementing the freeze has been funded from the overall benefit derived from the levy levels versus the budget assumptions in December 2013. This has been achieved as a result of prudent financial management by the Labour controlled joint boards. Table 10 of the report on Revenue funding summarises this position and the funding.
- There will be no increase in the Wirral Council element of Council Tax for 2014/2015.

Although acceptance of the freeze grant is welcome in that residents will see no increase in the overall Wirral Council element of Council Tax, it is disappointing that the level of grant equates to only a 1% rise and that effectively the government has prevented the income base increasing at a time when such significant savings in the next two years are required.

Finally, if the conditions surrounding the Council Tax freeze grant are maintained in 2015/2016 it is the Cabinet's intention to freeze the Council Tax for a further year following 2014/2015.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although this has been a difficult budget settlement, Cabinet is pleased to be able to freeze the Council Tax for 2014/2015, and hopefully, also for 2015/2016. This will enable us to help the residents of Wirral, many of whom are struggling to deal with the cost of living crisis.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

- (1) That the proposals as set out in this resolution be agreed by Cabinet and be recommended to Council for approval at its meeting on 25 February 2014.
- (2) That Council continues to lobby Government to review the way it allocates funding to local Councils with a view to ensuring that any cuts are distributed in a way which is fair and equitable.

(ii) Minute 144 (Cabinet – 12 February 2014) Capital Programme and Financing 2014/2017

Resolved –

- (1) That the new bids as detailed in Sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the report of the Director of Resources be approved.
- (2) That the overall Capital Programme 2014/2017, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report of the Director of Resources be agreed and referred to the Council for approval.
- (3) That the capital financing requirements be reflected in the revenue budget.
- (4) That the Prudential Indicators be noted and reported to Cabinet as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.
- (5) That progress on delivering the Capital Programme be presented in accordance with the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements.

(iii) Minute 146 (Cabinet – 12 February 2014) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2017

Resolved –

A That in respect of the Treasury Management Strategy 2014/2017 –

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/2017 be approved
- (2) The Prudential Indicators be adopted
- (3) The Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy be approved
- (4) The Council Officers listed in Appendix G of the Director's report be authorised to approve payments from the Council's bank accounts for all treasury management activities.

B That is respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2017 –

- (1) The Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved
- (2) Regular updates of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be reported to Cabinet

**(iv) Minute 147 (Cabinet – 12 February 2014)
Schools Budget 2014/2015**

Resolved –

- (1) That the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funded Schools Budget for maintained schools and academies be approved in the sum of £240,058,000.
- (2) That the headroom of £1,215,100 be allocated within the formula to all schools and early years providers.
- (3) That the High Needs Contingency totalling £908,900 be agreed.
- (4) The use of DSG reserves totalling £732,000 in setting the schools budget be agreed and the remaining balance for Automatic Meter Readers be reclassified as a reserve for installation of defibrillators.
- (5) That Council regrets that due to its financial challenges, it is unable to fund the full PFI affordability gap in 2014/2015 and will reduce the Council contribution to the Schools Budget by £600,000 to £2m. Officers are instructed to take appropriate actions in respect of the 2014/2015 Schools Budget.

**(v) Minute 148 (Cabinet – 12 February 2014)
Carbon Budget**

Resolved –

- (1) That progress towards the 2013/2014 target be noted.
- (2) That the Carbon Budget for 2014/2015 be approved.
- (3) That the current Carbon Budget method be applied until the impacts of: the ongoing simplification of the CRCEES and the Corporate restructuring are assessed and that Officers be instructed to report further to Members to make recommended alterations as a result of these processes.
- (4) That managers be directed to ensure that Carbon Reduction Implications of projects and initiatives are assessed and reported as required by the standard report template and that impacts are required to be reported to the Building Services and Sustainability Section to support the carbon management process.

CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Wirral's Conservative Group welcomes the national economic recovery and believes that this recovery must be supported by ensuring the costs of the Council to hardworking residents are minimised and where possible reduced. We know that every pound the Council spends is money taken from the pockets of Wirral residents and therefore it is incumbent on the Council to spend that money wisely and fairly in a way that is going to improve the lives of all of Wirral's residents.

We therefore welcome the Labour Administration's embarrassing policy U-turn and their decision to use Government grant to freeze Wirral Council Tax although we regret that this opportunity was not taken last year which led to an unnecessary financial burden being imposed on Wirral's hardworking families.

