

CABINET

Thursday, 10 April 2014

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

181 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Phil Davies declared a non pecuniary interest in Item No. 5 on the agenda – Wirral Business Support – Birkenhead Business Improvement District Proposal (Minute No. 185 refers). He indicated that he would be vacating the Chair and leaving the meeting whilst this matter was under consideration.

182 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 March 2014 be approved as a correct record.

183 UPDATE ON LIVING WAGE

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement which updated the Cabinet on the latest activity that the Council was driving to harness the positive economic benefits the Living Wage could bring.

The Cabinet was reminded that in 2013, the Council was one of the first local authorities in the country to become a Living Wage Employer. In addition, Council policy aimed to ensure that new social care contractors were required to follow the Council's ethical care charter and fair wage approach.

Members noted that the Council was now committed to building on this activity, and would be working with employers and partners in Wirral to encourage them to pay the Living Wage to all their employees. The report

outlined the approach and additional actions to be taken in order that Wirral could become a Living Wage Borough.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that the Council saw this as a key priority for addressing inequalities in the Borough. He informed that on 4 April 2014 the Council had jointly hosted a regional Living Wage Summit with the North West Trades Union Congress at the Floral Pavilion which had been attended by prominent businesses, MPs and Councillors from across the North West. Nigel Hughes, Chief Executive at YMCA Wirral, who was an accredited local Living Wage Employer along with a member of his staff, who now received the Living Wage, had talked about the positive impact this had made and had demonstrated the difference that paying the Living Wage rate of £7.65 per hour could make to employees. Key speakers at this Summit had also included Paul Novak, Assistant General Secretary of the TUC, Frank Field MP and the Mayor of Salford, Councillor Ian Stewart. They had spoken about the positive impact associated with the implementation of the Living Wage.

It was noted that the Council had also made a commitment to ensure that new contracts for social care providers demonstrated they would follow the Council's ethical care charter and fair wage approach which asked providers, among other requirements, not to employ staff on zero hours contracts. The Council was now committed to becoming a Living Wage Borough through working with employers and partners in Wirral to encourage them to pay the Living Wage to their employees.

The Council was committed to building on this existing activity, and a detailed plan was now being developed which would set out the proposed actions that would take place in order to achieve the ultimate aim of becoming a Living Wage Borough. This included:

- The Council applying for accreditation as a Living Wage Employer.
- Through the Public Service Board, co-ordinating work with public sector partners to support them to become Living Wage organisations.
- Working with the Chamber of Commerce, Invest Wirral and local businesses and employers in Wirral to raise awareness of the Living Wage and encouraging them to pay the Living Wage to their employees.
- Building on the key role that the voluntary, community and faith sectors had to play in this campaign.
- Reviewing procurement, contract and best value policies to ensure that, as far as possible within UK and EU law, the Living Wage was the minimum paid to contracted staff as well.

The Chief Executive reported that the Public Service Board that represented all public bodies in Wirral had been discussing the Living Wage and had established a working group to pull together the good practice of all public bodies paying the Living Wage.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the current activity taking place to increased awareness and adoption of the Living Wage amongst Wirral partners be noted; and**
- (2) the proposed actions to move Wirral towards becoming a Living Wage Borough be approved.**

184 **UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY BUDGETS/PUBLIC SECTOR TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement which updated the Cabinet on the Public Service Transformation (PST) initiative that the Council was involved in. Together with its partners, the Council was committed to new ways of working, to deliver public service transformation across the Borough based on the clear principle of finding local solutions to local problems.

The report informed that one strand of activity within this project was Wirral's role in the PST Network. PST aimed to build on the opportunities created by Community Budgets around the country, leading to more joint working and shared services and a new way for local public service providers to work together to meet local needs. The Community Budgets Pilots, initially launched in 2011, aimed to encourage public service partners to share budgets, improving outcomes for local people and reducing duplication and waste in order to:

- make better use of their resources by establishing joint budgets and sharing local knowledge, community assets and voluntary effort;
- flex central rules and regulations so local partners can provide better services that suit their area;
- give people greater control over their local public services; and
- establish local partnership and governance arrangements to create a unified approach

The Cabinet was informed that during 2012, four areas in England (Cheshire West and Chester, Essex, Greater Manchester, and in London the Tri-borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster) had begun piloting Community Budgets as a mechanism for tackling some of their biggest local challenges, from domestic violence to skills and employment. In each of those four localities, public services, business and the voluntary sector had been working together to develop new joint responses to those challenges.

