

COUNCIL

Tuesday, 24 February 2015

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Steve Foulkes) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Les Rowlands)

Councillors	RL Abbey	P Hackett	C Povall
	T Anderson	J Hale	D Realey
	E Boulton	P Hayes	L Reecejones
	A Brighthouse	A Hodson	L Rennie
	P Brightmore	K Hodson	D Roberts
	C Carubia	M Hornby	J Salter
	P Cleary	T Johnson	H Smith
	W Clements	AER Jones	Tony Smith
	J Crabtree	C Jones	W Smith
	M Daniel	S Kelly	C Spriggs
	G Davies	A Leech	J Stapleton
	P Davies	AR McLachlan	M Sullivan
	WJ Davies	M McLaughlin	A Sykes
	P Doughty	C Meaden	J Walsh
	D Elderton	D Mitchell	G Watt
	G Ellis	B Mooney	S Whittingham
	L Fraser	C Muspratt	J Williamson
	P Gilchrist	S Niblock	I Williams
	JE Green	T Norbury	KJ Williams
	R Gregson	M Patrick	S Williams

Apologies Councillors B Berry T Pilgrim
C Blakeley P Williams

107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / RESTRICTIONS ON VOTING

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 Niblock, Lesley Rennie, Denise Roberts and Jean Stapleton declared a personal interest in all agenda items by virtue of their membership of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Lesley Rennie, Steve Williams, P Brightmore and C Muspratt declared a personal interest in all agenda items by virtue of their appointments as Governors of Special Schools.

108 **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced the following two events which were taking place in aid of the Mayor's Charity.

- Charity Bag Pack in Morrison's Store in New Brighton 14 March 2015
11am till 3pm
- Spotlight on Youth, 22 March 2015, Floral Pavilion. Members wishing to attend were urged to contact the Mayor's Office for details.

109 **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

110 **PETITIONS**

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

Councillor Wendy Clements on behalf of 43 signatories regarding the state of the alleyway behind the shops on Greasby Road.

Councillor Gerry Ellis on behalf of 158 signatories, requesting the extension of parking time on Acacia Grove

Councillor Gerry Ellis on behalf of 641 signatories requesting Library Services at Hoylake to be retained.

Councillor Dave Mitchell on behalf of 18 signatories regarding the parking problems on Stoke Close

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

111 **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)**

112 **COUNCIL BUDGET**

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 136, 145, 137 to 138 and 147 of 10 February 2014, duly seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan (Deputy Leader) –

- (i) Minute 136 (Cabinet – 10 February 2015)
Revenue Budget 2015/16, Council tax Levels 2015/16 and Council Tax for 2015/16**

RESOLVED:

That the following Budget Resolution be agreed and recommended to Budget Council:

BUDGET RESOLUTION 2015/16

Cabinet notes the following:

1. In spite of the continuing draconian cuts by the Tory-led government amounting to £151m since 2010, this Council has protected front-line services and welcomes the fact that in 2015/16 no Library, Children's Centre or One Stop Shop will close.
2. Cabinet welcomes the fact that, in spite of inheriting an overspend of £17m from the previous administration, Labour will deliver a balanced budget in 2015/16.

GROWTH

3. In spite of the unprecedented cuts in the Council's budget, Cabinet is able to recommend the following growth items in the period 2015/18

which will allow us to meet our corporate priorities (these are set out in Appendix 2 of the Acting Section 151 Officer's report). These include the following:-

Protecting vulnerable people

£6.8m to address demographic growth in Children's and Adults' Services.

£400,000 to address homelessness and fund the Community Safety Team.

Narrowing the inequalities gap

£600,000 to address property conditions in the private sector and promote housing and growth.

£356,000 for Selective Licensing pilot scheme in four areas of the Borough to improve private sector housing standards.

£1.5m capital for a new house building programme which continues into 2015/16.

£1.9m to continue support to schools previously funded by the Education Services Grant cut by the government.

Economic Growth

£808,000 capital to provide assistance to businesses.

£7m investment, primarily from grant, to replace the Dock Bridges.

£4m of capital to install LED lighting throughout the Borough.

£2m of capital investment into Highways (over and above Government funding).

Improving staff pay

£2.5m growth has been identified for 2015/16 to fully fund the national pay award for staff. This runs from January 2015 to March 2016.

£400,000 growth is included in the budget for 2015/16 rising to £800,000 by 2017/18 to increase the pay of social workers in recognition of the importance of safeguarding children, young people and adults.

4. Cabinet notes that there is a resource of £1.5m available for allocating in 2015/16 and that, whilst an additional £614,000 allocated as part of Wirral's Revenue Support grant is welcome, this pales into

insignificance compared to the £24m which the government has cut from Wirral's Revenue Support Grant in 2015/16. This administration has a long-standing commitment to protecting front-line services and helping vulnerable people. Cabinet therefore proposes to allocate this funding as follows:-

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour - £365,200

Cabinet is determined to address the issue of anti-social behaviour which residents tell us is a key issue in many parts of the Borough. This entails being tough on the consequences of anti-social behaviour, as well as investing in facilities such as the proposed Wirral Youth Zone which will tackle the causes of this problem. We are therefore proposing the following comprehensive package of measures at a total cost of £365,200. This will be implemented by working together with our key partners, notably the police, and will be subject to a detailed evaluation to determine the impact of this additional funding.

- **Employ two additional Anti-Social Behaviour officers - £75,000**

Initially the matter with the highest priority is to provide an additional 2 ASB Enforcement Officers in the existing ASB team. This would result in a model of 2 ASB Enforcement Officers per constituency area and this investment would enable a far quicker and more improved response to locational issues of ASB. It would also lead to speedier case resolution, dealing with the perpetrators more quickly and providing a resolution to the victims.

- **Establish an Out of Hours Environmental Health Officer rota - £30,000**

Another significant ASB matter is that which relates to nuisance environmental health matters, for example – noise, light, smells, etc. This option seeks to support the setting up an Out of Hours standby Environmental Health Officer (EHO) rota. This would allow for an EHO to be on call to respond to those noise complaints outside normal working hours. This officer would also be able to issue Environmental Protection Notices direct to offenders and also install monitoring equipment, etc.

