

CABINET

Thursday, 13 June 2013

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council Finance
	Councillors	G Davies P Hackett AER Jones C Jones B Kenny AR McLachlan C Meaden T Smith	Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement Economy Central and Support Services Adult Social Care Environment and Sustainability Governance and Improvement Health and Wellbeing Children and Family Services
<u>Apologies for Absence</u>	Councillor	H Smith	Highways and Transportation

1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chris Jones declared a personal interest in Item No. 6 on the agenda – Budget Option – Residential and Short Breaks - by virtue of her employment with the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust.

Councillor Brian Kenny declared a personal interest in Item No. 13 on the agenda – Commissioning of Six Day Nursery Provisions – by virtue of him being a member of the Birkenhead/Tranmere/Oxton Sure Start Board.

Councillor George Davies declared a personal interest in Item No. 15 on the agenda – Child Poverty Project Proposal – by virtue of him being on the Child Poverty Working Group.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the accuracy of Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23 May 2013 be approved.

3 BUDGET OPTION - TRANSFORMATION OF DAY SERVICES

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Director of Adult Social Services that provided the Cabinet with consultation feedback and associated recommendations arising from the officer proposal to down size day services,

to save resources by closing Moreton Day Centre and consolidating mental health provision into one centre, thereby closing two smaller satellite buildings at Prenton and Union Street.

The report outlined the rationale and decision-making process behind the option, background information regarding day services and a summary of a revised proposal.

A staffing structure to deliver day services through a neighbourhood approach was also set out in the report. This was subject to a five-week staff consultation which had now closed. The new staff structure would be implemented accordingly.

Following a comprehensive consultation process including people that use services, carers and staff, the report contained revised recommendations to respond to the challenge to deliver services more efficiently, but also incorporate the views and aspirations of the consultees. The revised recommendations built upon the important work undertaken by a representative carers group working with the support of the Department to establish new proposals and meet the challenge. Additionally, the revised recommendations proposed offering a reduced service in the Moreton area to ensure continued access to local community links.

On 18 February 2013 the Cabinet had committed to explore the possibility of an alternative delivery model, i.e.: a single social enterprise model across all day services to deliver the year two and three savings. (Minute No. 200 refers) The revised proposals were in line with this commitment and the recommendations supported it.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that because of the Council's financial situation, in the context of it being required to find savings of £109 million over the next three years, clearly it had some difficult decisions to take. It had previously received a report which had included a proposal to close Morton Day Centre. There had followed a three month consultation exercise which had just ended. Councillor Phil Davies thanked all those who had taken part including centre users, carers, staff etc. all of whose voices had been heard. The Cabinet was now in a position to move forward and agree resolutions. The proposal was now for the retention of a smaller service in Moreton.

Mr John Dalby, speaking on behalf of carers, outlined their proposals for Transforming Day Services whilst making the required savings, maintaining a service in Moreton and establishing a model structure and vision for a Social Enterprise. Mr Dalby told the Cabinet that the carers wanted to be involved in the changes as much as possible. He considered that the service could be transformed into a role model for day care provision across the country and that alternative income streams could be sought. To achieve their vision they would need the help and support of the Council. Mr Dalby felt that it was not

too late to fix the location for Morton and find a more interactive way of engaging with the carers. The Council could continue to work with them to transform day centre provision.

Councillor Chris Jones informed that change was vital for Moreton. These services did need to change. Large, segregated centres were a thing of the past and younger people coming through had different aspirations and wanted to play their role in society. The feedback had shown that some people did require a therapeutic service and that was why the initial proposals had been refined to stay in Moreton. Councillor Chris Jones hoped that the Cabinet could continue to work with carers and she thanked them and service users for their input.

