

# CABINET

Monday, 7 July 2014

Present: Councillor P Davies (Chair)

Councillors AR McLachlan P Hackett  
G Davies Tony Smith  
AER Jones B Mooney  
C Jones S Whittingham  
C Meaden

## 21 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham and Councillor Tony Smith declared a personal interest in item No. 9– Children and Young People’s Department Day Nursery Provision by virtue of them being Directors of the Overton Nursery and Pre School Centre. (Minute No. 29 refers)

Councillor Stuart Whittingham declared a personal interest in item 10- Provision of Children and Adult Transport Services by virtue of virtue of a personal acquaintance. (Minute No. 30 refers)

Councillor Bernie Mooney declared a personal interest in item 8- Quality Assurance and Standards of Care Homes in Wirral – Scrutiny Report by virtue of a personal acquaintance. (Minute No. 23 refers)

Councillor P Davies declared a non pecuniary interest in item No. 9 – Children and Young People’s Department Day Nursery Provision by virtue of him being a governor of St Werburgh’s Catholic Primary School. (Minute No. 29 refers)

## 22 MINUTES

### RESOLVED:

**That the minutes of the last meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014 be approved as a correct record.**

23 **LEADERS ANNOUNCEMENT**

Councillor P. Davies indicated that he would be bringing Item No. 8 – Quality Assurance and Standards of Care Homes in Wirral – Scrutiny Report forward to the first item on the agenda.

24 **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND STANDARDS OF CARE HOMES IN WIRRAL - SCRUTINY REPORT**

A report by the Chair of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee, provided background information on the report of the Quality Assurance and Standards of Care Homes in Wirral Scrutiny Review (appended to it), which had been approved by the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee and referred to Cabinet for further consideration.

Councillor Wendy Clements, Chair of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee and Councillor Moira McLaughlin, Panel Member, was in attendance at the meeting and proceeded to introduce the very detailed report drawing attention to its recommendations.

Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health thanked the Chair and those members that had taken part in the review and indicated that this was a valuable report with great importance and welcomed further meetings with the Director and Department of Adult Social Services to discuss the recommendations detailed within the report.

Councillor P Davies echoed the comments made by Councillor Chris Jones and asked that a copy of the actions being delivered be shared with the Cabinet at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the contents and recommendations of the Scrutiny Report, 'Quality Assurance and Standards of Care Homes in Wirral' be supported; and**
- (2) officers be requested to develop an Action Plan to implement the recommendations contained within the report.**

25 **NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF**

Councillor P. Davies reported that this item has been withdrawn from the agenda.

## 26 COUNCIL BUDGET 2015/16 AND 2017/18

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Director of Resources that set out the process to deliver a Council Budget (revenue and capital) for 2015/16 and forecast Budgets for the following years 2016/17 – 2017/18 for agreement by Council in February 2015 and the latest financial projections from the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This built upon the Future Council Project Update presented to Cabinet on 19 June 2014.

Councillor P Davies indicated that the Council had been presented with a lot of financial difficulties with a 70 million funding gap to fund, but would continue to protect front line services.

He further indicated that all budget proposals would be measured against the Council's corporate priorities and that the Corporate Plan would be subject to a review; the Future Council project would be key to remodelling the Council.

Councillor P. Davies indicated that the Council would have to look at a reduction within its workforce, but he had given assurances to the Trade Unions that where possible this would be on a voluntary basis. He would continue to work with the Trade Unions.

Councillor P. Davies concluded that in relation to the cost of living pressures it was the intention of the present administration to freeze Council Tax as detailed within the report.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Corporate Plan be reviewed and agreed by Council to provide the basis of the 2015/16 Budget;**
- (2) recommendations on the Council Budget be considered by Council in December 2014 and February 2015.**

## 27 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Director of Resources which informed the Cabinet of the Monitoring position for Month 2 (ending 31 May 2014).

The monitoring reports for both the Revenue and Capital were attached as appendices to the report.

Councillor P Davies indicated that in relation to the pressures identified within Community Care, this had been identified early and measures had been put in place by the Department of Adult Social Services. At this point Councillor

P.Davies invited the Director of Adult Social Services to inform the Cabinet of the department's plans.