We are also mindful that since April 2013 the cost of living for an average family in Wirral has gone up by an extra £295.51 per year due to Labour approved, locally determined measures. Immediate action must be taken to reduce this additional burden. This amendment will therefore:

Result in a zero percent Wirral Council tax increase and reinstate the Councils 'pensioner discount' in full to 7.76%.

In addition we will reduce the cost of living burden by:

- Reverting to pre April 2012 car parking charges
- Reinstating the year round 'free after 3pm' parking initiative,
- Halving the charge to residents for garden waste collection
- Freezing for one year, at current levels, Wirral Council's fees & charges.

We also believe that the safety of our residents is paramount and therefore this amendment will:

- Protect school crossing patrols,
- Reverse the Administration's illogical plans to turn off street lights,
- Increase the money available to tackle the small minority of irresponsible pet owners who persistently refuse to pick up after their pets
- Invest £1 million in an immediate programme to repair pot holes and improve Wirral's roads, and pavements

We know the true value of **all** of the Borough's Children Centres and have continued our commitment to Wirral families.

Additional Expenditure

Reducing the cost of living for our residents

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| 1) | <p>Pensioners should be provided with the support they need to enjoy their retirement. We disagree with the Labour proposal to reduce the level of local pensioner discount by 2.76% and their divisive measure of removing the pensioner discount completely for some, without any recognition of their means, this is completely unfair.</p> <p>We have therefore re-instated the Pensioner Discount Scheme in full by maintaining a 7.76% discount for households where all occupants are over 70 irrespective of Council Tax banding.</p> | £591,000 |
| 2) | <p>Re-instate car parking charges to pre April 2012 levels and reintroduce the year round 'Free after 3pm' parking initiative for an initial period of twelve months.</p> | £300,000 |
| 3) | <p>We have identified that Wirral's recycling rate has dropped due to the introduction of the garden waste charge to the extent that it has put the 50% recycling rate by 2020 in jeopardy (see risk based assessment of the level of General Fund balances, Cabinet 12 February 2014 refers).</p> <p>We will therefore use a proportion of the £6.7 million Waste Development Fund to halve the cost per household of the garden waste collection charge and subsidise the entry of other residents into the scheme for an initial two year period after which recycling rates will be reviewed.</p> | £550,000 per year |
| 4) | <p>By following the Sec of State's advice and releasing funds from balances we will be able to freeze the Council's Fees and Charges for one year while officers undertake a formal review of the economic impact of Wirral's schedule of fees and charges.</p> | £900,000 |

Maintaining the safety of our residents

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| 1) | <p>We note the warm words of the Leader of the Council with regards to working in partnership with schools. However, we note his budget has not reversed this cut and therefore ensured that money meant for the education of Wirral's school children is not diverted to pay for the Council's responsibility to provide school crossing patrols. For the avoidance of any doubt we rectify that omission here by reinstating the funding.</p> | £415,000 |
| 2) | <p>By switching off street lights, we believe the Labour Administration is putting the safety of residents, either driving or walking, at risk. Therefore we will move to end this ill-thought through measure.</p> <p>The funding identified here will be used to switch back on lights that have been previously switched off and ensure</p> | £170,000 |

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| | that the planned further switch off is prevented. | |
| 3) | As well as being unsightly and unpleasant, dog fouling is a dangerous health risk, particularly to children causing Toxicariasis. Therefore we will increase the level of dog fouling prosecutions by doubling the number of dog fouling enforcement patrols. | £88,000 |
| 4) | We believe that Early Intervention is essential and any cut to Children's Centres might save money in the short term but will cost Wirral Council Tax Payers in the long term if we fail to support young families in the early years. Therefore we have removed the £500,000 cut imposed by the Labour Administration this year and demand that the Cabinet start looking immediately for measures that will prevent the further reduction in funding planned for 2015-2016. | £500,000 |
| 5) | We note the deterioration of road surfaces and pavements and the massive cuts to the resources available to improve road carriageways, pavements and repair potholes. We believe this has the potential to damage vehicles and increases the likelihood of trips and falls. Once again this demonstrates the short-termism of the Labour Administration who appear to be prepared to play fast and loose with the safety of Wirral residents. Therefore we are re-instating an immediate one-off improvement programme for 2014-2015. | £1,000,000 |

We believe all elements of the Council; Councillors, the Council bureaucracy and Council staff need to play their part and do all we can to ensure Council spending is kept under control and bills are kept to a minimum.