Councillor Phil Davies agreed that there needed to be a continuous presence in Moreton. The Cabinet wanted to continue the dialog with carers and centre users on the building to be used and hoped agreement could be reached. He was absolutely committed to the social enterprise model and gave his commitment to continue talking to the carers on how it could be made to work. Before any provision was closed on the Moreton site there must be alternative provision in place to ensure that no one was denied a service. The reality was that the Council had a shortfall due to cuts to its budget and these must be addressed. Doing nothing was not an option but the Council had to meet the needs of those who need the services.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet notes the constructive approach developed between DASS officers and carers. Cabinet would encourage this to continue through a joint working partnership with carers to explore a social enterprise model for the whole of day service provision;**
- (2) the Cabinet agrees to officers developing and delivering a reduced service in Moreton to meet the needs of a small group of people who require support in this area delivered from within the reduced staffing structure;**
- (3) the Cabinet notes the findings of the consultation process into the proposal relating to day services, specifically the proposal to close the existing Moreton day centre building, and to close Prenton day centre and Union Street sites and consolidate mental health provision into one site at Beaconsfield;**
- (4) the Cabinet instructs officers to begin the process of closing the affected buildings, with a view to full closure of the sites by September 2013, and to bring a further report detailing options for future use or disposal of the affected buildings;**

- (5) the Cabinet thanks the people, carers, family members and staff using all day services for their input into this process; and**
- (6) approval be given to begin a review and consultation of all incentive payments. Initial consultation as part of the transformation of day services has shown that this system is currently inequitable and not consistent across services.**

4 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - SUMMARY REPORT

The Cabinet considered the Summary Report prepared after the Corporate Peer Challenge Group's follow-up visit (seven members of the original team) on 8 and 9 May 2013. The Group had been invited back to Wirral to help the Council assess progress made since the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2012. The Peers had used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read. The review team provided feedback as 'critical friends', not as assessors or inspectors.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that the report was a record of the review team's key findings. The team had noted that the Council had made impressive improvement. It was playing a greater role in the Liverpool City Region, it was strengthening its corporate functions, its Corporate Plan set out its key priorities, it had made headway with its challenges, had improved the quality of its decision-making and was taking tough decisions. The team had also noted that the Council had ambitious plans in respect of its Constituency Committees and transformational change and it saw the Council as a learning organisation. The Council was learning from best practice it was aware of elsewhere in the country by engaging with the Centre for Public Scrutiny and others.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet notes the positive report from the Peer Challenge Team, i.e.:**
 - there has been an impressive journey of improvement since the peer challenge in October 2012;**
 - the Council has come a long way and should be pleased and proud with the substantial progress we have made;**
 - there is a strong sense that the organisation is significantly more confident and decisive about the issues and challenges it faces and its ability to respond to them and there is external recognition of this from the Council's partners and other stakeholders.**
 - the Council is playing a greater role in the city region.**

- our corporate plan sets out clearly and concisely the priorities that the council is working to in the medium term;
- significant headway has been made with the immediate financial challenges the authority has been facing;
- key changes to the constitution are being implemented to strengthen governance, increase transparency and improve the quality of decision-making;
- we are now able to take a more proactive look at the future;
- there are ambitious plans and proposals emerging such as the Constituency Committees and thinking is evolving about the next phase of the Council's transformation; and
- we are learning and seeking challenge from others in the sector, including continued support from the Improvement Board, visits to other local authorities and external assistance from the LGA, Centre for Public Scrutiny, Local Partnerships and others.

(2) the Cabinet further notes the key issues to take forward, i.e.:

- continue emphasis on financial management;
- progress thinking on the council of the future;
- strengthen corporate functions;
- continue to do things at pace, hold your nerve and be prepared to take the tougher decisions ahead; and
- Use the opportunity that a new 'top team' presents to promote cultural change throughout the organisation.

(3) the Cabinet agrees the following:

- (a) to formally thank the Peer Challenge Team for their extremely helpful report;**
- (b) to request the Chief Executive to produce a report for a future meeting on the practical steps that will need to be taken to address the issues to take forward identified by the Peer Challenge Team; and**
- (c) to re-affirm the importance of learning from good practice elsewhere and sharing our learning with others.**

5 IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Ann McLachlan introduced a report by the Director of Public Health/Head of Policy and Performance that provided an update on progress in delivering the Council's Improvement Plan, six months into its implementation.

The report informed that significant changes have been made since the Improvement Plan was developed during summer 2012. The Plan reflected the position the Council was in at that time, with an emphasis on the need to get some of the basic infrastructure for change in place to enable the organisation to begin a longer process of transformation.

The Cabinet noted that the emphasis of the Plan was being changed to ensure that it was more outcome-based. Outcomes had been identified that the Council believed would demonstrate the impact of the changes being made as an organisation, against the priorities that were set out in July 2012. They would also enable the Council to be stronger in its approach to delivering the commitments made in the Corporate Plan for 2013-16.