Members noted that there were two tranches of Community Budget Pilots and Wirral was one of nine areas in the second one announced in July 2013 (Bath

and North East Somerset, Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset, Hampshire, Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark, Sheffield, Surrey, Swindon, the West London Alliance (Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow) and Wirral.). The Chief Executive reported that Wirral being chosen as one of the nine was a tribute to the Council and a recognition the credit it was now receiving, as a considerable number of councils had applied to be in the Pilots and been unsuccessful.

Following on from the initial announcement, it was noted that Wirral's broad approach to the PST initiative was set out within the Joint Statement of Intent (JSI), in October 2013. Wirral's Public Service Board (PSB) was providing the overarching direction for Public Sector Transformation activity, and partners had now developed a number of work streams as part of this.

Wirral's JSI highlighted a number of priority themes, each with a specific work stream focus which was set out in the report. Each work stream had a project lead and a detailed project plan, currently being developed, which set out the specific activity that would take place in the coming months.

The detailed focus for how Wirral's PST initiative would be delivered was set out in an outline Business Plan attached to the report as Appendix 1. Appendix 2 to the report set out further details about the Health Related Worklessness project.

Members were asked for their comments on the latest developments and to agree a number of proposed actions as the project moved towards implementation from April 2014.

The Chief Executive informed that the Council was now delivering services in an improved way. He had recently attended a meeting in London with Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government who had paid tribute to the work the Council was doing. Additional resources were flowing into the Council as a result.

The Cabinet noted that in March 2014, Ministers had approved catalytic funding to support local authorities participating in the PST Network with on-going co-design work. Wirral was set to receive £75,000 of this total amount which would help to develop and implement business cases in 2014/15, and scale up transformation projects that had been successfully piloted.

In addition, on 1 April, the Network had informed partners of a one-off additional resource for Local Authorities to invest in their local service integration and transformation. Councillor Phil Davies informed that to the Council's great credit its allocation was £563,984. He referred to Appendix 1 and in particular to the Health Related Worklessness Target: A 10% reduction in the number of ESA/IB claimants in Birkenhead by April 2017. Partners had

acknowledged that this target was highly ambitious. Not accounting for any on-flows this would require a target reduction of 770 ESA/IB recipients over a three year period; this required the same level of reduction that the area had achieved over the past 13 years. This reduction would provide an estimated fiscal benefit of £6,646,640. Councillor Phil Davies told the Cabinet that if the cohort could be got back into work it would save the Treasury a lot of money and the Council wanted to retain a large portion of these savings and use it for the benefit of Wirral residents. If this was accomplished it would signal a large step forward as the Government would have recognised the case.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed direction and focus of the Public Service Transformation initiative be noted;**
- (2) the Chief Executive be authorised to enter into discussions with the Government to request that any public sector financial savings delivered by the PST projects be retained in Wirral; and**
- (3) the Chief Executive and his Team be thanked for the work that they have undertaken on this initiative.**

Councillor Phil Davies left the meeting.

Councillor Ann McLachlan in the Chair.

185 **WIRRAL BUSINESS SUPPORT - BIRKENHEAD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT PROPOSAL**

Councillor Pat Hackett introduced a report by the Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment which informed that, in March 2011, the Government had announced a £10m package of measures to support empty properties on high streets and to provide resources for those areas specifically affected by the riots of August 2011. The Council was one of 100 local authorities that had been allocated £100,000 grant funding to support those areas that had been affected by the disturbances.

The report sought Cabinet approval to the allocation of the £100,000 High Street Innovation Fund (HSIF) to the Wirral Chamber of Commerce to draw up proposals for the establishment of a potential Birkenhead Business Improvement District (BID).

Wirral Chamber of Commerce had been suggested as the body to take forward the BID proposal because it already operated shop watch and pub watch in the area and was, therefore, more likely to secure business engagement. The Cabinet noted that a BID Steering Group would be set up to manage the activities of the BID on a day-to-day basis and it was being

asked to nominate a local Ward Councillor as the local authority BID Steering Group Member and to agree that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment could act in the capacity of strategic advisor for matters relating to the Council's business.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 and 2 were Birkenhead Business Improvement District Zone 1 Maps.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the use of the HSIF monies (£100,000) to support the Wirral Chamber of Commerce to draw up proposals relating to the establishment of a Birkenhead BID, as described within the report be agreed;**
- (2) the Head of Legal and Member Services be authorised to agree and enter into a grant funding agreement between the Council and the Wirral Chamber of Commerce; and**
- (3) the Strategic Director - Regeneration and Environment and Councillor Brian Kenny be nominated as the local authority BID Steering Group Members.**

Councillor Ann McLachlan vacated the Chair.

