

# CABINET

Thursday, 17 December 2015

Present:

Councillor P Davies (Chair)

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

77 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Cabinet were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest. No declarations of interest were received.

78 **MINUTES**

**Decision:**

**That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 5 November 2015 be confirmed as a true record.**

79 **COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016/17**



*“Making sure that the Council has enough income to provide the services residents rely on, while keeping Council Tax levels at a fair and equitable level which residents can afford is extremely important to this Cabinet.*

*We have consistently demonstrated we are up to this task and once again this year are setting out our proposals which generates the revenue the Council requires while protecting the most vulnerable, in line with the Pledges set out in our Wirral Plan for 2020.”*

Councillor Phil Davies

**Reason for Decision:**

To allow Members to be aware of the Council Tax base for 2016/17 and the factors taken account in its calculation.

To allow Members to decide on the level of Local Discounts and the content of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 taking account of the financial issues impacting on the authority as well as charge payers.

**Decision: That**

**(1) RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL - That the figure of 90,481.9 be recommended as the Council Tax-Base for 2016/17;**

**(2) the level and award of each local discount for 2016/17 be made as follows:**

**Wirral Women's & Children's Aid - to award the Refuge discount of 50% and the Flat's discount of 75%**

**Empty Property Discounts - The discount and premium rate charges remain unchanged for 2016/17:**

**Discount category D 0%**

**- Full charge on properties undergoing renovations;**

**Discount category C 0%**

**- Full charge on empty properties from date they become unoccupied;**

**Empty Premium 150%**

**- Properties empty for more than two years; and**

**(3) the Council Tax Support Scheme approved for use in 2015/16 also be approved as the Scheme for 2016/17.**

**Purpose:**

The report detailed the current status of recipients of Wirral's Council Tax Support Scheme and detailed options available for consideration for 2016/17 and proposed the scheme to be adopted be largely unaltered from that used in the last 3 years. The 2016/17 scheme must be adopted by Council by 31 March 2016.

The Authority has a number of statutory decisions that it must make each year with regard to its administration of Council Tax. The three which were required to be agreed by Council by 31 January were set out in the report.

The Authority is required to annually determine its Council Tax Tax-Base in order to determine the appropriate levels for Wirral, the Preceptor Authorities (Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire & Rescue Services). The Tax-Base has a direct impact on the Council Tax that will be levied for Wirral for

2016/17. This decision could be a delegated function but the matter is to be considered by Cabinet and Council for 2016/17. The calculation and factors taken into consideration were set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

## 80 COUNCIL BUDGET 2016/17 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY



*"We continue to face unprecedented financial challenges, as ongoing national Government austerity policies place huge pressure on the services and support Wirral people rely on. In our Wirral Plan we made a commitment that we would never use this as an excuse for doing nothing, and we reaffirm that commitment to Wirral people today.*

*Setting a budget for next year is once again a difficult task – made more difficult yet again by the Chancellor with yet more cuts to local government following his Autumn Statement.*

*Of the £24 million which we are currently required to save next year, almost two-thirds have been proposed which have no impact at all on the services which we provide. This is a clear demonstration of our commitment to finding new, innovative and progressive ways to set a balanced budget and still protect our services and our residents as best we can.*

*We are a responsible and pragmatic Administration, and for as long as I am Leader of this Council we will always set a balanced, fair and sustainable budget which protects the most vulnerable and makes the best use of our resources to ensure we can deliver on our Pledges to local people."*

Councillor Phil Davies

### **Reason(s) for Decision(s):**

The Medium Term Financial Strategy and its associated financial governance arrangements are key to ensuring that the Council is well run and financially stable. Throughout the year the major financial matters are presented in a series of reports which highlight the financial position of the Council and the decisions needed to ensure the Council remains financially stable.

The Council has to meet a legal requirement to set a balanced Budget in March 2016 for the 2016/17 financial year. This report details the approach and includes proposals and initiatives to meet the challenge for 2016/17 and for the five year period as the Medium Term Financial Strategy supports the

delivery of the Wirral Plan and the outcomes as set out in the Wirral pledges for 2020.