At a time when the Council is having to make very difficult decisions regarding where to invest any expenditure, we believe it is vital that we do not duplicate spending therefore:

Delete the following items:

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| 1 | Removing Duplication | £1,930,000 |
| | House Building - there are many Social Landlords in Wirral who have comprehensive investment and house building programmes planned for the next two years. For example, Magenta Living expect to complete 356 new build properties between 2014-2016. This investment is approximately £38 million. We therefore believe that this item of expenditure can be removed. | £1,500,000 |

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| | As Trades Unions are wealthy organisations we do not believe the Council Tax Payer, or school budgets, should be expected to fund Full Time Trades Union Officials. | £130,000 |
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| | We have all been informed that the 'Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral Combined Authority' will focus on and provide economic benefit. The Labour majority in this Council appear hell bent on forcing Wirral into this alliance. We believe that the creation of a separate Wirral Council Economic Development Team is premature and unnecessary at this stage. | £200,000 |
| | | |
| | Last year a large number of organisations including the Council, Social Landlords and Voluntary, Community and Faith Organisations provided information and advice targeted to those residents affected by welfare reform. this service already costs the taxpayer in excess of £290,000. We believe that the £100,000 additional allocation introduced by the Labour Administration is therefore a duplication and note that the money allocated for this service last year has not been fully utilised. | £100,000 |

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| 2 | Reducing support to Councillors | £139,000 |
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| | Reduce Councillors Training Budget from £36,900 to £16,900. | £20,000 |
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| | Remove 'Alternative Support to Councillors' Budget | £116,000 |
| | | |
| | Withdraw from membership of SIGOMA. | £3,000 |

| | | |
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| 3 | Leaning the Council Bureaucracy | £385,560 |
| | | |
| | Reduce 'Performance and Intelligence Team' by 2.5 posts | £100,000 |
| | | |
| | Reduce Council PR budget (this equates to the printing and distribution costs of 4 'One Council' editions per year). | £10,000 |
| | | |
| | Reduce the Officer Training Budget from £516,300 to £391,300 | £125,000 |
| | | |
| | Reduce the Council's Press, Marketing and Design Teams from 20 posts to 15 | £150,000 |

Council notes the discipline and management of the Strategic Change Programme (SCP) delivered £10.725 million of cashable benefits in the 2010/11 financial year. The Conservative Group still remains disappointed that the Labour Administration formed in May 2011 did not actively manage the SCP and the opportunity it provided to reduce year on year revenue expenditure during the year was ignored.

It would now appear that the Strategic Change Programme is morphing into the 'Future Council' project which encompasses 'Shared Services' a 'Merged Service' and 'Remodeling Wirral Council' (a project being led by Ernst and Young) plus improved 'Commissioning and Procurement'.

We are gravely concerned that the ambition, discipline, rigor, risk management and political accountability required for this change portfolio is seriously lacking and the current approach has the danger of breaking any political consensus around the structural changes required to the Council. We therefore recommend the establishment of a Strategic Change Board on an all party basis to be led by the Leader of the Council.

| | | |
|----------|--|-------------------|
| 4 | Transforming Wirral Council | £1,000,000 |
| | We will vary the savings from 'Transforming Wirral Council' from £9.1 million to £11 million over the next two years. We note this remains in the lower quartile of Ernst and Young's projections and therefore, by taking immediate action to strengthen the focus of this Change Programme it will deliver an additional £1,000,000 of cashable benefit in the financial year 2014/2015. | £1,000,000 |

| | | |
|----------|--|---------------------|
| 5 | Balances | £1.7 million |
| | <p>We note that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has recommended that Councils use their reserves for the benefit of local residents. Therefore following an in-depth analysis of the General Fund Balances and associated risk assessments it appears that a degree of duplication has taken place.</p> <p>We believe that if a prudent risk aware approach is taken the likelihood of needing all of the balances identified in 2014-2015 is unlikely and that they can be reduced by £1.7 million.</p> <p>Given our commitment to return as much money as possible back to the hardworking families of Wirral, we believe that £900,000 of this sum should be utilised to freeze any increase in Council fees and charges and the remainder placed in the remodelling reserve to support our more ambitious approach to transforming the Council.</p> <p>We note that this places £10.7 million in the Remodelling Reserve and £15.6 million in the General Fund Balances.</p> | £1.7 million |

Council Loans

Conservatives believe that the money raised from Wirral's Council Tax should be used for the benefit of hardworking Wirral residents and not lent out to other councils at 'bargain basement' rates. We therefore demand that Cabinet instructs Officers to produce an urgent report on how these loans (£35 million) can be recalled and Tax payer's money can be used for the benefit of Wirral residents.