- **Establish Co-ordinator for Neighbourhood Justice Scheme - £45,000**

There is a pressing need for the Neighbourhood Justice Scheme to have a full-time Co-ordinator to oversee and drive forward this initiative. At present, the ASB Manager and a Police Sergeant are managing it, but they are unable to dedicate enough time, without major impact on other critical service delivery. This scheme has the real potential to reduce demand, change behaviour and culture across the Borough. A bid is being prepared to the

Police and Crime Commissioner when her fund for Restorative Justice is released shortly, but there is no guarantee that Wirral would be successful. This item would fund the secondment of a police officer (preferably a Sergeant) into the Corporate and Community Safety Team.

- **Supporting the victims of ASB - £20,000**

In dealing with ASB, all the effort appears to be concentrated on investigating, identifying and dealing with the perpetrator. There is often little support with regard to the victims. In an attempt to redress this balance, an amount of £20,000 would be provided to engage the services of a Victim Support Mediation Service. This service would work directly with supporting the victims of ASB, which would also result in increasing the perception with those victims that we are tackling ASB.

- **Funding additional StaySafe Operations - £35,200**

One of the most effective ASB reduction programmes with regard to public perception and confidence is the StaySafe Operations. These are concentrated multi-agency operations, where teams of police, ASB officers, youth support workers, etc. saturate a particular area in a High Visibility manner engaging with youths and residents in that area. Youths who are engaged in high risk activities – drinking, drugs, etc. or those that are seen to be carrying out ASB, are taken back to a ‘place of safety’ where professionals are able to deal with these issues and where the carers and/or parents of these youths are called in to discuss their behaviour. The cost of a typical StaySafe operation is £2,200. This option would fund an additional 4 StaySafe Operations in each Constituency Area over the next 12 months.

- **Capital Investment - Funding additional CCTV cameras and other equipment - £100,000**

Following a number of years of reducing ASB spending, there is now a critical need to equip the team correctly to ensure they can tackle ASB cases more effectively. This includes replacing the 2 ASB team vehicles, replacing the Police and Criminal Evidence recording equipment, providing additional mobile CCTV cameras and most importantly investing in a modern electronic case management system. The investment in this re-equipping of resources will enable the team to operate far more effectively, and more importantly, allow them to resolve more ASB cases by being able to capture more evidence.

- **Monitoring of Council Owned CCTV Cameras - £100,000**

Working in partnership with the police, Cabinet agrees to increase the monitoring of the Council’s CCTV system by appointing additional staff to be

based in the Control Room at Cheshire Lines. The details to be reported back to Cabinet.

- **Provide dedicated funding to Constituency Committees to tackle ASB - £60,000**

In support of the constituency committee process and to engage the committees in tackling ASB in their areas, it is proposed to make available a fund of £60,000 to be split equally amongst the 4 Constituency Committees. The ASB team would work with the Constituency Committees and produce action plans to tackle ASB in their area. Constituency Committees will be offered a menu of ASB prevention and intervention activities to enable them to choose what they feel would benefit their areas. Some examples on this menu are – Youth alcohol testing programmes, additional youth provision, sports development workers, enhanced household security campaigns, and increased CCTV camera provision.

Local Welfare Assistance Fund - £900,000

This fund provides financial assistance to people in dire need. The government transferred responsibility for administering this from DWP to the Council together with a grant of £1.1m. The government announced that this grant was being cut with effect from March 2015. The Council has £600,000 in a reserve for this fund. Cabinet intends to make this available together with the anticipated underspend in 2014/15 of £300,000 to create a fund totalling £900,000 available in 2015/16. This will provide a local scheme to fill the gap left by the government's unwillingness to assist the most vulnerable in our communities. It is proposed that the 2014/15 policy be continued until the end of July 2015. In the interim, Cabinet asks the Scrutiny Review Group which has been set up to look at this fund to meet in order to make recommendations as to how this resource should be allocated.

Discretionary Housing Payments - £300,000

The government recently announced that Wirral's Grant for Discretionary Housing Payments would be cut from £996,000 to £736,000 in 2015/16. Cabinet deplores this cut as yet another attack on the poor. In order to ensure that people continue to receive help with their housing needs, Cabinet agrees to invest £300,000 of Council funding to bridge the gap created by this misguided decision.

Appoint Additional Dog Wardens - £102,500

In order to tackle the prevalence of dog fouling across the Borough, Cabinet is proposing to increase the resources in this area by £102,500. It is generally accepted that a mixed service delivery model of both enforcement and education produces the best results with regards to reducing the prevalence

of dog fouling. The Council is pursuing the adoption of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) across the 4 constituency areas which will be in place by summer at the latest. These PSPOs will permit a more rigorous enforcement programme. In preparation to ensure that the Council is ready to use these new Orders as soon as they are live, it will be necessary to reinforce the existing dog fouling team by a further 4 enforcement officers at a cost of £72,500. This will result in each constituency having 2 dedicated Dog Fouling Wardens.

This proposal is an enhancement of existing plans to second a senior community patrol officer to the Waste and Environmental Services team, in order to deliver the “We’re Watching You” dog fouling campaign, undertake educational visits and gather intelligence from the public to assist in targeted enforcement activities. This item is also cost neutral as the budget will be substituted from the Sinking Fund.

To optimise the effectiveness of this saving option there will be a requirement to have a small marketing and advertisement budget of £15,000 per annum for 2 years. A review will be undertaken at the end of this period.

Williamson Art Gallery - £250,000

The Williamson Art Gallery is a vital element of Wirral’s cultural offer. The Council has been working with a group of supporters, including the Friends of the Williamson, and the National Museums Liverpool, to put the Williamson on a stable financial footing. In the short term this will require an additional £250,000. Looking to the future, it is our intention **to work with the Friends** Group and others to look at operating the Williamson under a new model such as a Trust.

Floral Pavilion - £200,000

Cabinet wishes to reduce the subsidy to the Floral Pavilion with a view to it becoming commercially self-sufficient within the next twelve months. To enable this transition to take place will require additional funding. Cabinet will therefore commit growth of £200,000 to this facility with a view to exploring a new service delivery model going forward.