Mr Hodkinson thanked Councillor Davies. He set out that there was a projected potential budget variance reported on behalf of Adult Social care in the finance report of £3M. This was following budget in year budget reductions reflecting the significant and stretching savings that were agreed in 2013 for 2014 totalling £11.7M.

The savings group into four key thematic areas;

Working Together	£1.741M
Delivering Differently	£4.388M
Managing the Money	£3.697M
Transforming the Business	£1.881M

Mr Hodkinson set out that the Department has a large number of projects to be delivered as part of the three year transformation programme agreed in 2013 to save £18M of DASS expenditure. Examples include day service transformation, changing support arrangements for people with disabilities, further integration with the NHS, improving systems and payments through Liquid Logic, ensuring that people that should be able to access NHS funding are able to, enabling people to be more independent, equalising charging processes across all services etc.

The figure of £3M that had been reported was not as yet an overspend. It was derived primarily from a financial perspective that all of the benefits of the projects may not be deliverable in year. He pointed out that the reported variance was due to specific concerns expressed in relation to a small number of the projects and outlined these briefly;

#### Transformation of Day Services.

Considerable progress had been made with regard to developing a Local Authority trading Company model. This was endorsed by cabinet earlier in the year. A challenge process had, however been put in place as some of the savings identified were based on previous assumptions such as reduced re-charges etc. The challenge process had been set up to test the LATC model and the strategic business case.

#### NHS Continuing Care Review

It was reported that there had been considerable increased uptake of NHS Continuing care in Wirral during 2014. The CCG had seen demand increase by £1.5M in the first quarter. A project was set up to ensure that individuals were properly reviewed against the criteria, however at this point in time insufficient data had been gathered to show a clear transfer from LA funding.

The Department was awaiting quarter 1 data. In addition to the above there was a specific piece of work to identify people that were independently re-claiming funding from the NHS through NHS Continuing Care. At this point the Department had been unable to access personal data regarding individuals due to NHS data sharing rules.

### Managing Demand

A project was in place to ensure that people get support focussed upon enabling them to be as independent as possible. In order to ensure that this and other projects based on reviewing peoples needs were implemented an Independent Review Team was put in place in the Department last year. Progress in assistive technologies and other means to reduce risk were now available. Reviews were undertaken sensitively but can ensure that resources were used to best effect. The activity was happening however due to the variability of review outcomes data was required to specifically show reductions in care packages directly as a result of the review process.

In summary the range and nature of these projects was such that outcomes can be variable. The Department must always ensure that whilst challenging efficiency, processes are followed that are within the law and appropriate to peoples vulnerability. A number of enablers to maximise the benefit from projects such as the Independent Review Team already mentioned. In 2013 progress in relation to the project and financial delivery was monitored by the Transformation Board in DASS reporting progress directly to CESG using the Corporate PM system. Project or programme leads are called to account in relation to progress and any variance explained in detail. The same system had been employed for 2014.

### **RESOLVED: That**

#### **Revenue:**

- (1) it be noted that at Month 2 (May 2014), the full year forecast projects a gross General Fund overspend of £3,137,000;**
- (2) the increased commitment of £152,000 for Carbon Reduction Commitment allowances contained within the above figure be noted;**
- (3) that the payment of New Homes Bonus grant of £242,253 which is a general grant received outside of directorate budgets be noted;**
- (4) the risks relating to non delivery of savings as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of appendix A and requirement for mitigation and actions to be identified be noted;**

- (5) the mitigation actions being undertaken including capitalisation, reprofiling and use of public health budgets as per paragraph 3.5 (of Appendix A) and reductions to 2014/15 growth as detailed in paragraphs 5.2 and table 5 above (of Appendix A). Further mitigation action will be developed as appropriate during the year;
- (6) the application of the additional New Homes Bonus grant against the Carbon reduction commitment and overall overspend to reduce the net overspend to £2,894,747 be approved.

**Capital:**

- (i) the spend to date at Month 2 of £1.3 million, with 16.7% of the financial year having elapsed be noted; and
- (ii) the revised Capital Programme of £61.3 million (Table 1 at 3.1 of Appendix B) be approved.