For the avoidance of doubt it should be noted that this budget amendment will:

- **Result in a zero percent Wirral Council Tax increase**
- **Recognises that a great many pensioners are on fixed incomes and that all over 70 households should be treated equitably and addresses this through the Council's Pensioner Discount Scheme**
- **Reduces the financial burden on Wirral's hardworking families and provides respite from Labour approved, locally determined increases in the cost of living**
- **Restores our residents' safety and safeguards their wellbeing**
- **Maintains the entire Councils commitment to a sustainable budget**

Local discount under Section 13a of the Local Government Act 1992 (pensioner discounts)

That for the financial year 2014/15 the Council will ensure that a pensioner household (over 70) will receive the same percentage discount as awarded for 2013/14 against its Council Tax liability.

This applies where:-

- (i) The Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 70 or over on 1 April 2014 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2014 eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only).
- (ii) This reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs.
- (iii) Application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Support. No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Support will qualify for the reduction.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

The statutory calculations associated with each Council Tax increase are set out below and the Council is now invited to approve.

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 10 December 2013 calculated the Council Tax Base 2014/15 for the whole of the properties in its area as 87,786.2 (Item T in the statutory formula)

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2014/15 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ("the Act");

- (a) £112,213,601 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2014/15 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (d) is determined as being the difference between:
- (i) £768,500,665 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and
 - (ii) £656,287,064 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph 3(a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- (b) £1,278.16 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15. This amount being calculated as item R in (a) above divided by item T above.
- (c) that in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral Council

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A | B | C | D |
| £852.17 | £994.20 | £1,136.23 | £1,278.26 |
| E | F | G | H |
| £1,562.32 | £1,846.38 | £2,130.43 | £2,556.52 |

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the basic amount of council tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 2% or above.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax

| | | | |
|--------|----------|----------|--------|
| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | Change |
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Band D | 1,278.26 | 1,278.26 | Nil |

To note that the Police and Crime Commission for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have to formally issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Pat Williams

Council welcomes the use of the "Freeze Grant" provided by the Coalition Government and approves a zero Council Tax increase for 2014/2015, with the clear prospect of that welcome assistance remaining available in the future.

However, Council recognises and understands the decisions taken by the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and the Merseyside Fire and Civil Defence Authority and acknowledges that charges for their respective services will need to be added.

Council recognises that the continuing financial challenges will require radical remodelling of services and approves the establishment of such provisions to enable this work to take place.

Whilst accepting many of the options contained within the Cabinet recommendation, Council is keen to ensure that there is clarity and direction with regard to such issues as School Crossing Patrols, street lighting, standards of cleanliness and the future allocation of capital receipts.

Council, therefore, believes that the Budget should be amended as follows:

School Crossing Patrols

Council believes that the Schools Budget should be spent on educating our young people, not raided for Council services. The Council needs to secure a comprehensive School Crossing Patrol service without placing a burden directly on schools. Road safety has been, and should remain, a Council service. Council, therefore, resolves to restore the School Crossing Patrol budget to the revenue budget (£415k) and acknowledges the addition to the budget gap for subsequent years.

Street Cleansing

Council welcomes the release of funds by the Merseyside Waste and Recycling Authority, funding that was collected from Wirral's taxpayers and should be returned. The money being returned should be used to augment sweeping and recycling services which have been reduced in recent years.

It is desirable to deal not only with back alleys but also to target resources where the quality of the local environment has declined. For example, fly tipping hot spots and local retail areas need to be returned to a higher standard of cleanliness.

For 2014/15, a further £200,000 should be applied from the fund to augment street cleansing based on a team under the direction of each area Constituency Committee. During the next year, the Council should develop its waste reduction strategy, examine the feasibility of devolving street cleansing to Constituency Committees and determine sustainable funding arrangements from 2015/16 onwards.