The report looked forward and informed that the focus for the next six months would be on ensuring Wirral could evidence the actions taken that showed the borough was strengthening its corporate culture to meet its current and future challenges. Key priorities would be to embed a new performance culture as well as embarking on a series of transformational projects that were seen as essential in shaping the Council that Wirral would be by 2016. The Peer Challenge follow-up visit recommendations had support this, particularly around the need to strengthen Wirral's corporate functions and linking the transformation programme to the vision of its future.

The report was accompanied by a detailed milestone report which was attached as an appendix. It included a summary of progress against each of the Improvement Plan objectives and a Red, Green, Amber, Blue (RAGB) rating.

The Cabinet noted that of the 45 objectives within the Plan:

- 11 were rated blue and had now been completed.
- 13 were rated green and were on track, in progress and completed to plan, with no issues.
- 21 were rated amber and were not yet completed, a risk but not yet an issue.
- 0 were rated red and identified as a problem requiring serious or immediate attention or action.

The Cabinet noted that this RAGB rating illustrated that significant progress had been made. The report narrative highlighted the main areas of progress and those areas requiring more attention. There was a summary against each of the five Improvement Plan priorities and at the end of each section, a list of the key supporting evidence.

Progress with Priority 1 'Political and Managerial Leadership' had been strong with the delivery of a series of development sessions for all Members to shape the Council's vision and transformation priorities. However, some

activities under this priority, specifically the Leadership and Cultural Change programmes had been deferred until the autumn once the organisational restructure (currently being implemented) was completed.

There had been good progress under Priority 2, 'Corporate Governance and Decision-Making', specifically in terms of completion of a constitutional review that delivered a number of improvements in Council governance. Areas under this priority that now needed significant attention included improving the Council's arrangements for Risk Management and Procurement.

Overall, progress against Priority 3 'Corporate Plan' and Priority 4 'Budget and Financial Stability' had been very strong in view of the business need to meet the challenges of reduced funding, whilst also rectifying historic issues in terms of base budget setting and debt recovery. The success of the 'What Really Matters' consultation had provided a foundation upon which to build the new Corporate Plan and Council priorities. The consultation had also provided local residents with a say in determining the budget options which would deliver over £40 million worth of savings in 2013/4.

In terms of Priority 5, the Improvement Board had acknowledged that the Council's Investment Strategy and approach to economic development were an area of high achievement. Progress had also been made in relation to safeguarding in Adult Social Services with the implementation of an action plan in response to a safeguarding peer review in 2012.

Councillor McLachlan thanked the Director of Public Health/Head of Policy and Performance and her officer team for their hard work which had resulted in the progress made to date.

Councillor Phil Davies also thanked the Officers for the huge amount of work that sat behind the Director's report. He told the Cabinet that it was within touching distance of completing its targets set out in the Improvement Plan and that Members should all be proud of this achievement.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Cabinet Members be requested to reflect on the progress made within the Plan and provide any comments or observations;**
- (2) the Cabinet recommends that the Improvement Plan should shift its focus to outcomes as described in the priority sections of the report; and**
- (3) a further progress report be presented to the Cabinet in September 2013.**

6 BUDGET OPTION - RESIDENTIAL AND SHORT BREAKS

Councillor Chris Jones introduced a report by the Director of Adult Social Services that set out recommendations in relation to the Adult Social Care budget options for Residential and Social Break Services.

The report provided further detail and context around the proposal submitted to Cabinet on 18 Feb 2013 seeking approval to close one respite centre for Mental Health (Fernleigh) and one Learning Disabilities care home (Sylvandale) and to develop Girtrell Court as the main centre for all short breaks provision (Minute No. 200 refers).

The Director's report set out recommendations to achieve the budget savings outlined in the initial report to close the two buildings (1) Fernleigh and (2) Sylvandale.