**Decisions: That**

- (1) the forecast budget funding gap for 2016/17, currently £24 million and the projected funding gap for 2016/21, £126 million, be noted;**
- (2) the impact of the budget reductions and proposals for 2016/17 as summarised in Section 3.34 of the report and detailed in Appendix A of the report be noted;**
- (3) Officers be authorised to complete the required consultation and engagement with residents, partners and other stakeholders on the budget proposals in advance of Budget decisions in February 2016 as detailed in Appendix B of the report;**
- (4) an updated Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy be reported to the Cabinet meeting on 22 February 2016. (This being to cover the updated financial projections, including the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement expected in mid-December 2015, and the outcome from the engagement and consultation undertaken); and**
- (5) call-in in respect of these decisions be waived, as they are considered urgent, and any delay caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's and/or public's interest, in that it would adversely affect the ability of the Council to meet the legal requirement to set a balanced Budget for 2016/17.**

**Purpose:**

The Leader of the Council reported that, over the next five years, Wirral Council was projecting a funding gap of £126 million due to Government austerity measures and increasing demands for services.

The report presented a series of proposed actions to enable the Council to take the necessary steps to present a balanced budget for 2016/17 and be in a better position to present balanced budgets in the subsequent four years to 2020/21.

The size of the funding gap meant that there would be an impact upon services for the people of Wirral. The Budgets would be informed by, and aligned to, the pledges within the Wirral Plan.

The focus would be on generating more income into the Council and the Borough, on finding new ways of achieving positive outcomes for residents, on building further integration with our partners and on ensuring the £201 million annual budget Wirral Council would be investing into the borough by 2020 delivered value for money for residents.

## COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR NUMBERS 305, 307, 309 AND 321 BOROUGH ROAD, BIRKENHEAD



*“This decision is a clear demonstration of our determination to ensure an attractive local environment for Wirral residents – a Pledge we committed to in our Wirral Plan for 2020.*

*“These properties are in the heart of Birkenhead; an area which is absolutely vital to the future economic prosperity of Wirral and an area which is set to benefit from a transformational programme of regeneration in the coming years.*

*“The purchase of these properties, and the additional investment of £100,000 for landscaping and environmental work to improve the area, is a step in the right direction and I’m sure local people will join me in welcoming this decision.”*

Councillor Phil Davies

### Reasons for Decisions:

Acquisition of the Order Land is needed to carry out the environmental improvements to the area.

To remove properties that are derelict and in a poor condition and consequently detracting from the general amenity on Borough Road.

In the absence of a voluntary sale by the owners of the Order Land the most appropriate compulsory purchase power is under Section 226(1) (a) as explained in the report and agenda supplementary paper Appendix 3 (ref: 309 Borough Road).

### Decisions: That

- (1) the progress made in purchasing the properties be noted;**
- (2) the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 226(1)(a), for the acquisition of the Order Land to complete the acquisition of land and property shown coloured pink and edged in red on the plan at Appendix 1, be authorised;**
- (3) the Head of Legal Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order including the publication and service of all notices and the presentation of the Council’s case at**

**any Public Inquiry and acquire the interests in the Order Land either by agreement or compulsorily; and**

**(4) funding the environmental improvement works of £106,026 as detailed in section 5.2 of the report, be approved.**

**Purpose:**

The report updated Members on the progress made in acquiring properties within the block 305-329 Borough Road, Birkenhead. In addition the report requested that Cabinet authorised the use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Section 226(1)(a) to acquire the remaining properties, numbers 305, 307 and 321 (“the Order land”) shown coloured pink and edged in red on the plan at Appendix 1 of the report. This would enable the Council to undertake environmental improvement works to a key road corridor into Birkenhead Town Centre.

The report affected the Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward and was not a key decision.

It was a key theme under the Wirral Plan: 2020 Vision, An Attractive Local Environment for Wirral Residents.

The report contained exempt information set out in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and included the current position with regard to negotiations to acquire remaining legal interests in the Order Land. The exempt information was in Appendix 2 of the report.

**82 2015/16 QUARTER 2 - CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORTS**



*“When we commit to delivering actions to improve the lives of Wirral people, as we have in our Wirral Plan for 2020, it is vitally important that we track our progress towards achieving them.*”

*“This report is an excellent example of that robust monitoring: it helps us make sure we are in the best possible place to achieve what we have promised, identify where we need to focus our attention and to hold ourselves to account.”*

Councillor Ann McLaughlin

**Reason for Decision:**

To ensure Cabinet Members have the opportunity to review the Council’s performance.

**Decision:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**Purpose:**

The report set out the Council's Quarter 2 (July to September) performance against the delivery of the 2015/16 Corporate Plan (as approved by Council 8 December 2014). The report was attached at Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report and set out progress against a suite of agreed indicators. The indicators related to a range of pledges under the three Wirral Plan themes of People, Business and Environment. The performance report affected all wards within the borough. It was not a key decision.