Street Lighting

Council believes that the savings on street lighting to date have resulted in a 'hit and miss' approach where areas have had lighting removed, then restored. As a consequence, lighting has been taken out of use without public consultation Council believes that a new approach is needed, based on investment in new energy efficient lighting, using less energy and yet giving higher quality light. Council, therefore, requests the restoration of the £168,000 budget removed in 2013/14 and 2014/15 relating to the switching off of street lighting.

Council requests officers to draw up and report upon proposals for the introduction of energy efficient LED lighting units. The proposals should be fully costed to include LED investment costs, the resulting savings from existing lamp maintenance and replacement budgets and the savings from energy consumption reduction. The proposals should identify, and make recommendations to resolve, all barriers to achieving the required outcomes.

Programmes should be designed for the proposals so that they can be put in place from 2015/16 onwards and savings achieved used in place of those currently taken through lamp switch off.

For 2014/15 funding from reserves can be used to bridge the saving target.

Capital Spend – 20mph and Highway Maintenance

Council notes the substantial sums in capital receipts expected to be generated from the sale of assets this year. We believe that the use of capital receipts to accelerate the highway maintenance programme represents a prudent use of such funding, thus avoiding more costly repairs arising from deferment.

An initial investment of £1m should be made in a programme of road surface reconstruction with a judgment made on further investment taking into account the nature and timing of the receipts.

Council notes that, even in times of difficulty, many councils are investing in 20mph zones to increase road safety and bring about a safer environment where people cycle and walk with consequential health benefits. The opportunity should be taken for Wirral to follow where other Councils are leading.

These amendments result in a nil increase in the Wirral Council Tax element.

Local discount under Section 13a of the Local Government Act 1992 (pensioner discounts)

That for the financial year 2014/15, the Council will ensure that a pensioner household (over 70) within Property Bands A-D will receive a 5% award against its Council Tax liability.

This applies where:

- (i) The Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 70 or over on 1 April 2014 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2014, eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only).
- (ii) This reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs.
- (iii) Application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Support. No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Support will qualify for the reduction.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

The statutory calculations associated with each Council Tax increase are set out below and the Council is now invited to approve.

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), Cabinet on 10 December 2013 calculated the Council Tax Base 2014/15 for the whole of the properties in its area as 87,786.2 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2014/15 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”):

- (a) £112,213,601 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2014/15 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (d) is determined as being the difference between:
 - (i) £769,467,665, this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year *and*
 - (ii) £657,254,064, this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph 3(a) above and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- (b) £1,278.16 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for

2014/15. This amount being calculated as item R in (a) above divided by item T above.

- (c) that in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral Council

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A | B | C | D |
| £852.17 | £994.20 | £1,136.23 | £1,278.26 |
| E | F | G | H |
| £1,562.32 | £1,846.38 | £2,130.43 | £2,556.52 |

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the basic amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 2% or above.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax

| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | Change |
|--------|----------|----------|--------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Band D | 1,278.26 | 1,278.26 | Nil |

To note that the Police and Crime Commission for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have to formally issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area.

Budget Debate

Following a debate and Councillors Phil Gilchrist, Jeff Green and Phil Davies having replied, the Mayor indicated that card votes would be taken in accordance with the amended Budget Council Procedure.

In respect of the Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment, the Council divided as follows –

For the motion (26) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, P Gilchrist, J Green, J Hale, T Harney, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, S Kelly, I Lewis, S Mountney, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, Mrs P Williams, S Williams

Against the motion (37) Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Glasman, R Gregson, P Hackett, M Johnston, AER Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The motion was therefore lost (26:37) (One abstention)

In respect of the Conservative Budget Amendment, the Council divided as follows –

For the motion (21) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, J Green, J Hale, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, I Lewis, S Mountney, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, S Williams

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

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The motion was therefore lost (21:42) (One abstention)

In respect of the Cabinet Budget Motion, the Council divided as follows –

For the motion (37) Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Glasman, R Gregson, P Hackett, M Johnston, AER Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson

Against the motion (26) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighouse, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, P Gilchrist, J Green, J Hale, T Harney, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, S Kelly, I Lewis, S Mountney, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, Mrs P Williams, S Williams

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The motion was therefore carried (37:26) (One abstention)

Resolved (37:26) (One abstention) – That the Cabinet Budget Motion, set out in minutes 143 (Revenue Budget 2014/2017), 144 (Capital Programme and Financing 2014/2017), 146 (Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/2017), 147 (Schools Budget 2014/2015) and 148 (Carbon Budget) be approved.