In relation to Fernleigh it was reported that this provision would be appropriately commissioned from the NHS for crisis support and from the independent sector for respite provision. Respite care previously offered at Sylvandale would be relocated to Girtrell Court.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet agrees to complete the planned closure of Sylvandale and to complete the transfer of all patients to alternative provision;**
- (2) the Cabinet agrees to the closure of Fernleigh: De-commissioning Fernleigh in its current form and commissioning two distinct services.**
 - (a) Crisis beds to be commissioned by Wirral NHS as outlined above; and**
 - (b) The Department for Adult Social Services will commission beds from the independent sector in relation to respite provision.**
- (3) the Department for Adult Social Services will aim to ensure, whenever and wherever possible, to support people in their own homes, through the Community Mental Health Teams, including the Home Treatment Team; and**
- (4) people will be offered structured access to personal budgets with support to arrange their own respite care.**

7 **POLICY ON DISCHARGE OF STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS DUTY INTO THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

Councillor George Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment who sought approval for the adoption of a policy to discharge a homeless duty into the private rented sector.

The Cabinet was informed that the Localism Act 2011 included significant changes to the way in which local authorities could deal with applications for social housing and homelessness applications under Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Local authorities owed applicants who were homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless, the main housing duty to secure suitable accommodation (unless a referral to another local authority could be made under the local connection provisions).

From 9 November 2012, the Localism Act had allowed local authorities to fully discharge the local housing duty by a 'private rented sector offer'. This must be an offer of an assured short-hold tenancy in private rented accommodation with a minimum fixed term period of one year. The property attached to the offer had to be in a reasonable physical condition and the landlord had to be a fit and proper person.

If the Council intended to use this power it had to develop a clear policy around its use. A draft policy that set out how the Council intended to discharge a homeless duty into the Private Rented Sector was attached as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet recommends that the Council adopts a policy to Discharge a Homeless Duty into the Private Rented Sector.

8 **TENANCY STRATEGY STATEMENT**

Councillor George Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment that sought Members' approval and endorsement to Wirral's Tenancy Strategy Statement, following a public consultation exercise with stakeholders and Registered Providers of social). The Cabinet noted that the development of tenancy strategy housing by local authorities was a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 20 December 2012, Members approved the draft Tenancy Strategy Statement, prior to wider consultation with Registered Providers (RPs) and the general public (Minute No. 152 refers). This wider consultation occurred in January and February 2013 and in addition to being posted on the Council's website had been publicised widely to all RPs with

social housing stock in the borough and to prospective tenants who had registered their e-mail address with Property Pool Plus.

All responses from RPs had been in favour of the Strategy content. The majority of responses from the public had also been positive, with just two consultees against the use of fixed term tenancies altogether. A summary of the questionnaire responses was set out in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Tenancy Strategy Statement set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

9 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - UNDER-OCCUPATION SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Cabinet considered the referral of the Under-Occupation Scrutiny Review, from the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 22 April 2013. The report contained eighteen recommendations, separated in terms of their implications for tenants; social housing providers; the private housing sector; the Council and its services; and other partner organisations and their clients.

Councillor G Davies thanked the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its thought provoking piece of work. He informed that those affected by the obnoxious tax had suffered anxiety. This was the biggest change to welfare since its inception. Only 48% of those who should pay the under-occupation tax were actually paying it and he considered that this ill thought through policy should be dropped.

Councillor Phil Davies thanked Councillor Mark Johnston and other Members of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their excellent work and suggestions for improvement. He asked that Officers provide a detailed report on how the Council could implement the action plan. Councillor Phil Davies informed that the Council had allocated resources within its budget to enhance advice services.

Councillor Phil Davies also raised concerns that the benefit reforms on under occupation was leading to an increase in homelessness. Family break ups, poverty and deprivation could lead to a number of Housing Associations going bankrupt because rent could not be collected. There was a shortage of alternative accommodation and this would mean more people would be forced into the private rental sector and household bills would increase as a consequence.

Councillor Phil Davies paid tribute to the lobbying of the Government to rethink this legislation, carried out by various groups and proposed that the Cabinet add its comments.

Councillor George Davies made reference to the 280 void properties in St Helens which meant that the authority did not have the properties to do what the Government wanted it to do.

RESOLVED:

That the Final Report of the Scrutiny Review ‘The Implications of Benefit Reforms on Under Occupation’ be sent to all Wirral MPs.

10 **ADOPTION REFORM GRANT**

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children’s Services that detailed how the Council proposed to improve the recruitment and assessment of adopters and reduce adoption delay in Wirral. using the government Adoption Reform Grant for 2013/14.