Constituency Committees - £200,000

Labour introduced Constituency Committees in 2013 as part of a new Neighbourhood Working agenda. We have been impressed with the work each committee has done to enable local people to have a greater influence over how the Council spends its funding at a local level. When we started this programme we allocated £50,000 for ‘seed corn’ funding, focussed on tackling poverty and deprivation, which we hoped would be matched by other public agencies. Cabinet will continue to devolve funding to each Constituency

Committee, however, we would request the Acting Chief Executive to undertake an evaluation of the work of Constituency Committees, and to report back to the Cabinet on what additional activities may be devolved and how far each Committee has tackled deprivation in the Borough and whether there is a case for weighting the funding going forward based on levels of deprivation. This funding is in addition to the £60,000 allocated to Constituency Committees to tackle ASB and £40,000 to carry out community clean-ups (see Section 6).

Using Business Rates flexibilities to incentivise employers to pay the Living Wage - £50,000

The Council has the discretion to award discounts in national non-domestic rates to businesses under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. To award discounts under this provision a business must meet criteria set by the Council. The cost would be charged in accordance with the business rate allocation from the Collection Fund, i.e. the Council would pay 49%, Fire 1% and Central Government 50%. If the Council contributed £50,000 then the scheme total fund would be £100,000.

It is therefore proposed that £50,000 be set aside to create a total fund of £100,000 and to offer small and medium sized businesses (10-250 employees) the opportunity of obtaining a discount on their business rates if they become an accredited Living Wage employer. The details of how such a scheme will operate will be reported to Cabinet.

5. Cabinet has also identified additional funding for the following:-

Reduced car parking charges - £313,000

Following careful consideration of the recommendations set out in the Car Parking Scrutiny Review Report presented to Cabinet in November 2014, Cabinet proposes the following measures, for an initial 12 month trial period, to help local businesses and support the viability of Wirral’s shopping and commercial centres:

- i. Simplified charges at all Council car parks for a 12 month trial period April 2015 to March 2016 which includes the removal of the 5p tariff denomination***

Proposed tariff:	Car parks:
Tariff A – shopper car parks: Up to half hour – £0.50 Up to 1 hour - £1.00 Up to 2 hours - £1.60 Up to 3 hours - £2.10	Barton Street Cook Street Europa Square Wilbraham Street Oliver Street 1

Up to 4 hours - £3.30 Up to 5 hours - £4.10 All day - £4.50	Exmouth Street Atherton Street Europa Pools Hamilton Building
Tariff B – long stay car parks: Up to 1 hour - £1.00 All day - £4.50	Hinson Street Duncan Street Woodside Approach
Tariff C – long stay car parks: Up to half hour – £0.50 Up to 1 hour - £1.00 All day - £2.00	Elgin Way Quarry Bank Street Upper Mount Avenue
Tariff D – long stay car parks: Coaches - £5.00 Up to 1 hour - £1.00 Up to 2 hours - £1.60 Up to 3 hours - £2.10 All day - £3.00	Price Street

ii. A new significantly reduced Pilot Tariff for the following shopper car parks for a 12 month trial period April 2015 to March 2016

Proposed tariff:	Car parks:
Pilot Tariff – shopper car parks: Up to half hour – Not Applicable Up to 1 hour - £0.70 Up to 2 hours - £0.80 Up to 3 hours - £1.20 Up to 4 hours - £2.10 Up to 5 hours - £3.30 All day - £4.50	Seaview Road Liscard Village Liscard Crescent Rocky Lane Pye Road Puddydale Mount Avenue Dee Lane Concourse

Cabinet also requests officers to progress the testing of new technology such as “Phone to Pay” as highlighted in the Car Parking Scrutiny Review report and carry out further consultation with traders’ associations to look at the feasibility of a “Parking Cashback” scheme that allows shoppers to park and have the cost of their parking ticket refunded by participating outlets. It is anticipated that these revised charges will lead to a reduction in income of £313,000 which will be found from balances. As part of this new policy it is hoped that businesses will work with the Council to ensure the success of the pilot. A review of the impact of these revised charges will be undertaken towards the end of the year and reported to Cabinet.

Continuation of Council Apprenticeship Programme – £218,000

Cabinet proposes the continuation of the Council's apprenticeship programme which will fund 12 apprenticeship places at a cost of £218,000. This will be funded from the Children and Young People's Department.

CREATING A CLEANER AND GREENER WIRRAL

6. Cabinet is mindful of the fact that the Waste Development or 'sinking fund' is 'one off money' and that it is therefore important to allocate as much of the fund as possible on initiatives that can be sustained (or have a sustainable outcome) once the fund runs out. Cabinet therefore proposes the following initiatives which will create a cleaner and greener Wirral. They will also directly improve recycling performance, and hence are fully eligible to be funded from the sinking fund under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed with the Waste Disposal Authority. In addition, all initiatives are designed to engender sustainable improvements that can be realised after initial periods of investment.

A. Removal of charges for replacement grey wheeled bin recycling bins (140 litre, 240 litre and 360 litre)

Currently, residents are charged £37 to replace a lost, stolen or damaged wheeled bin. Over time, many residents have simply not replaced grey bins in order to avoid this cost. Those residents without grey bins are unlikely to be recycling regularly. If residents do not have enough capacity in their green residual bin for all their waste, it can also cause waste to escape into the local environment as bins are overfilled, or waste is left uncontained.

It is proposed that all grey bins are provided free of charge over the next two years. Residents should be required to sign for their bin and undertake to store it securely and use it correctly (via the serving of a notice). Bins will also be delivered pre-numbered.

Large households should also be allowed to upsize their grey recycling bin free of charge if they feel they could recycle more. Second hand bins will be recirculated wherever possible to reduce costs to the Council.

It is estimated that up to 4,000 households who should have a grey bin do not currently have one. We are also likely to receive around 1,000 calls in 2015/16 from other residents requesting replacements.

Funding required: £180,000 over a 2 year period.

B. Reduction of charge for replacement residual (green) bins

Residents are more likely to buy a green bin if theirs needs replacing, or they do not have one. It is therefore recommended that the charging policy remains in place for green bins. However, it is proposed that the cost of a green bin be reduced from £37 to £24 so that it is more in line with other districts and more affordable to more households.

