

# CABINET

Monday, 27 July 2015

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council
	Councillors	AR McLachlan	Governance, Commissioning and Improvement
		G Davies	Neighbourhoods, Housing and Engagement
		AER Jones	Support Services
		C Jones	Adult Social Care and Public Health
		C Meaden	Leisure, Sport and Culture
		P Hackett	Economy
		Tony Smith	Children and Family Services
		B Mooney	Environment and Sustainability
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	S Whittingham	Highways and Transport

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

Councillor Adrian Jones referred to Item No. 4 on the Agenda – Early Years and Children’s Centres (Minute No. 43 refers.) and declared a personal interest in respect of the Seacombe Children’s Centre on St Paul’s Road, Wallasey.

Councillor Phil Davies declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item No. 5 on the Agenda – Designation of a Neighbourhood Planning Forum and Neighbourhood Planning Area for Birkenhead and Tranmere (Minute No. 44 refers.) by virtue of him being a member of Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Forum. He informed that he would leave the meeting whilst that item of business was under discussion. Councillor Phil Davies also declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a Non-Executive Director of the Wirral Chamber of Commerce.

## 41 CAPITAL MONITORING 2015/16 - QUARTER 1 (APRIL - JUNE 2015)

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Acting Section 151 Officer which provided an update on the progress made to deliver the Capital Programme 2015/16 at the end of Quarter 1 (April-June 2015). Appended to the report at Annex 1 was the Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16.

The Cabinet noted that the Programme for 2015/16 was subject to change and reflected the Programme agreed it had agreed on 10 February 2015 (Minute No. 137 refers.) together with subsequent amendments. Broadly the

report reflected the re-profiling identified since the 2014/15 Budget Cabinet meeting. The provisions differed from the 2014/15 Outturn report which detailed re-profiling relating to the 2014/15 Programme only, whilst the report also showed post 2014/15 adjustments. Revisions to the Programme also included any changes relating to external financial support, primarily the latest grant notifications and any estimated re-profiling of schemes into the 2016/17 year.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that he was pleased with the Capital Projects that were underway to improve facilities in the Borough. He referred, in particular, to the School projects, the investment in leisure facilities, the forthcoming LED Lighting Scheme which would improve street lighting services and the investment in new housing.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the spend to date at Month 3 of £7.3 million, with 25% of the financial year having elapsed, be noted;**
- (2) the revised Capital Programme of £61.5 million (Table 1) be agreed and referred to Council for its approval; and**
- (3) the Capital Monitoring report be presented to the Cabinet after the end of each quarter, which is in line with the Performance Management Monitoring arrangements.**

**42 REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16 - QUARTER 1 (APRIL - JUNE 2015)**

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report by the Acting Section 151 Officer that set out the projected revenue position for 2015/16 as at the end of June 2015. The 2015/16 revenue budget included a savings programme of £38 million. The Cabinet noted that progress had been regularly reviewed and had identified that whilst over £28 million had been deliverable in year, some slippage had been identified. It was recommended that the 2015/16 budget was adjusted to reflect this through the use of Reserves and an element of the sum set aside in General Fund balances. This led to a forecast overspend of £2.9 million primarily due to early indications of demand pressures on which further work would be undertaken to confirm and to seek mitigation. Also, there would be a review of reserves in order to restore the General Fund balances to the required level.

Appended to the report at Annex 1 was the General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/16 which had been agreed by the Council on 24 February 2015.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that there would be some challenges in revenue monitoring and in respect of the £2.0 million overspend; measures were now in place to address the situation. He also informed that in-year cuts

were difficult to manage and the £2.4 million cut in Public Health Grant made it impossible to manage. Councillor Phil Davies reported that he had written to the Secretary of State for Health informing him of the Cabinet's opposition to this cut. He raised concerns that there may be more cuts as a result of the forthcoming Public Spending Review.