Corporate Plan performance was measured against the targets set at the start of the year. For each measure, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating was assigned depending on the performance level against the target. The report also showed the direction of travel illustrating for each indicator whether performance was improving, deteriorating or sustained.

Of the 20 reportable indicators, 13 were rated Green, 4 were rated Amber and 3 were rated Red. For indicators Amber and Red, the responsible officer had indicated the corrective action being put in place to get performance back on track. Of the 19 indicators where it was possible to indicate a Direction of Travel, 9 were improving, 8 were deteriorating and 2 were showing performance sustained.

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**WIRRAL COUNCIL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015-2020**



*“One of the remarkable things about living in Wirral is the fantastic environment we all share. Our coastline and world class parks are second to none. As the Cabinet Member responsible for protecting the environment, I know how hard our teams work to collect your waste and maintain the environment.*

*However there is a need to do more in order to achieve waste targets at a time when resources are reducing. We need to look for ways to improve the level of recycled waste and we need the help of residents to do this.*

*We are currently recycling 36% of our waste, but legislation requires Wirral and all other councils to recycle at least 50% of waste by 2020. We have identified a range of options for consideration and incentives to help us improve and transform the way we manage waste and with this strategy we are setting out how we intend to achieve it. We will*

*be working closely with residents and listening to their views before making decisions about future waste collection”.*

Councillor Bernie Mooney

### **Reasons for Decisions:**

In order to meet statutory and corporate targets for waste management, the Council must establish new systems for the collection of municipal waste as quickly as possible.

The Council's current recycling performance is behind the level required to meet the 2020 targets and although the existing waste management system can be improved, such improvements will not meet the required targets alone.

The Waste Management Strategy 2015 – 2020 sets out the medium term requirements for waste management legislation and the scale of the task required to achieve 50% recycling by 2020. The Strategy also provides a framework for the future direction of the Council's waste management, which includes an action plan and a series of options for future waste stream collections.

The options appraisal exercise will consider the various waste stream collection options to determine the optimal system that can achieve targets as well as contribute to the Council's medium term financial plan.

Transforming the Council's waste management performance to reach the 50% recycling target will realise savings against the Council's waste disposal costs (the Council's waste levy apportionment for 2015/16 was £15,530,841).

### **Decisions: That**

- (1) the Wirral Council Waste Management Strategy 2015-2020 appended to the report be approved;**
- (2) commencement of an options appraisal exercise to consider future waste management arrangements; including the use of external support for project validation as outlined in Section 6.0 of the report be approved; and**
- (3) Officers be instructed to make recommendations for future waste management arrangements to a future Cabinet upon the conclusion of the options appraisal exercise.**

### **Purpose:**

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Protection reported that the Waste Management Strategy 2015-2020 provided direction for the transformation of



the Council's management of municipal waste over the next five years in order to meet statutory targets for recycling and reductions to landfill disposal.

Effective waste management was a crucial component of the Council's drive to create an attractive local environment across Wirral. As such the Waste Management Strategy underpinned the delivery of key strategic themes set out within the Wirral Plan and directly supported Pledge 20 'Attractive Local Environment for Wirral Residents'.

The transformation of the Council's waste management and achievement of legislative targets would realise reductions to the significant waste disposal costs the Council incurred, currently over £15m per year.

An options appraisal exercise would be required to determine optimal arrangements for the Council's future waste management. Such an exercise would recognise the contrasting demographic profiles across the townships and communities of the borough and that a 'one size fits all' approach would not work.

The Council's Waste Management Strategy complemented the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority's (MWRA) 'Joint Recycling and Waste Management Strategy 2011-2041' (JRWMS) and formed part of a suite of district authority strategies that provided the local delivery mechanism for achieving the aims and objectives of the JRWMS.

The matter affected all Wards within the Borough and was a Key Decision.

84 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Decision:**

**That, under Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act in that they contain commercially sensitive information. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.**

85 **COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER FOR NUMBERS 305, 307, 309 AND 321 BOROUGH ROAD, BIRKENHEAD**

**Decision:**

**That the contents of the exempt appendix to item No. 5 on the agenda 'Compulsory Purchase Order for Numbers 305, 307, 309 and 321 Borough Road, Birkenhead' (minute 81 refers) be noted.**