Funding required: £80,000 over a two year period

C. Bin Repair Service

The bin repair service trialled over the last 18 months has resulted in over 1,200 bins being repaired successfully (bin lid/axles/wheels), saving the tax payers of Wirral £44,400. It is proposed that this service is formally launched and offered free of charge to residents for the next two years.

Funding required: £45,000 for two years (1 x FTE, vehicle and spare parts over 2 years)

D. Increasing capture rates for recycling on the co-mingled scheme

Research carried out by the Waste Team has proven that many households do not have an internal system within their households to segregate their waste and this leads to less recycling being captured. It is proposed that re-usable bags for all households are issued alongside a comprehensive campaign to re-engage people in recycling of all 5 materials. The design of the bag has already been determined through extensive piloting and with consultation with members of the public.

The campaign messages will vary depending upon the levels and quality of recycling we are receiving from various demographics. It is proposed to roll out the scheme borough wide to all households over a two year period, targeting areas that are recycling the least first.

This important campaign will help prepare residents for the next step change in our recycling schemes that will need to be implemented in April 2017 when Biffa are scheduled to replace the waste collection fleet. Households that actively and optimally engage in recycling will be most likely to accept and cope with any potential future changes (such as the **introduction of food** waste and further changes to the frequency or bin size for residual waste collections).

Funding required: £300,000 over two years (£150,000 per year).

E. Appoint four new Neighbourhood Recycling Officers

From 2015/16, resources will be set aside to completely fund 4 new full time Neighbourhood Recycling Officer roles. The roles will oversee all changes to recycling schemes and be instrumental in delivering behaviour change initiatives to ensure Wirral optimises its diversion of waste from landfill and reduces the burden of waste management costs. These posts are essential to helping Wirral achieve the 2020 recycling target of 50%.

Funding Required: £170,000 for two years (initially)

F. Community Clean-ups - £40,000

There have been a number of examples during this year where individuals and communities have come together to help clean up their local areas. We applaud the commitment and pride shown by individuals and communities and would wish to support them to continue to do so. We therefore propose allocating £10,000 to each of the four constituency committees to enable local groups to pay for the cost of skips to be provided to support these local clean-ups. Constituency Committee managers will work with staff from the Council's waste team to quickly develop processes for this option to be introduced

The total allocation of the sinking fund proposed by the above initiatives is £775,000. If the £400,000 already allocated to tackle alleyway dumping is added, together with the £72,500 for additional Dog Wardens, this makes a grand total of £1,247,500 out of the £6.7m fund. This leaves around £5m to invest in infrastructure required to realise the step changes in 2017 that will be introduced when the new fleet is commissioned. Details are still to be worked up collaboratively across the City Region but will possibly include the roll out of food waste collections.

COUNCIL TAX TO BE FROZEN IN 2015/16

7. Cabinet was pleased to be able to freeze the Council Tax last year and was able to do this because the Council Tax Freeze Grant was built into the Council's base budget. If the rules on the use of this grant continue for a further year we intend to recommend to Council that the Council Tax is frozen for a further year. Given that Council Tax are one of the largest bills residents face, Cabinet is pleased to be able to freeze Wirral's Council Tax for the second consecutive year which will help Wirral residents cope with the cost of living crisis.

NEW MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

8. This Council will be required to deliver £70m of additional savings over the next three years. This will require radical thinking around new models of service delivery, building on the company which is being proposed in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester around schools traded services and the local authority company which is being proposed for Day Centres for

people with learning disabilities. More integrated working will also be essential to deliver savings and maintain good quality services. Some useful work has already been done in using public health funding to help other services such as housing and environmental health deliver key outcomes. Integrated working between social care and health is a central feature of the Better Care Fund and implementing the new Care Act.

9. FUTURE YEARS

This budget focuses on 2015/16. Cabinet intends to review the Corporate Plan in July with a view to producing a new 3 year plan. This will look at how the Council will deliver, with its partners, future investments in local services for the period 2016 to 2019. Our main aims will continue to be protecting frontline services and delivering our corporate priorities.

CONCLUSION

In spite of the Tory-led government's unprecedented cuts in this Council's budget over the past five years, this Labour administration has protected front-line services, frozen the Council Tax for two consecutive years and invested in services for vulnerable people, programmes which tackle inequalities and action to create jobs, assist businesses, and create safer and greener communities. However, another five years of austerity will make it almost impossible to maintain even basic levels of public services. That is why this administration is totally opposed to the government's intention to return to 1930s levels of public spending. That is why this country needs a change of direction nationally and the return of a Labour government at the general election in May to restore fairness in the distribution of public funding and provide the progressive policies to deliver social justice and economic success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Cabinet recommends to Council a budget proposal for 2015/16 as follows:-**
 - a) That the savings 2015/18, set out at Appendix 1 of the Acting Section 151 Officer's report be confirmed.**
 - b) That the Budget Growth 2015/18, set out in Appendix 2 of the Acting Section 151 Officer's report be agreed and the detail built into the Budget.**
 - c) That the additional growth items identified in this resolution together with the proposals to be funded by the Waste Development Fund be agreed.**

- d) That the fees and charges be noted and delegated authority be given to the Acting Section 151 Officer to update the Council Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2015.
 - e) That delegated authority be given to the relevant Portfolio Holder, relevant Strategic Director and Director of Resources in respect of revising present charges particularly for leisure and cultural activities.
 - f) 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.
 - g) That the release of reserves by Directorates be agreed and transferred to the Remodelling Restructure Reserve.
 - h) 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 at Appendix 6 of the Acting Section 151 Officer's Report be noted.
2. Cabinet recommends to Council the Council Tax levels for 2015/16 as follows:-
- a) That, with reference to Sections 2.38 and 8.2 of the Acting Section 151 Officer's report, Wirral's Council Tax to be frozen for 2015/16.
 - b) That it be confirmed that the Wirral Council Tax will include the precepts from the Police Commissioner for Merseyside and from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.
 - c) That, having regard to the fact that the precepts may be determined after the Council has determined its Council Tax levels for 2015/16 authority be delegated to the Acting Section 151 Officer to publish the final Wirral Tax levels for 2015/16.
3. Cabinet recommends to Council for approval the statutory calculations associated with the decision to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant and there be no increase in the Wirral Council Tax element for 2015/16.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 9 December 2014

calculated the Council Tax Base 2015/16 for the whole of the properties in its area as 89,344.9 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);

a) £114,206,012 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2015/16 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:

i) £722,401,275 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) £608,195,263 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 (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.