77 COUNCIL TAX 2014/2015

The Council gave consideration to the report of the Director of Resources, which sought approval for the statutory calculations in respect of setting the Council Tax, to set the total amount of Council Tax for the financial year 2014/2015 for the different categories of dwellings, and to determine that the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for the financial year 2014/2015 was not excessive such that Referendum was not necessary.

The Mayor indicated that a card vote would be taken in accordance with the amended Budget Council Procedure.

In respect of a motion by Councillor Phil Davies and seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan, the Council divided as follows –

For the motion (37) Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, J Crabtree, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Glasman, R Gregson, P Hackett, M Johnston, AER Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson

Against the motion (26) Councillors C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, W Clements, T Cox, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, P Gilchrist, J Green, J Hale, T Harney, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, P Kearney, S Kelly, I Lewis, S Mountney, C Poval, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, Mrs P Williams, S Williams

One abstention – Councillor D Mitchell

The motion was therefore carried (37:26) (One abstention)

Resolved (37:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) That it be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 10 December 2013 (minute 117) calculated the Council Tax Base 2014/2015 for the whole of the properties in its area as 87,786.2 (Item T in the statutory formula)**
- (2) That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2014/2015 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);**
 - (a) £112,213,601 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2014/2015 (item R in the statutory formula).**

This amount (d) is determined as being the difference between:

- (i) £769,097,665 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and
 - (ii) £656,884,064 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (2)(a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- (b) £1,278.16 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15. This amount being calculated as item R in paragraph (2)(a) above divided by item T in paragraph (1) above.
- (c) that in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral Council

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A | B | C | D |
| £852.17 | £994.20 | £1,136.23 | £1,278.26 |
| E | F | G | H |
| £1,562.32 | £1,846.38 | £2,130.43 | £2,556.52 |

- (3) These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the basic amount of council tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.
- (4) That it be determined that the amount set in (2)(c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2014/15 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 2% or above.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax

| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | Change |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Band D | 1,278.26 | 1,278.26 | Nil |

- (5) That it be noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are yet to issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area.

Police and Crime Commission for Merseyside (awaited)

| A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| E | F | G | H |
| | | | |

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (awaited)

| A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| E | F | G | H |
| | | | |

- (6) That the Council hereby sets as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2014/2015, as being the amounts calculated for each of the categories of dwellings at (2)(c) above, plus the precepts that are issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Total Council Tax for Wirral (awaiting Police and Fire)

| A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| E | F | G | H |
| | | | |

Local discount under Section 13a of the Local Government Act 1992 (pensioner discounts)

- (7) That for the financial year 2014/15 the Council will ensure that a pensioner household (over 70) within Property Bands A-D will receive a 5% award against its Council Tax liability.

This applies where –

- (i) The Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 70 or over on 1 April 2014 (but where the qualifying age criterion is

met after 1 April 2014 eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only).

- (ii) This reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs.
- (iii) Application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Support. No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Support will qualify for the reduction.

78 **POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE
- MEMBERSHIP**

The Council gave consideration to a recommendation made by the Policy and Performance Coordinating Committee at its meeting held on 5 February 2014, which requested the Council to approve an increase in the membership of that Committee and the co-option of two parent governor representatives and two diocesan representatives to sit on the Committee, when it dealt with education matters and to have voting rights in respect of education matters only.

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

Resolved (63:0) (One abstention) –

(1) That the Membership of the Policy and Performance Co-ordinating Committee be extended to include:

- (a) Two Parent Governor Representatives; and**
- (b) A representative of each of the appropriate Diocesan Authorities**

With voting rights, for the purpose of dealing with educational matters

(2) That in order to meet legal requirements when considering educational matters the following be co-opted onto the Policy and Performance Co-ordinating Committee:

- (a) the following two Parent Governor Representatives, elected to sit on the Council's scrutiny committees that deal with education (with voting rights, in respect of educational matters only)**

- **Mrs H Shoebridge (until 28 October 2015); and**
- **Mrs Nicola Smith (until 8 February 2017)**

and,

- (b) the following two Diocesan Authority representatives (with voting right in respect of educational matters only)**

- **Damien Cunningham (representing the Roman Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury); and**
- **A representative of the Church of England Diocese of Chester (currently a nomination has not yet been made).**

79 **VACANCIES**

The Mayor informed the Council that the Head of Legal and Member Services had not been notified of any changes to committee memberships or outside bodies.