Councillor Phil Davies was aware that Officers did the best they could to manage a difficult situation but at the recent Annual Local Government Conference in Harrogate delegates had been told to plan for an additional 5% cut. Consequently, it would be a difficult year for the Council and it would need to work creatively and with its partners to try to obtain the best value it could for every £ it spent.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the Revenue Budget 2015/16 be amended to reflect the re-profiling of the delivery of the savings programme with this funded through contributions from the Families and Wellbeing Reserve, Remodelling Reserve and General Fund balances and referred to the Council for its approval;**
- (2) Officers be requested to identify actions to reduce the projected overspend of £2.9 million, to mitigate against any in-year funding reductions for Public Health and to replenish General Fund balances; and**
- (3) the Financial Monitoring report be presented to Cabinet after the end of each quarter which is in line with Performance Management monitoring arrangements.**

**43 EARLY YEARS AND CHILDREN'S CENTRES**

Councillor Tony Smith introduced a report by the Director of Children's Services, which reminded the Cabinet of the Wirral Early Years and Children Centre Review presented to its meeting on 11 September 2014 made recommendations about the development of a new model of service delivery, supported by an outcomes framework to ensure that Wirral's youngest children have the best start in life, evidenced through their readiness for school (Minute No. 54 refers.).

The Review had been prompted by the need to save £1.5 million from the Council's Early Years Review and Children's Centre budget, reducing the budget to £3.080 million. The Review had also recognised that the service had not been reviewed since 2002, although the resources available to deliver this service in recent years had reduced significantly. The service had also required a radical shift in thinking to meet current policy and legislative requirements.

The Director reported that since the Review had been published there had been even greater emphasis placed on improving children's readiness for school through, the Council Plan: A 2020 Vision, Wirral's recent designation as a Vanguard site to deliver joined up health and care services and the recently published Ofsted Early Years report, which particularly emphasised narrowing the gap in outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

This Cabinet report was operational in nature. It requested that the Cabinet reviewed the feedback from the consultation about the proposed changes and authorised officers to take a series of steps to ensure the service was in a stable and financially viable position. It would provide a platform for future developments to meet ambitious outcomes for our youngest children and their families, as summarised in point 6.0 of the report.

The decision made by the Cabinet on 11 September 2014 that officers should commence consultation on a proposed new model for delivering early years services had been called-in under the Council's scrutiny arrangements which had resulted in the consultation being published for public feedback on 16 February 2015. The consultation had closed on 27 March 2015, and the report provided the Cabinet with the feedback received.

The report made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet about the delivery of early years and children's centre services. This included the approach to delivering outcome-focused provision in an integrated way with partners in local communities through three hubs, six satellite buildings and services commissioned through the two nursery schools.

The report recommended to the Cabinet that a weighted funded model be adopted which took account of levels of deprivation and need across pre-determined reach footprints within constituency areas, that this supported a flexible and well trained workforce and that services were commissioned and delivered across a range of different disciplines, including the voluntary community and faith sector.

The Cabinet noted that the recommendations, informed by the consultation findings, could deliver the agreed savings of £1.5 million. However, there would be slippage in 2015/6 which at this stage was likely to result in a shortfall of £1.2 million. This portion would be kept under close review.

The Cabinet was requested to consider the consultation feedback which informed the revised delivery model and to authorise officers to commence implementation of the model.

Appended to the Director's report was:

- Appendix 1 – Consultation Feedback.

- Appendix 2 - Map of Revised Hubs and Satellites Children's Centres.
- Appendix 3 - Explanation of the terms used to support the review/report.
- Appendix 4 - Indicative Model of Funding Allocations.

Councillor Tony Smith informed that in addition to the consultation feedback, two petitions had been received, one from Wallasey with 375 signatures and one from West Wirral with 657 signatures. These petitions had opposed the proposed changes to the service, their receipt had been acknowledged and the feedback they provided had been considered as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Tony Smith also informed that on 13 July 2015 the Chief Inspector of Schools, Michael Wilshaw had produced a report on Early Years and the general gist of it was that the outcomes for disadvantaged children were now rising in line with those of their peers. From 2016 Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools would look to rank local authorities by how well they met the needs of disadvantaged children. The aim was for all children to have reached the expected level.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that the Government's cut in Early Years funding from £10m to £3m was pretty disastrous to a vital service. It would be really difficult to deal with a cut such as this. The Council would need to work creatively and the model outlined in the report was a good way forward and the use of the Outreach Team ensured more flexibility in providing the service.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that as a result of Government's cuts, it was right for the Council to focus on children who were experiencing high levels of deprivation in line with its Plan – 'A 2020 Vision'. This was an imaginative way forward to provide a good outcome to a difficult process.