b) £1,278.26 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as 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 – Basic Amount Of Council Tax Per Valuation Band

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 in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 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 Comparison For Referendum

	2014/15	2015/16	Change
	£	£	£
Band D	1,278.26	1,278.26	Nil

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have issued 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 as indicated in the tables.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police and Fire the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral (awaiting figures for Police and Fire)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

**(ii) Minute 145 (Cabinet – 10 February 2015)
Schools Budget 2015/16**

RESOLVED:

That having taken account of the views of the Schools Forum Cabinet recommends to Budget Council that:

- (1) the contributions to combined budgets be agreed;
- (2) the proposed reductions totalling £2.3m (£1.7m in 2015-16) be agreed;
- (3) the High Needs Contingency totalling £500,000 be agreed;
- (4) the reserves totalling £894,900 used to set the Schools Budget be agreed;
- (5) the submission of the Schools Funding Formula to the Education Funding Agency containing amendments to increase the unit value of funding for Looked After Children and to cap the unit value for Free School Meals / Deprivation is approved; and
- (6) that following the increase in High Needs place funding for Alternative Provision to £10,000 in September 2015, the Top Up element of funding be reduced by a matching amount – from £5,000 to £3,000 per annum;
- (7) the teaching staff, support officers, governors and officers be congratulated on all their hard and achievement towards the attainment results of their pupils.

**(iii) Minute 137 (Cabinet 10 February 2015)
Capital Programme and Financing 2015/18**

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the new bids as detailed in Appendix 4 be approved;
- (2) any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority that such grant(s) have actually been approved;
- (3) progress on delivering the Capital Programme be presented in accordance with the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements; and
- (4) the overall Capital Programme 2015/18 as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report be agreed and referred to Budget Council for approval.

**(iv) Minute 138 (Cabinet – 10 February 2015)
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/2016**

RESOLVED:

(A) That in respect of the Treasury Management Strategy 2015-18

- (1) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2015-18 be agreed
- (2) The Prudential Indicators be adopted
- (3) The Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be approved;
- (4) The Council Officers listed in Appendix G be authorised to approve payments from the Council's bank accounts for all treasury management activities; and
- (5) Referred to Budget Council for approval.

(B) That in respect of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015-18

- (1) The Medium Term Financial Strategy be agreed and referred to Budget Council for approval; and
- (2) Regular updates of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be reported to Cabinet.

**(v) Minute 147 (Cabinet – 10 February 2015)
Carbon Budget**

RESOLVED: That

- (1) progress towards the 2014/15 target included in Appendix A to the report be noted;

- (2) the Carbon Budget for 2015/16 be agreed and referred to Budget Council for approval;
- (3) the current Carbon Budget method be applied until the impacts of the corporate restructuring are assessed and reflected in the new Asset Management System and that Officers be instructed to report further to Members to recommend alterations as a result of these processes;
- (4) Managers are directed to ensure that Carbon Reduction Implications of projects and initiatives are assessed and reported as required by the standard report template. Impacts must be reported to the Building Services and Sustainability Section to support the carbon management process.

CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT

Proposed by Cllr. Jeff Green

Seconded by Cllr. Lesley Rennie

Wirral's Conservative Group welcomes the success of the Government's long-term economic plan and believes Wirral Council too must take what action it can to lock in recovery, growth, more jobs and better wages.

We note that the Council currently has £142 million 'Cash at Bank' including £87 million in reserves and a further £17 million in General Fund Balances.

Wirral Conservative Group's long term plan is to deliver first class services, which are affordable, sustainable and meet the needs of local people. Wherever possible we will do this through engagement with, and the empowerment of, individuals and communities in both the design and delivery of local services.

We will deliver a Council that:

- Keeps children and young people safe
- Supports the Government's Long Term Plan to increase private sector investment and employment in Wirral
- Reduces waste and keeps Council Tax low
- Cracks down on Benefit Fraud
- Unleashes the potential of all local residents to prioritise, design and improve the services that serve our neighbourhoods

Conservatives know that every pound the Council spends or hoards in its reserves and balances is money taken from the pockets and family budgets of hardworking Wirral Taxpayers and therefore it is incumbent on the Council to demonstrate it uses that money wisely and fairly in a way that is going to improve the lives of all of Wirral's residents.

The budget amendment we propose tonight will therefore result in a zero percent Wirral Council Tax increase for all Wirral residents and reinstate the Council's 'pensioner discount' to those living in Bands A, B, C & D aged over 70 who have contributed so much to Wirral throughout their lives.

Additional Expenditure

We note that today in Wirral there are a number of children reported as being at risk of child sexual exploitation without a nominated 'Catch 22' case worker to protect them.

1)	Invest, with immediate effect, £40,000 to employ an additional 'Catch 22' case worker to protect children at risk of child sexual exploitation	£40,000
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We note the Labour Administration's choice to make swingeing cuts to Wirral's network of Children's Centres. We believe a rushed consultation will do additional harm to this essential service and anything less than a three month consultation will be flawed.

2)	To ensure a full, extensive and inclusive consultation with staff the voluntary, community and faith sector and all stakeholders	£173,000
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Lyndale School

We reconfirm our commitment to all special schools in Wirral and we therefore draw attention of Council to our separate amendment designed to ensure Lyndale School remains open to serve some of the most vulnerable children in the Borough and will work with parents, staff and others to explore all possibilities for this very special school.

Dementia Services

The Government's National Dementia Challenge Work Programme superseded the National Dementia Strategy and focuses on 3 main areas:

bringing about improvements in health and care, creating dementia friendly communities and improving research.

We are committed to improving the quality of services available to people with dementia and their carers in Wirral. This is a priority for us.

We note the Council's shared commissioning exercise with the Clinical Commissioning Group has resulted in a lack of providers and a potential serious gap in services for Wirral residents.