The Adoption Reform Grant for 2013/14 was in two parts:

- **Part A** was non-ring fenced and was not time-limited. Members noted that the purpose of this grant was to provide support to local authorities towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be lawfully incurred by them.
- **Part B** was ring-fenced to addressing recruitment of adopters and had to be spent by 31 March 2014. The Council was required to spend this one-off grant on adoption services. Members noted that a condition of the grant was that local authorities were required to write to the Department of Education providing details of what the grant was spent on and its consequent impact.

The Director proposed that Wirral’s allocation of the ring-fenced grant was contributed to a regional collaborative recruitment initiative as well as updating local recruitment material and processes. In addition, she proposed to provide additional social work staff, on a fixed term basis, to undertake the assessments of the increased number of potential adopters that result from the recruitment campaign, a family finding social worker and an adoption process development officer to embed the delivery of new processes and systems.

In order to promote a cultural change in social work practice so that plans for permanency, including adoption were initiated at the earliest opportunity when a child came into the care of the local authority, the Director proposed that Wirral’s allocation of the funds provided by Part A of the Adoption Reform Grant, £520,452, were used to procure additional resources to develop social work skills. She proposed to provide additional time-limited social work capacity to develop concurrent planning and fostering for adoption, reviewing

all permanency plans for current children in care and additional assessment capacity in the adoption team.

In addition to the reform grant the report proposed equalisation of inter-agency and inter-authority fees. In Wirral this meant increasing inter-authority fees to £27,000 which was approximately twice the amount currently paid. This was in line with the recommendation from SOLACE, ADCS and the LGA in order to promote adoption nationally to being a more realistic cost for the recruitment and assessment of adopters. This also cited one of the Government's priorities within the grant guidance.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the proposals as detailed in the report to develop adoption recruitment and family finding to be funded from the Department for Education Adoption Reform Grant 2013/14 Part B be agreed;**
- (2) the proposals as detailed in the report to improve social work practice in securing permanence for looked after children to be funded from the Department for Education Adoption Reform Grant 2013/14 part A be agreed; and**
- (3) the inter-agency adoption fee charged to other agencies be increased to the national recommendation of £27,000.**

11 CAREERS, EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICE 2014/15

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services that set out options and recommendations for the commissioning of a targeted information, advice and guidance (IAG) service for young people from 1 April 2014. The Cabinet was informed that the current contract and service had commenced on 1 April 2010 and had included annual service reviews. The service was currently delivered by Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP). This contract with GMCP expired on 31 March 2014, therefore, the Cabinet was asked to give consideration to options for delivering and commissioning a new 2014/15 service.

The Cabinet noted that the current contract had been commissioned by Halton Borough Council, in partnership with the other five Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Authorities (LAs). The service was a targeted careers information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) service, specifically for those young people not in employment, education and / or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET and those who were identified as vulnerable.

It was noted that the national policy landscape had changed significantly, during the life of this contract, and the current service reflected this. The

2013/14 service delivery was more flexible, based on a peripatetic basis and had evolved to be more aligned to the Council access strategy. However, in planning for a 2014 redesign of the service, greater consideration needed to be given to the young people's participation (Raising of the Participation Age 2013 for young people aged 17 and 2015 for young people aged 18) and youth agendas.

The Director's report detailed proposed approaches to the delivery of information, careers information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) for young people aged 14 to 19. The Cabinet noted that the 14-19 Team was seeking permission to take forward the following recommended approach:

- (1) Continue with a LCR LA led approach to jointly commission a Participation and Engagement Service, as a response to the Council's new statutory duty in respect of Raising the Participation Age 2013 and 2015.
- (2) Develop a LCR LA shared data tracking and monitoring software system commissioned by a lead LA. A Client Case Software System (CCIS) is required to make the monthly statutory data returns to the Department for Education.
- (3) Re-configure the 14-9 Team to locally manage the LCR shared data tracking system, provide reports and quality assuring the rigour/robustness of the data.