Councillor Adrian Jones made reference to the unfair cuts he considered that the Government had imposed on northern local authorities and raised concerns that Conservative Councillors did not appear to be protesting about them.

Councillor Bernie Mooney considered that the knock on effect of the Government's actions was that more and more people were living in economic and social deprivation. They needed the services that the Council would no longer be able to provide due to Government funding cuts and all departments were experiencing the stresses and strains of this. The public needed to be made aware of how severe and tight things were becoming as a result of the Government's actions.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the consultation process detailed within the report be noted, and Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders be thanked for their input;**
- (2) the detailed consultation findings provided within the report and that Appendix 1 be noted; and**
- (3) the revised delivery model outlined in the report be approved and its implementation, including taking the required steps to make the necessary workforce changes and redefining the use of assets be approved.**

**Councillor Phil Davies left the meeting.**

**Councillor Ann McLachlan in the Chair.**

**44 DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING AREA FOR BIRKENHEAD AND TRANMERE**

Councillor Ann McLachlan introduced a report by the Strategic Director - Regeneration and the Environment which informed that the Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Planning Forum had applied to the Council to be formally designated as a statutory Neighbourhood Forum to enable it to prepare a statutory Neighbourhood Development Plan for a proposed Neighbourhood Area based on the Electoral Ward of Birkenhead and Tranmere, with small additional areas around The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum in Oxton Ward; and at Holborn Square, Holt Road and Sidney Road in Rock Ferry Ward.

Appended to the Strategic Director's report was

- Appendix 1 – Proposed Neighbourhood Area (as applied for);
- Appendix 2 – Recommended Neighbourhood Area for Designation; and
- Appendix 3 – Summary of Representations Received.

Councillor Pat Hackett informed that the Neighbourhood Area applied for detailed on the map at Appendix 1 to the report, included Birkenhead Town Centre, Hamilton Square and a large part of the surrounding commercial areas. The Area included approximately 8,500 residential properties, up to 1800 non-residential commercial and business properties and had an estimated resident population of 12,900.

Councillor Pat Hackett also informed that a public consultation exercise had taken place in accordance with the Delegated Decision published on 7 May 2015, to comply with national regulations. The Cabinet noted that the application for the designation of the Neighbourhood Area had to be

determined within 13 weeks of the application being publicised, which in this case expired on 19 August 2015.

The report recommended that the application for the neighbourhood area, as applied for, be refused but that a reduced area be designated to the south and east of Borough Road, to better reflect the delineation of local communities and the character of the area.

The Neighbourhood Area that was recommended to be designated, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, would still include approximately 5,160 residential properties and up to 200 non-residential properties and would have an estimated residential population of 10,200.

The Cabinet noted that the Council was unable to refuse to designate a neighbourhood planning forum that met the minimum statutory requirements (which included a written constitution, with a purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area; and an open membership, with a minimum of 21 individuals who lived or worked or were elected to represent the area) and the Council must designate some or all of the neighbourhood area applied for, unless it considered that the specified area was not an appropriate area to be designated as a neighbourhood area. The reasons for refusing or amending an application had to be published and could be challenged in the courts.

Once designated, no other organisation or body could be designated for that neighbourhood area until that designation expired or was withdrawn.

Any future Neighbourhood Development Plan (for any area) had to have regard to national policy and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained within the Council's adopted Local Plans and could only be legally made following statutory consultation, independent examination and a majority vote in a local referendum.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the application for the neighbourhood area be refused and that the reduced area shown on the plan attached at Appendix 2 to the report be formally designated as the statutory Neighbourhood Area for Birkenhead and Tranmere;**
- (2) a document setting out the decision to refuse the neighbourhood area application and a statement of the Council's reasons for refusal together with the Council's reasons for making the decision to designate an area smaller than was applied for be published in accordance with Regulation 7 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and Section 61G of the Town**

**and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy;**

- (3) the Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Planning Forum be asked to confirm that it is still willing to act in relation to the smaller area and to confirm that it is still able to meet the conditions for designation set out in Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) before the Council agrees to formally designate it as the statutory neighbourhood planning forum for the smaller Neighbourhood Area of Birkenhead and Tranmere; and**
- (4) subject to a positive response pursuant to resolution (3) above, the application for the neighbourhood forum be reported back to a future meeting of the Cabinet, to allow the designation of the neighbourhood forum to be confirmed.**