3)	To ensure high quality day services are available to dementia sufferers we will make an additional investment to commission high quality dementia services and, a one off grant in order that local care providers can offer quality care environments and improvements through innovation in local care and technologies	£246,000 £254,000
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Integrating Health & Social Care

In order to drive forward the long term benefits to vulnerable people and the sustainability of Council and Health budgets we will invest in a shared Programme Team with Health to develop an integrated Social Care and NHS Trust.

4)	To use the Remodelling Reserve to fund 1 X Programme Manager, 2 X Project Managers 1 X Programme Support to drive forward the integration.	£200,000
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Increasing Employment

We note the Administration's budget contains an additional £1.2 million of spending on welfare payments. We believe the Government's welfare reforms have demonstrated beyond doubt the long term route out of welfare dependency is through employment.

5)	Reduce the Administration's welfare spending by £300,000. Add to £700,000 from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and introduce a targeted employment initiative; providing six months employment	£1,000,000
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	and training (at the Living Wage rate) to long term unemployed and to those whose health has been a barrier to employment	
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We welcome the Administration's 'cave-in' to Conservative, Liberal Democrat, local business and resident pressure and it's unceremonious U-Turn on car parking charges. However we believe the Council can go further to support our local shops and shopping areas, following the lead of the Coalition Government increasing the Business Rates Discount to £1,500 for retail and café units.

6)	Re-introduce the Conservative 2010 'Free After Three' initiative at all Council car parks and off street parking (with an evaluation after an initial 12 months).	£240,000
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Doing the basics well

Libraries are an essential part of local communities, they provide a safe place for those isolated within the community to meet and in some places the only link residents have with the Council. We believe the Administration's decision to cut £364,000 for library services has echoes of their ill-fated Strategic Asset Review and the subsequent Charteris report.

We also believe that all Community Library funding should be allocated to Constituency Committees for them to work with staff, Friends Groups and residents to determine local priorities and the opening hours most appropriate for their communities.

7)	We therefore re-instate Library funding in full	£364,00
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Wirral is rich in the number and quality of its local parks, gardens and open spaces. It is regrettable that the current Administration has ignored these much loved local assets. Conservatives are committed to establishing a long term programme, overseen by Friends Groups, communities and Constituency Committees.

8)	Establish a long term parks, gardens and open spaces improvement fund, allocated equally to each Constituency Committee	£400,000
	Rescind the Administration's increased charges to allotments, bowling greens and football pitches	£35,000

We note the reduction in the number of requests for the removal of large domestic items and the increase in fly tipping following the Labour Administration's choice to charge for the ERIC (Every Reasonable Item Collected) service, down from a peak of 18,000 calls to only 6,000 per year, since charges were introduced.

This amendment will therefore re-instate the large domestic items collection, recycle and disposal service (ERIC) as a free of charge service to Wirral domestic householders. The impact of this initiative on the environmental blight of fly tipping and recycling rates to be assessed after 12 months and this initiative be met from the Waste Development Fund.

9)	The ERIC service be re-established as free to all Wirral domestic householders	£400,000
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Conservatives are concerned about the level of fraudulent claims of benefits administered by the Council and welcomes the centralisation of the Fraud Team into DWP. However we believe that the Council will still require adequate capability in this area to crack down on any remaining benefit fraud including: Council Tax single person discounts, local Council Tax support scheme, Discretionary Housing payments, falsely claimed grants and procurements.

10)	Establish an Anti-Fraud Unit within the Resources Directorate	£60,000
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Council Tax

As the Government's long term plan is working, pensioners who have played by the rules, worked hard, paid their taxes and now find themselves on a fixed income should be provided with the support they need to enjoy their retirement. We disagree with the Labour proposal to remove the local pensioner discount to households in Council Tax bands A-D

11)	Continue local pensioner discount to over 70's households in Council Tax bands A-D for a further year.	£600,000
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Savings

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.

Delete the following items:

	As Trades Unions are wealthy organisations we do not believe the Council Taxpayer, or school budgets, should be expected to fund Full Time Trades Union Officials	£125,000
	Noting the Administration's wish to spend in combination an additional £1.2 million (£900,000 Local Welfare Assistance Fund & £300,000 Discretionary Housing Payments) this total be reduced, pro rata, to £900,000 and the resultant saving be utilised for the Targeted Employment Initiative	£300,000

	Reduce Councillors Training Budget from £36,900 to £6,900	£30,000
	Remove 'Alternative Support to Councillors' Budget and the free taxi facility for journeys to and from the Town Hall	£73,300
	Withdraw from membership of SIGOMA	£3,000

Whilst not providing a saving this year, we believe savings will be available in the future and that Council Officers should develop a detailed plan to reduce the overall number of Councillors by one third.

Reduction of 2.5 posts from the 14.9 FTE Strategy, Policy, Performance and Scrutiny Function	£100,000
Reduction of 2.5 posts from the 18.1 FTE Press, Marketing and Design Team	£100,000
Reduce the Officer Training Budget and reduction in Organisational Development Staffing budget of £612,000 to	£100,000

£512,000	
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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 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.

Following the failures of the Shared Services and Merged Services projects it would now appear the Council is only left with the 'Future Council' project which encompasses the 'Remodelling of Wirral Council'.

We are 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.

	<p>We will vary the savings target to be delivered from 'Transforming Wirral Council' from £9.4 million to £10.4 million. 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 over the next two years. To allow time for the project team to put in place the required project management oversight and rigour we will back load the savings.</p>	<p>£300,000</p>
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Balances & Reserves

	<p>We note that the Prime Minister and 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 we believe 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 2015/16 is unlikely and that they can be reduced by 10%</p>	<p>£1.7 million</p>
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releasing £1.7 million to support the Budget Amendment.	
Reserves:	
We believe that the Remodelling Reserve rather than simply being used by the Administration to pay for redundancies and IT spending should be used to invest in delivering high quality and efficient services for the people of Wirral. The investment to develop an integrated Social Care and NHS Trust fulfils this purpose.	£200,000
Working Neighbourhood Fund (utilised for targeted employment initiative)	£700,000
Waste Development Fund (utilised for a free ERIC service)	£400,000
<i>We note that this leaves £14 million in the Remodelling Reserve, £5 million in the Waste Development Fund and £16 million in the General Fund Balances.</i>	