RESOLVED:

That the following be agreed:

- (1) **Participation Service - Work in partnership with other LCR LAs to jointly commission a participation advisor service from an external agency; and**
- (2) **16-19 Data Hub - Access a shared service delivered by a lead LCR LA. Shared service to include direct access to a CCIS compatible software data system necessary to enable statutory Department for Education data returns to be made.**

12 PENSBY / STANLEY SCHOOLS CO-LOCATION PROJECT - FINANCIAL POSITION

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services that informed the Cabinet, pursuant to Contract Procedure Rule 16.1.2, that the contract awarded for the construction of the new schools for Pensby Primary and Stanley Special School had been increased by £1,037,960. The additional costs related to £716,264 for construction costs

and a further £321,696 for costs associated with demolition, specialist equipment and hire of temporary accommodation.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that this was an absolutely fantastic development and he asked the Director to arrange a tour of it for Cabinet Members. He also informed that it was a requirement of the Contract Procedural Rules to bring this development to the Cabinet's attention.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

13 COMMISSIONING OF SIX DAY NURSERY PROVISIONS

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services as part of the Council's Budget Savings Options. The report outlined a proposed framework and timetable for the commissioning of six Day nursery provision which were being currently delivered by the Children and Young Peoples Department.

The report sought the Cabinet's agreement on the proposed commissioning approach and priorities in respect of the nursery provision. It also sought approval to change the proposed contract period from three years to five years.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that these provisions had come out of budget saving options. This was potentially an innovative way of delivering this important nursery provision. He informed that all contracts would be monitored on a quarterly basis to provide evidence to ensure good quality outcomes as set out in paragraph 2.7 of the Director's report. The Council's aim was to continue to prioritise the most vulnerable children.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) approval be given to changing the proposed contract period from three years to five years; and**
- (2) the proposed commissioning approach and priorities be agreed.**

14 SOMERVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL - EXTENSION AND REFURBISHMENT

Councillor Tony Smith presented a report by the Director of Children's Services that advised the Cabinet of the outcome of the tender process for works to Somerville Primary School, to remove six poor quality mobile classrooms and re-provide accommodation within the main school building. The report sought the Cabinet's agreement to the proposal to accept the lowest tender for the work required, submitted by Conlon Construction Ltd.

Councillor Tony Smith told the Cabinet that this was a good example of the excellent work carried out by the Council's Officers.

Councillor Phil Davies warmly welcomed the report and informed that this work would significantly enhance the facilities for the School.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contractor who submitted the lowest tender, as detailed above, be accepted as the Council's 'preferred contractor'; and**
- (2) the Head of Legal and Member Services be authorised to execute an appropriate construction contract with the preferred constructor, in due course, subject to him checking this contractor's tender submission and the contractor developing a satisfactory Health and Safety Plan.**

15 CHILD POVERTY PROJECT PROPOSAL

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services that outlined a proposal for expenditure on child poverty activities based on priorities identified by Wirral's Child and Family Poverty Working Group. The report also set out a proposed commissioning process for progressing this proposal and related project management arrangements, including the role of the Working Group in respect of monitoring progress.

The report took forward the longstanding view of the Working Group that community assets, not deficits, were the key to addressing issues of poverty and deprivation in Wirral. It also recognised the role of schools in improving outcomes now and in the longer term for Wirral's children. The report also outlined a proposed approach which was about enhancing the vital role of schools and creating a platform for them to act as a catalyst for transforming local communities. The approach had been proactively developed by all members of the Working Group, with support from officers as appropriate.

The report further set out the Working Group's key areas of focus for 2013-14 in line with the Liverpool City Region Strategy on Poverty and Life Chances.

The Cabinet noted that, in respect of funding for child poverty initiatives, expenditure had been committed to support the Springboard project and this expenditure had been dealt with separately in a previous report to the Cabinet in September 2012. A further report on progress in relation to Springboard would be brought to the Cabinet for consideration in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet agrees the following

- (1) the £100,000 allocated for priorities allocated by the Working Group be utilised to commission the delivery of the project outlined in this proposal;**
- (2) the Wirral Child and Family Working Group acts as the key stakeholder group for this project;**
- (3) regular reports on progress in relation to the delivery of the project and on Wirral's wider contribution to delivering the Liverpool City Region Strategy on Poverty and Life Chances are produced for the Children's Trust in line with existing governance arrangements;**
- (4) to commit to ensuring that the lessons learnt from the implementation of the project are considered as the Council and its partners further develop neighbourhood working in Wirral; and**
- (5) to review the progress of the project alongside other Council priorities and consider the allocation of additional funding in the 2014/15 budget and agrees that any further allocation will be based on the project beginning to evidence the impact of the investment on improved outcomes for children and families.**

16 FINANCIAL OUT-TURN 2012/13

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Interim Director of Resources that detailed the Out-turn for 2012/13 and concluded the report to Cabinet for the 2012/13 financial year. The report had attached separate appendices for Revenue (including details of the reserves and provisions), Capital (including the resources to fund the programme) and the Collection Summary (including debts for which approval to write-off is required). At the time the report was written this remained as work-in-progress.