**28 FINANCIAL OUT-TURN REPORTS FOR 2013/14**

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Director of Resources which detailed the Out-turn for 2013/14 and concluded the reporting to Cabinet for the 2013/14 financial year. There were separate Appendices for Revenue (including details of the reserves and provisions), Capital (including the resources used to fund the programme) and the Collection Summary (including Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debts).

Councillor P.Davies congratulated the officers for all their hard work in achieving the £5 million pounds underspend reported within the report.

**RESOLVED: That**

**Revenue**

- (1) The Revenue Out-turn for 2013/14, which showed an underspend of £5 million which is more favourable than the £1 million projected at Month 10 be noted.
- (2) the transfer of the underspend to the Re-Modelling Reserve be agreed.
- (3) the Reserves as detailed in the Annex be agreed.

**Capital**

- (4) the re-profiling of £10.9 million from 2013/14 to 2014/15 be noted;

- (5) the financing of the Programme for 2013/14 be noted;**
- (6) the Programme for 2014/15 be rigorously reviewed to ensure that it was realistic and deliverable in order to minimise the ongoing need for the reprofiling of the agreed Programme.**

#### **Collection Summary**

- (7) the Council Tax in-year collection rate being 95.4% and 0.3% above the projected target; and**
- (8) the Business Rates collection rate increased from 95.3% to 96.9% in 2013/14; and**
- (9) the Sundry Debtors arrears at 31 March 2014 showed a reduction of £6.5 million on the position at 31 March 2013 be noted.**

#### **29 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 (YEAR END REPORT)**

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Director of Resources which presented a review of Treasury Management activities in 2013/14 and confirmed compliance with treasury limits and prudential indicators. The report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Department for Communities and Local Government Investment Guidance.

The report further highlighted that the Authority achieved in-year savings from the re-profiling of the Capital Programme with the need for external borrowing offset by the temporary use of internal funds. This use of internal funds reduced the sums available for investment and low interest rates meant the income target was not achieved but, overall, Treasury Management activities underspent by £2 million in 2013/14. The Authority also complied with the Prudential Indicators.

#### **RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2013/14 be agreed;**
- (2) the compliance with Prudential Indicators in 2013/14; and**
- (3) the saving of £2 million from capital financing activities in 2013/14 be noted and welcomed.**

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT DAY NURSERY PROVISION**

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services which stated that, at the meeting of Cabinet on 19 June 2014, Cabinet approved (Minute . refers) and agreed to the transfer of New Brighton Day Nursery provision to become a separate legal entity established as a social enterprise model. This was under a five year contract and worked to a transfer date of 1 September 2014. This was the only tender which proceeded to a full conclusion from the process agreed at Cabinet on 13 June 2013 (Minute. 13 Refers) .

At the meeting of Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014 (Minute.5 refers) it was agreed that other matters in respect of proposals regarding the remaining five Council day nurseries be deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet.

All of the five day nurseries referred to in the report were co-located in buildings alongside key partners. Four were situated on school sites and one was located within the St James Centre, this centre was owned by the North Birkenhead Development Trust.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the proposal to cease the Council's day nursery provision detailed within the report, in respect of the five day nurseries is subject to a 12 week public consultation period be approved;**
- (2) the further allocation of places for children at the five day nurseries be proactively managed (through discussion with and agreement of parents) during the proposed 12 week consultation period to help mitigate against possible future inconvenience for parents. This is to reduce any likelihood of disruption or unnecessary transfers for children to a different childcare provider in the event that the Council's day nursery provision detailed within the report ceases to operate;**
- (3) the Director of Children's Services be requested to undertake consultation and further negotiations with those school partners to explore the full potential of developing this proposal;**
- (4) the Director of Children's Services be requested to undertake consultation and further negotiations with North Birkenhead Development Trust as a current and key stakeholder at the St James Centre to explore the full potential of developing this proposal;**



- (5) a contingency plan be put in place (funded from existing resources) by the Director of Children's Services as considered necessary and appropriate to ensure sufficiency of the early education offer.
- (6) the Director of Children's Services be authorised to prepare the requisite consultation documentation and commence the public consultation as soon as practicably possible.
- (7) the outcome of the proposal and consultation responses be considered at a future meeting of Cabinet.