Council Loans

Conservatives believe that the money raised from hard working Wirral Council Taxpayers should be used for the benefit of 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 (£8 million) can be recalled and Taxpayer'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:

Keep children and vulnerable people safe

Financially protect pensioners over 70 living in Band A-D households

Reduce welfare spending and increase employment opportunities

Crack down on Benefit Fraud

Provide the tools to integrate Health & Social Care services

Unleash the potential of all local residents to prioritise, design and improve the services that serve our neighbourhoods

Reduce waste and result in a zero percent Wirral Council Tax increase

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 9 December 2014 calculated the Council Tax Base 2015/16 for the whole of the properties in its area as 89,344.9 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);

- a) £114,206,012 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2015/16 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:
- i) £725,401,275 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) £611,195,263 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 (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- b) £1,278.26 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as 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 – Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band

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
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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 in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 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 Comparison For Referendum

	2014/15	2015/16	Change
	£	£	£
Band D	1,278.26	1,278.26	Nil

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have issued 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 as indicated in the tables.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police and Fire the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral (awaiting figures for Police and Fire)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

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

That for the financial year 2015/16 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 2015 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2015 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.

CONSERVATIVE GROUP SCHOOLS BUDGET AMMENDMENT

Proposed by: Councillor Wendy Clements

Seconded by: Councillor Paul Hayes

Council recognises the unique and caring environment provided by The Lyndale School to children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. Council acknowledges the value of this facility and affirms its belief that such provision should remain at The Lyndale School

Council, having regard to the overwhelming support given to the campaign to keep The Lyndale School open by the public of Wirral recognises that The Lyndale School should remain open and wishes to bring to an end the anguish and uncertainty that has been heaped on pupils and their parents and

carers throughout this whole sorry saga.

Accordingly, Council requests Cabinet to issue a Revocation Notice to consult on proposals to stop all current and planned action being taken to close The Lyndale School immediately. Should this be approved, Cabinet is further requested to instruct officers to commence negotiations with the Schools Forum and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the High Needs Funding Formula so as to identify and secure adequate funding to enable The Lyndale School to remain open from 1 April 2016. The revised High Needs Funding Formula shall be expressly detailed in the Schools Budget for 2016/17.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP BUDGET AMENDMENT

Proposed by: Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by: Councillor Stuart Kelly

Council notes the Cabinet recommendation and the proposals to restore the cuts in services in a number of areas such as community patrol, dog wardens, the Williamson Art Gallery and car parks. Council notes that these areas were included by Cabinet in previous budgets without sufficient assessment of their impact. Council notes that the targets set at the time have proved unrealistic in practice, caused unnecessary uncertainty, led to lack of continuity in service provision and stored up problems which now need to be addressed.

Council, however, considers that the opportunity has been missed to reconsider further service areas where past Cabinet decisions have resulted in further problems, most notably in the rushed reduction in library opening hours, mismanagement of faulty street lighting and reduced capacity to tackle the blight of dog fouling on our streets and playing fields.

Council believes that insufficient attention is paid to reserves and balances. Council has a duty to residents to ensure that these are regularly reviewed so that funds do not remain unused for lengthy periods of time.

Council, therefore, resolves that Cabinet Minute 136 be varied as follows:

1. Library Services

That £75,000 be allocated from the Remodelling Reserve to enable the successful implementation of the changes and the transfer to a revised service. The Cabinet embarked upon an over optimistic timetable to reduce library hours. The strategy has risks, especially where there are no Friends' Groups, with the prospect that local people are frustrated and services withdrawn. The funding is needed to develop a more flexible approach and allow the Council to work with staff, library users and user groups. This

approach should seek advice and support from The Reader Organisation as appropriate. In addition to this one-off funding, Council recognises that the timescale for the implementation of the proposed operating pattern for libraries is ambitious and, to be successful, the changes need to be implemented in a timely manner. Council also notes that within General Fund balances, there is an amount set aside to cover delays in the implementation of budget savings.

2. Street Lighting

Council believes that £30,000 should be identified for the re-introduction of night time scouting inspections. Since the removal of night time scouting, Streetscene has relied on the public to report lights that were out. However, this has caused further confusion. This funding is required in order to resolve this uncertainty and to ensure that stability can be brought to the street lighting service. It would also enable accurate monitoring of the contractor's performance in maintaining the street lighting service.

3. Public Health & Healthy Homes Scheme

Council notes that the Public Health Budget has £195,579 of uncommitted resources. Council recalls that the Cabinet reduced the successful Healthy Homes Scheme budget which enabled people to improve their heating systems and their health. Council believes that £102,234 removed by Cabinet in July 2014 should be restored to continue to tackle fuel poverty from this uncommitted resource, with a particular emphasis on poor housing within the areas designated for selective licensing. In addition, funds should be released from this uncommitted resource to address social isolation.

4. Local Welfare Assistance / Discretionary Housing Payments

Council notes that the review of reserves highlighted the balance of £760,898 in the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. This has been the position for some time.

Council believes that, in the absence of properly developed proposals for its use, £300,000 can be released to augment the £900,000 funding identified for Local Welfare Assistance and to provide further flexibility in awarding Discretionary Housing Payments.

5. Anti-Social Behaviour – joined-up working

Council welcomes the steps being taken to tackle anti-social behaviour, especially the intervention activities with youth. However, Council calls upon the Cabinet to re-examine whether expenditure on internal structures of Council officers and co-ordinators might be better spent by being allocated to the Police and managed by mutual agreement. Proposals to bring the

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour teams together have been in development for some time and need the appropriate powers to make effective use of the money. Officers are requested to bring a report to Cabinet on how this project could be taken forward and funded from the Remodelling Reserve.

6. Cleaning Up Wirral

Council notes the restoration of part of the 2013 cuts to the Dog Warden Service but believes that the full saving should be restored (£60,000) to enable the service to operate at full strength once again. Council believes that the appointment of additional dog wardens can only work effectively if the Council actually gets the Public Space Protection Orders in place. Lessons need to be learned from the reduction and restoration of this team. Council needs to ensure that the various enforcement services cooperate and work effectively to improve the environment. Funding provided for 2015/16 will be subject to review for future years and will be met from the Waste Development Fund.