Councillor Phil Davies in the Chair.

186 **STIMULATING THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Councillor George Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Director - Regeneration and Environment which sought the Cabinet's approval for the use of £1.5 million of Council resources which had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 25 February 2014 (Minute No. 76 refers.) to bring forward an accelerated development programme of up to 100 new affordable homes in Wirral.

Councillor Phil Davies had included in his Budget Resolution to the Council that local authorities had a proud tradition of investing in physical assets which were essential to improving the quality of life for local residents. He had informed that there would be challenging house building targets over the next five years. He had also referred to the huge challenges in those disadvantaged areas of the Borough which lost out on new housing when the Government cut the Housing Market Renewal Programme. The Council, therefore, intended to invest £1.5 million to kick-start a substantial programme of affordable housing to be targeted at areas with the highest levels of

deprivation. Councillor Phil Davies had requested that a report be presented to the Cabinet setting out how such a programme could be delivered.

The Cabinet was informed that this initiative supported the Council's vision in a number of ways. New housing, in particular, the provision of affordable housing provided opportunities for residents to remain in the Borough in the type of housing that suited their needs. The physical development of the new homes would help to stimulate economic growth as well as provide opportunities for the local labour force and new apprenticeships and training places, thereby "driving growth and aspiration".

Councillor Phil Davies informed that he was delighted to see the report on the agenda and that it was about a very important project. It illustrated the role the local authority could play in addressing the issues and it was vital to raise living standards in the disadvantaged areas of the Borough. He was pleased to see that the proposal would have an impact on Church Road which was in his own Ward and was delighted that it would deliver the new housing and have spin off benefits.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the framework for the use of the £1.5m allocated to stimulate affordable housing building in Wirral and supporting the local economy be approved; and**
- (2) the Cabinet Portfolio Holder be granted delegated authority to approve the use of funding on an individual scheme by scheme basis and report the outcome retrospectively and progress being made to future Cabinet meetings.**

187 **FUTURE COUNCIL - ENGAGEMENT OF POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEES**

Councillor Ann McLachlan introduced a report by the Chief Executive which set out proposals for engaging the Council's Policy and Performance Committees in order to provide effective overview and scrutiny at key stages of the Future Council Programme. The report built on the report presented previously to the Cabinet at its meeting on 13 March 2014 that had outlined the future Council process and objectives. (Minute No. 163 refers.)

The Cabinet was aware that Local Government was changing at the most rapid pace in living memory. Significant reductions in the grant funding that the Council received from the Government, combined with an increasing demand for its services, presented it with an unprecedented challenge. In addition to savings already agreed and currently being delivered, the Council faced a forecast budget gap of £18 million in 2015/16 and £25 million in 2016/17.

The Cabinet noted that it was essential that the Council approached this challenge in a planned and considered way to ensure it protected, as far as possible, the delivery of its policies and spent its remaining budget in line with its agreed priorities.

It was noted that the Future Council Programme built on proposals put forward by Ernst and Young for remodelling the organisation. The programme would lead to the delivery of a new organisational structure and a new system of job profiles and pay grades that would modernise the Council and enable it to become more flexible.

The programme also drove forward a business-case approach that would see every Council Service being reviewed in order that a series of options could be developed to re-shape how the Council would best deliver its Services in the future. It was noted that the options developed would be the subject of wide-ranging stakeholder engagement and public consultation commencing in June 2014.

Members of the Council's Policy and Performance Committees had been engaged in reviewing budget options, in previous years, as part of the consultation process. Feedback from Members had indicated a preference to be more engaged in the options development process from an earlier stage. The Cabinet noted that the Future Council Programme provided a mechanism for how this could be achieved.

Councillor Ann McLachlan informed the Cabinet that the Future Council Programme was the single most important and far reaching piece of work the Council had ever carried out and it was important that all Members were involved in it so they could help to shape the direction and the Council. A timetable for the work required was set out in the report.

The Chief Executive informed the Cabinet that the Future Council Programme was a central project going forward. Money was being saved by restructuring the Council otherwise it would have meant Services would have had to be cut. The proposed cuts in Government funding over the next five years was a major challenge and an alternative proposal to the salami slicing carried out previously was required.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that this approach was preferable to "salami slicing". It was a real breadth of fresh air and had the endorsement of the Wirral Improvement Board who, at its meeting in March 2014, had stated that its view was that the Council had no alternative than to adopt this Programme. There would be effective consultation with the Trade Unions and a timescale had been agreed in order to take account of employees' views. It was important that the Council got this right and ensured Members' involvement. As part of the Members' Development Project there would be Member

Development meetings providing opportunities for Members to contribute to this.