### 31 PROVISION OF CHILDREN AND ADULT TRANSPORT SERVICES

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services which stated that Wirral Council transported children from home to school and vulnerable adults from home to day centres, placements and educational provision. The transportation was provided through contracted services from external transport providers, an in-house fleet and additional commissioned transport as required. Current external contracts were due to expire in summer 2014 and new contracts were required in order to fulfil the transport requirements for eligible students and adults based on Wirral Council transport policies. The report sought approval to award new transport contracts.

In accordance with the Constitution (Standing Order 35) the Cabinet was also requested to waive call-in as the decision required to be taken in respect of this matter was considered urgent as the delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's and the public's interest given that the existing contracts were due to expire in summer 2014. The Chief Executive had confirmed that if Cabinet agreed to waive call-in, the decision was reasonable in the circumstances and should be treated as a matter of urgency.

#### **RESOLVED: That**

- (1) in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules, the contracts for the transportation service outlined in the report be awarded to the most economically advantageous tender for each contract; and
- (2) the decision to award the transportation services contracts as detailed in paragraph 12.1 is urgent for the reasons set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report and not therefore subject to call-in.

## 32 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING - LEASOWE

Councillor Pat Hackett introduced a report by the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment Children's Services which indicated that Unity in Our Community had applied to the Council to be formally designated as a Neighbourhood Forum to enable them to prepare a statutory Neighbourhood Development Plan for Leasowe. Public consultation had taken place in accordance with the Delegated Decision published on 26 February 2014, to comply with national regulations.

As no substantive representations were received, the report recommended that Unity in our Community is designated as the Neighbourhood Planning Forum for the Leasowe Neighbourhood Area and that the designation was published in accordance with Regulations 7 and 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The designation of Unity in our Community and of the Neighbourhood area of 'Leasowe' required a resolution of Full Council.

### **RESOLVED: That**

- (1) Cabinet recommends to Council that Unity in our Community be formally designated as the statutory neighbourhood planning forum for the neighbourhood area of Leasowe shown on the plan attached to the report; and**
- (2) the designation and associated documents are published in accordance with Regulations 7 and 10 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.**

## 33 GARDEN WASTE CONTRACT AWARD

Councillor Bernie Mooney introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment which stated that, on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, Cabinet approved Wirral Council join an existing green waste composting contract between April and October 2014, currently let by Sefton Council.

This enabled Wirral Council to take part in a collaborative procurement exercise with all other Merseyside districts (Minute 95 refers). At that time, Members requested Officers to report back to Cabinet on the outcome of exploring an in-house option. These requests pre-date the revision of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules that came into force December 2013.

The report detailed the outcome of that procurement exercise and recommended Members accept the preferred bidder tender. It also concluded that an in-house option to compost our own garden waste was not viable at this time. The value of the tender to Wirral over the two year core contract

period is approximately £600k (depending on tonnage variations). Accepting the preferred bidder would ensure that Wirral enjoys the “economies of scale” of a large contract and limits the impact of increased processing costs that this industry has experienced over recent years.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment be requested to liaise with Sefton Council’s Director of Streetscene and conclude the procurement exercise with the intent of entering into contract with the preferred bidder for the period of 2 years, plus 3 x one-year extension options, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014;**
- (2) the revenue saving of £22.5k from 2014/15 reflecting the surplus funds arising from this procurement exercise; and**
- (3) the future possibility to carry out the composting process in-house as outlined in Section 5.1 of the report and requests that the commercial viability of operating a windrow composting facility be explored within the lifetime of the new contract be noted.**

**34 POTHOLE FUNDING**

Councillor Stuart Whittingham introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment which sought approval to accept a grant from the Department for Transport (DfT) in the sum of £462,452 and further sets out the proposed approach to using this funding for Cabinet approval.

The maintenance of public highways is a statutory duty for the Council as local highway authority.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the grant from the Department for Transport in the sum of £462,452 be accepted and the proposed programme based on the approach outlined in section 3.0 of this report be approved.**

**35 REVIEW OF BIFFA CONTRACT EXTENSION PROPOSAL**

This item has been deferred for further consideration.