7. Highway Maintenance / Safety

Council welcomes the substantial funds being allocated for Highway Maintenance by the Coalition Government; £3,305,000 in 2015/16 with substantial additional funds available through till 2020/21. Council also welcomes the £2 million of Council investment 2015/18 into the highways infrastructure.

Council notes the substantial resources expected from the sale of assets at Acre Lane and requests Cabinet to allocate £500,000 from this capital to be divided between the Constituency Committees to tackle concerns raised by local residents so that, for example, road widening and road safety can be prioritised and programmes drawn up by them.

Council approves the statutory calculations associated with the decision to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant and there be no increase in the Wirral Council Tax element for 2015/16.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 9 December 2014 calculated the Council Tax Base 2015/16 for the whole of the properties in its area as 89,344.9 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);

- a) £114,206,012 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2015/16 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:
- iii) £722,836,275 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
- iv) £608,630,263 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 (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- b) £1,278.26 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as 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 – Basic Amount Of Council Tax Per Valuation Band

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 in (c) above as the Council’s Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2015/16 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 Comparison For Referendum

	2014/15	2015/16	Change
	£	£	£
Band D	1,278.26	1,278.26	Nil

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have issued 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 as indicated in the tables.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (figures are awaited)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police and Fire the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral (awaiting figures for Police and Fire)

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H

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 Budget Council Procedure.

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

For the motion (5) Councillors A Brighthouse, C Carubia, P Gilchrist, S Kelly, D Mitchell.

Against the motion (56) Councillors R Abbey, T Anderson, E Boulton, P Brightmore, P Cleary, W Clements, J Crabtree, M Daniel, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, J Green, R Gregson, P Hackett, J Hale, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, T Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, C Povall, D Realey, L Reece Jones, Mrs L Rennie, D Roberts, SL Rowlands, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, A Sykes, J Walsh, GCJ Watt, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, S Williams, J Williamson

One abstention – Councillor S Foulkes.

The motion was therefore lost (5:56) (One abstention).

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

For the motion (24) Councillors T Anderson, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, P Gilchrist, J Green, J Hale, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, S Kelly, D Mitchell, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, S Williams.

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

One abstention – Councillor S Foulkes.

The motion was therefore lost (24:37) (One abstention).

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

For the motion (18) Councillors T Anderson, E Boulton, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, J Green, J Hale, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, S Williams.

Against the motion (43) Councillors R Abbey, A Brighthouse, P Brightmore, C Carubia, P Cleary, J Crabtree, M Daniel, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, P Gilchrist, R Gregson, P Hackett, T Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, S Kelly, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, L Reece Jones, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson

One abstention – Councillor S Foulkes

The motion was therefore lost (18:43) (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, M Daniel, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, R Gregson, P Hackett, T Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, L Reece Jones, D Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson.

Against the motion (24) Councillors T Anderson, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, L Fraser, P Gilchrist, J Green, J Hale, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, S Kelly, D Mitchell, C Povall, Mrs L Rennie, SL Rowlands, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, S Williams.

One abstention – Councillor S Foulkes.

The motion was therefore carried (37:24) (One abstention).

113 **FURTHER MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 5(2), three matters were submitted for approval by the Council (see minutes 114 to 116 post).

114 **APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE(INCLUDING RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER**

The first matter requiring approval was in relation to the Appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer and the recommendations of Employments and Appointments at its meeting 6 February 2014 (minute 15 refers).

Prior to the vote on the item, Councillor P Davies along with five Labour Members asked that a 'card vote' be recorded.

In respect of item A. Employment and Appointments Panel – 6 February, 2015 Minute 15 – Appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer), the Council divided as follows –

For the motion (57) Councillors R Abbey, T Anderson, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, P Brightmore, C Carubia, W Clements, J Crabtree, M Daniel, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, P Gilchrist, J Green, R Gregson, P Hackett, J Hale, A Hodson, K Hodson, M Hornby, T Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, S Kelly, A Leech, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, S Niblock, T Norbury, M Patrick, C Povall, D Realey, L Reecejones, Mrs L Rennie, D Roberts, SL Rowlands, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, M Sullivan, A Sykes, J Walsh, GCJ Watt, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, J Williamson.

Against the Motion (4) Councillors P Cleary, L Fraser, P Hayes, S Williams.

One abstention – Councillor S Foulkes.

The motion was therefore carried (57:4) (One abstention).

Councillor P Davies indicated that he was delighted with the panel's unanimous decision to recommend Mr Eric Robinson's appointment to the Council for approval. Mr Davies indicated that Mr Robinson was an excellent appointment and came with an excellent work record.

Councillor J Hale commented that although he supported the appointment of the new Chief Executive he did not necessarily support the pay and conditions awarded to the post.

Councillor J Green indicated that he was pleased to second the recommendation and that he was impressed with how Mr Robinson presented and responded throughout the whole recruitment process.

Councillor P Davies requested that Standing Order 9 be suspended to allow further debate of the Motion.

Councillor P Gilchrist indicated that he was impressed by all of the candidates and that Mr Robinson was well respected and well regarded and stood out above the other candidates considered.

RESOLVED – (57:4) (One abstention) – That Minute 15 (Employment and Appointments Panel – 6/2/15) – The Appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service (including Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer), be approved.

115 **CAPITAL MONITORING 2014/15- MONTH 8**

The second matter requiring approval was in relation to the Capital Monitoring 2014/15- Month 8 and the recommendations of Cabinet at its meeting 15 January 2015 (minute 125 refers).

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

RESOLVED (61:1) (One abstention) -

That the recommendations contained within Cabinet minute 125, be approved.

116 **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FEES CHARGED FOR ADAPTATION DELIVERED FUNDED BY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT**

The third matter requiring approval was in relation to the Proposed Changes to the fees charged for Adaptation Delivered Funded by Disabled Facilities Grant and the recommendations of Cabinet at its meeting 10 February 2015 (minute 149 refers).

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

Resolved (61:1) (One abstention) – That the recommendations contained within Cabinet minute 149, be approved.

117 **VACANCIES**

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

Outside Bodies

Leasowe Community Homes

Councillors A.Jones, C.Spriggs and B Mooney to replace Councillors R Abbey, J Salter and A Leech.

Resolved – That the appointments and amendments to the membership of the Committee and outside body listed above, be approved.