Councillor Phil Davies informed the Cabinet that the Outturn for 2012/13 had come up with £2.7m overspend less than projected at month 11. He was pleased reserves had been increased to £17.2m at the year end. This was close to the target set for 2015. Councillor Phil Davies also informed that the Council had been able to release earmarked reserves of £17.2m, had created a redundancy reserve of £5.5m and had maintained an enhanced voluntary severance scheme.

Councillor Phil Davies told the Cabinet that there was now a more robust procedure in place to monitor the Capital Programme and that capital receipts had been used to reduce borrowing.

Councillor Phil Davies thanked the Interim Director of Resources, Peter Timmins and his team for the absolutely fantastic amount of work they had undertaken to get the Council's finances to where they were now.

RESOLVED: That

Revenue

- (1) the Revenue Out-turn for 2012/13, which showed that balances have increased by £3.6 million due to the outturn being £2.7 million below the projection at Month 11 and the release of £0.9 million of previously used Capital Reserves to General Fund balances, be noted;
- (2) the creation of a Redundancy Reserve of £5.5 million, previously identified as a cost for 2013/14, be agreed;

Capital

- (3) the additional slippage of £4.6 million from 2012/13 to 2013/14 be agreed;
- (4) the financing of the programme for 2012/13 be agreed;
- (5) the application of the £2.5 million of capital receipts, to reduce future capital financing costs by £0.2 million per year and to release £0.9 million of previously used Capital Reserves to General Fund balances, be agreed;

Collection Summary

- (6) the report be noted; and
- (7) the debts, as detailed in appendix 3 to the report, be written off.

17 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Interim Director of Resources that detailed the Monitoring Position for Month 1 (ended 30 April 2013). Attached to the report were separate appendices for Revenue and Capital.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that it was essential to have a very robust monitoring process in place to ensure that the Council delivered its savings. Throughout the financial year the Cabinet would receive monthly updates in respect of Revenue and Capital Monitoring and this was the first report for the 2013/14 financial year.

RESOLVED: That

Revenue

- (1) **the monitoring position of a balanced position for revenue be noted and that this position is after funding of a Redundancy Reserve of up to £5.5 million;**

Capital

- (2) **the monitoring position for capital be noted; and**
- (3) **the revised capital programme as detailed in the capital monitoring appendix be agreed.**

18 COMMITTEE REFERRAL - ANNUAL REPORT - AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which informed that to comply with best professional practice the Audit and Risk Management Committee completed an Annual Report for the Cabinet's consideration on the work it had.

The Annual Report had been prepared by the Chair in consultation with the Internal Audit Section and was attached to the Chief Internal Auditor's report.

Councillor Phil Davies proposed that the Cabinet approve the report. He also thanked the Chair, Councillor Jim Crabtree and Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee for their excellent work in monitoring and raising issues in respect of the Council's accounts

RESOLVED:

That the Audit and Risk Management Committee's Annual Report 2012/13 be approved.

19 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND 2013/14 PROGRAMME

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment which requested the Cabinet to approve the 'Key Component' and 'Major Bid' programmes of the 2013/14 Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). It was reported that £1,084,860 of 'major' funding and £235,000 of 'key component' funding had been allocated to the Council for 2013/14.

The LSTF aimed to assist the Council to support Wirral residents to access employment opportunities, as well as encouraging the use of sustainable

transport and contributing to reducing carbon emissions in the Borough. The LSTF delivery area was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet

- (1) approves the delivery of the 2013/14 LSTF Capital programme as set out in Section 3 of the report;**
- (2) approves the delivery of the 2013/14 LSTF Revenue programme as set out in section 4 of the report; and**
- (3) delegates authority to the Head of Environment and Regulation in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services and Party Spokespersons to make necessary adjustments to the priorities within the programme should the need arise due to financial conditions or other factors.**

20 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

21 EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Cabinet noted the detail of the exempt Appendix 3, Collection Summary to Agenda Item 16 – Financial Outturn 2012/13. (Minute No. 16 refers)