**36 CORPORATE EQUALITY PLAN 2014-2017**

Councillor Ann McLachlan introduced a report by the Chief Executive which indicated that the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) 2011 stated that public

bodies must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

The report sought Cabinet approval for the publishing and implementing of a new Council Equality Plan 2014-2017 (see Appendix 1 of the report), in line with the PSED 2011.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the publishing and implementation of the Council's new Equality Plan 2014-2017 be approved.**

37 **TRANSFORMATION OF LEISURE SERVICES SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES PRICING STRUCTURE**

Councillor Chris Meaden introduced a report by the Strategic Director Families and Wellbeing which stated that, in September 2013, Cabinet approved the outline of the Leisure Transformation Plan, which required savings in excess of £2m to be delivered by the end of financial year 2015/16. Considerable progress had been achieved including the development of a £2m capital improvement scheme which would see major improvements to Leisure Centres in the upcoming year.

Current prices for activities at the leisure facilities were very competitive when compared to other local authorities in the area and the discounts provided by the Council in the form of concessions were amongst the most generous in the region. At present, all of the discounts were available to everyone, whether or not they lived in Wirral. Even after the proposed changes, the Council would still be offering generous concessions when compared to other local authorities in the region.

The Council was determined to make all leisure facilities accessible and affordable and to continue to protect the most vulnerable people in the area. The challenge was how to maximise income (especially at peak times), without making the facilities unaffordable to those for who price is a genuine barrier to access.

The current pricing policy had evolved over many years, and was quite complex and needed to be simplified. Prices needed to be standardised across all Leisure Centres and the Council needed to be able to promote a very competitive and fair membership offer, which also allowed the Leisure Centres to maximise income from those who could afford to pay a fair market price.

At present, anyone over 60 or under 18 receives a discount (currently up to 50%), irrespective of where they live. Almost all local authorities now only offered major concessionary discounts to local residents.

The report identified a range of proposals which would increase the income generated at the Leisure Centres whilst achieving the Council's commitment to protect the most vulnerable and continue to offer some of the most generous special discounts to targeted groups of local people at specified times. If accepted, the new pricing policy would help to reduce the leisure subsidy further, but would also provide excellent value for money in facilities which will see over £2m of major investment from the Council within the next twelve months.

Price was not the main consideration when promoting the use of Leisure Centres for sport and physical activity to inactive people. The service needed to maximise revenue to ensure that the Council can continue to improve quality and afford to deliver the £2m investment programme and have sufficient funding to provide a range of highly targeted promotions and other activities which will encourage more local people to improve their health and wellbeing.

If implemented, the changes were anticipated to deliver an additional £500,000 worth of income between implementation and the end of the financial year 2016/17.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the general approach and key principles, as set out below be approved as follows;**
  - Identify and deliver changes to the pricing and concessions policy that can deliver additional income of £500,000 by the end of 2016/17 as part of the Leisure Transformation Programme and savings requirement of £2m.**
  - Maximise the revenue that can be generated from the increase in quality and capacity that will be delivered by the £2m investment programme.**
  - Preserve the Council's commitment to providing high quality facilities and services which are affordable and accessible.**
  - Target concessions at people who live in Wirral.**
  - Target concessions at those for whom price is a genuine barrier to access.**

- Simplify and standardise prices for all casual pay and play activities so that the pricing policy can be communicated and marketed far more effectively.
- Provide a discount of at least 25% on pay and play activities for Older People (aged 65 + years), Young People aged under 18 and students in full time education, the registered disabled and people on benefits and all former armed service personnel.
- Change the Invigor8 membership benefits package to introduce new products to launch from September 2014, that introduces peak/off peak memberships, with the effect that Passport holders have their access restricted to off peak times unless they chose to pay an additional "peak time" supplement of £2 per session.
- Protecting the free / reduced price access for Passport holders for all activities at all facilities for off peak usage
- Retain free swimming during school holidays for Young People aged under 18 who live in the Wirral.
- Retain free swimming during morning times (Monday to Friday 7am – 12noon) for Older persons who live in Wirral.
- Target free use for currently serving and members of the Armed Forces (including the territorial army and reservists) who are from Wirral and former service personnel who have suffered a disabling injury when in the services and are in receipt of disability benefit. Retain present Armed Forces discounts until September 2014. Those who will no longer meet the criteria after this date convert to Corporate Invigor8 Membership, with the benefit of a discount of at least 25%.
- Introduce a new programme of one to one support for all qualifying service personnel and work more closely with other agencies to produce a newsletter offering advice and support and promoting other benefits.
- Protect all concessions and discounts for Looked After Children, their siblings and carers.
- Protect free swimming for all children under 5, as at present.
- Protect the benefit of unlimited swimming as part of the relevant Invigor8 packages.