RESOLVED:

That this report and the engagement process for the Future Council Programme be referred as a priority for inclusion in the Work Programmes of each of the Policy and Performance Committees commencing in July 2014.

188 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR MAINTENANCE OF UNCLASSIFIED ROADS AND SEVERE WEATHER RECOVERY FUNDING**

Councillor Harry Smith introduced a report by the Strategic Director - Regeneration and Environment which sought the Cabinet's approval for Preventative Maintenance to Unclassified and Residential Streets and approval to a programme for the use of additional funding allocated to Local Authorities by the Department for Transport (DfT) for repairing local roads damaged by the recent severe weather. The maintenance of highways was the Council's statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

In his Budget Statement on 19 March 2014 the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced an additional dedicated fund to provide for essential maintenance to help repair damage to the local road network caused by the severe weather. The Council had been allocated £364,447 from that fund. The Cabinet noted that it was a requirement of the DfT that this additional expenditure was detailed on the Council's website by the end of April 2014.

The report also sought authority for the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, in consultation with Group Spokespersons, to approve the detailed programme for utilising the funding.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the Proposed Capital Bid Programme 2014/15 and attached to the report at Appendix 2 was the terms and Conditions for the Severe Weather Funding.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that he welcomed the additional funding to improve and maintain unclassified roads. The four Constituency Committees had assigned their priorities in respect of the work to be done. Councillor Phil Davies told the Cabinet that he was keen to devolve, through the Localism Agenda, as many responsibilities as possible to these Committees.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Capital Programme for Preventative Maintenance to Unclassified Roads and Residential Streets 2014/15 (as detailed in Appendix 1) be approved;**

- (2) **the Strategic Director - Regeneration and Environment be authorised to approve; in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and Group Spokespersons, necessary adjustments to the priorities within the Capital Programme should the need arise due to financial, condition or other factors;**
- (3) **the acceptance of the Severe Weather Recovery Grant of £364,447 on behalf of the Council by the Section 151 Officer be noted; and**
- (4) **the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation approve in consultation with the Group Spokespersons a Programme of Highway Maintenance Schemes to be funded from the Severe Weather Recovery Grant.**

189 **CAMPAIGNS TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Councillor Brian Kenny introduced a report by the Strategic Director - Regeneration and Environment that informed that low level environmental crime cost the Council over £3.5 million per year to clean up, and was consistently placed as a top improvement priority for Wirral residents. The report sought approval for the implementation of two campaigns, with associated expenditure, aimed at improving local environmental quality through increased campaign efforts in relation to alleyway dumping and dog fouling. In addition, approval to extend the very successful "Love Wirral" grants funding to assist communities make their own positive contributions was sought.

The Cabinet was informed that it was widely recognised that good environmental quality could have a positive impact on peoples' health and well-being. The recommendations set out in the report, therefore, supported the Council's strategic priorities "Protecting vulnerable people and communities" and "Narrowing the gap in inequalities".

In addition to adopting the nationally recognised 3Es model of Engagement, Education and Enforcement, the Cabinet noted that these balanced campaigns would also carry out extensive consultation and engagement in order to better understand the root causes of alleyway dumping and dog fouling.

The report reminded the Cabinet that on 25 February 2014 the Council had resolved to return to four weekly cleansing of alleyways for a period of two years and to re-double enforcement efforts. (Minute No. 76 refers.) It also outlined proposals for how the £400K contribution from the Waste Development Fund could be used over a two year campaign period to drive pro-environmental behaviours and maximise recycling of household waste in terraced housing areas.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the Alleyway Dumping Project Outline.

Councillor P Davies welcomed the initiative of providing extra resources to tackle these three issues. The aim of the 3Es was to try to change people's behaviour. He informed that the "Love Wirral" grants funding was a fantastic initiative and he paid tribute to Councillor Brian Kenny who was leading on it.

RESOLVED:

- (1) the proposal to tackle alleyway dumping as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report including the allocation of £400K Waste Development Fund over a two year period to reinstate a four weekly cleansing schedule to aid the recovery of recyclable materials be approved;**
- (2) the six month Dog Fouling pilot campaign as outlined in Section 2.2 of the report be endorsed; and**
- (3) the continuation of the "Love Wirral" grants programme into 2014/15 at a cost of £40K be agreed.**

190 **THANK YOU**

Councillor Phil Davies drew attention to the fact that this was the last meeting of the Cabinet in the present Municipal Year. He thanked both Members and Officers for the excellent work and support they had provided over the year.