(2) Officers in consultation the Portfolio Holder for Leisure , Culture and Tourism and the Leisure Transformation Board be delegated to complete the details of the of the new pricing and Invigor8 scheme and to implement agreed changes.

## SOFT MARKET TESTING EXERCISE - GOLF COURSES

Councillor Chris Meaden introduced a report by the Strategic Director for Families and Wellbeing which highlighted the results of the soft market testing exercise completed in May 2014 which demonstrated interest from specialist golf operators in taking over the management and maintenance of the Wirral golf courses excluding Hoylake Municipal Golf Course. The market response indicated that it was possible to protect the Council's requirement for affordable and accessible "pay and play" golf whilst eliminating Council subsidy, which is currently £330k per annum including course maintenance.

The report sought approval to progress to the next stage – which involves a more formal procurement process to secure detailed proposals for the granting of a lease and concession agreement for up to 25 years. No final decision or commitment is required at this stage. If approval is given, more detailed engagement with staff, trade unions and other stakeholders will commence.

Other Councils have found that similar arrangements can eliminate subsidy entirely (and in some cases attract a concession income for the Council). Liverpool City Council have achieved this recently and the arrangement will generate investment in the courses and facilities whilst protecting affordable pay and play golf for local people.

The market response to the soft market testing indicated that operators will only be willing to take full trading risk if they manage and maintain the courses and operate the golf concession. The standards required for course maintenance will be set out in the formal agreements, but clearly the operators will expect to provide high quality in order to achieve the level of usage they will need for the concession to be viable.

Currently, the Council operates and maintains the following Golf facilities:

- Arrowe Park Golf Course
- Hoylake Golf Course (note that this course was excluded from the scope of the market testing)
- Brackenwood Golf Course
- Warren Golf Course
- Wallasey Beach mini golf
- Arrowe Park pitch and putt, and
- Kings Parade crazy golf

The provision of golf transferred to the Leisure Services section in February 2014 from the Technical Services Department.

In order to secure the best possible outcome, officers have worked closely with Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C). This collaborative approach is in

line with the agreement reached by both authorities to work more closely together. By widening the scope for operators to express interest in specific courses, it has been established that economies of scale are likely to apply when groups of courses can be managed together. That said, the next stage of work will result in specific proposals that may involve one or more operators (if this presents better value).

The current revenue subsidy for Golf course provision is forecasted to be £440,050 in 2014/15. Income has fallen significantly during the last two years across all areas of golf, and the level of subsidy may well increase in the future as usage declines. Significant investment is required simply to maintain roundage at current levels. There is expected to be a £50k minimum increase in golf income this year as a result of re-branding the golf package and additional interest generated by the Open Golf tournament at the Royal Liverpool in July 2014.

For the purposes of the soft market testing exercise, Hoylake Municipal Golf Course was excluded from the process, as it is thought possible that a local solution may prove better value and this option needs to be explored separately in the wider context of golf development in Wirral.

**RESOLVED:**

**The reasons for the procurement of golf facilities be noted and approved, and that appropriate reporting mechanisms will be put in place, including a final report to be presented to Elected Members before any award is made. By entering into the next stage of the process, the Council will not be committing themselves to awarding a concession agreement.**

39 **DISPOSAL OF LAND TO THE REAR OF PENSBY PARK, FISHERS LANE, PENSBY**

Councillor Adrian Jones introduced a report by the Head of Universal and Infrastructure Services, to declare the former school playing fields, to the rear of Pensby Park Resource Centre, Fishers Lane, Pensby a surplus asset and seek authority to its disposal. Permission from the Secretary of State to dispose of former community school land is also required. The matter was being reported to Cabinet as the potential sales receipt was anticipated to be well in excess of the threshold for delegated decisions.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the former Pensby Park playing fields be declared surplus and authority be given to disposal using the Council's appointed property consultants; and**



- (2) an application to the Secretary of State be made for the disposal of the land.