

# CABINET

Thursday, 8 December 2016

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council
			Strategic Economic Development, Finance & Devolution
	Councillors	G Davies	Housing and Community Safety
		C Jones	Adult Social Services
		AR McLachlan	Transformation, Leisure & Culture
		B Mooney	Environment
		M Patrick	Community Engagement and Communications
		T Smith	Children and Family Services
		S Whittingham	Highways and Infrastructure
		J Williamson	Public Health

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

Councillor Stuart Whittingham declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Items No 15 and 19 on the agenda – Changes to the Governance Arrangements – Leasowe Community Homes and Leasowe Community Homes Constitution – Exempt Appendix (Minute Nos. 76 and 79 refers) by virtue of him being a Board Member of Magenta Living.

Councillor Bernie Mooney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Items No 15 and 19 on the agenda – Changes to the Governance Arrangements – Leasowe Community Homes and Leasowe Community Homes Constitution – Exempt Appendix (Minute Nos. 76 and 79 refers) by virtue of her being a Member of Leasowe Community Homes Management Board.

Both Members indicated that they would leave the meeting room whilst these items of business were under consideration.

Councillor Phil Davies declared a personal interest in Item No. 8 on the agenda – Capital Monitoring 2016/17 (Quarter 2) (Minute No. 69 refers.) as it made reference to the Hive, Wirral's soon to be opened Youth Zone and he was on the Board.

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

Councillor Stuart Whittingham declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Items No 15 and 19 on the agenda – Changes to the Governance

Arrangements – Leasowe Community Homes and Leasowe Community Homes Constitution – Exempt Appendix (Minute Nos. 76 and 79 refers) by virtue of him being a Board Member of Magenta Living.

Councillor Bernie Mooney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Items No 15 and 19 on the agenda – Changes to the Governance Arrangements – Leasowe Community Homes and Leasowe Community Homes Constitution – Exempt Appendix (Minute Nos. 76 and 79 refers) by virtue of her being a Member of Leasowe Community Homes Management Board.

Both Members indicated that they would leave the meeting room whilst these items of business were under consideration.

Councillor Phil Davies declared a personal interest in Item No. 8 on the agenda – Capital Monitoring 2016/17 (Quarter 2) (Minute No. 69 refers.) as it made reference to the Hive, Wirral's soon to be opened Youth Zone and he was on the Board.

63 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.**

64 **EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the following Key Decisions that had been taken under delegated powers during the period 28 October (date of publication of last Cabinet agenda) to 17 November be noted:**

- **Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure Parking Enforcement Contract Extension.**

**Call-In expired on 17 November 2016.**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“Following the devolution deal agreed in November 2015, the Liverpool City Region has the opportunity for a major transfer of resources, powers and responsibilities from Government, alongside governance changes to adopt a directly elected LCR Mayor.*

*This report outlines the final legal and governance requirements to establish the new devolved powers and functions”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report that outlined the final legal and governance requirements to establish the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Mayoral Model with the devolved powers and functions agreed as part of the Devolution Deal in November 2015.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the LCR Order as detailed in the revised Appendix 3 to the report (as circulated at the Council meeting on 6 December 2016) which sets out the powers to be devolved to the LCRCA and directly elected Mayor be agreed;**
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to agree, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the two opposition Political Group Leaders, minor amendments with Government and subsequently provide confirmation of Wirral Council’s formal consent to Government in respect of the LCR Order;**
- (3) the governance principles, previously agreed by the Council and LCRCA in November 2015, that will form the basis of the revised LCRCA constitution be noted and reaffirmed; and**
- (4) the scrutiny principles as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report be agreed and it be noted that these will be incorporated into the revised LCRCA constitution.**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council – Strategic Economic Development, Finance and Devolution, said:**

*“In 2020 Wirral has to be self-sufficient – the only money we will have to invest in our borough, in the services residents rely on, will be the money we can raise ourselves. This simple fact puts strengthening our economy, supporting businesses to grow and encouraging businesses to move here and create jobs, at the top of our agenda.*

*We have big ambitions for Wirral and, working with our partners in the Liverpool City Region and throughout the North West, we must maximise the impact of the huge opportunities before us: downtown Birkenhead, New Brighton, Bromborough Business Park, Hoylake Golf Resort and more.*

*This report proposes the development of a new company to drive these efforts. Building on the success delivered by Liverpool and Manchester over the past decade, this new company would provide Wirral with the ability to promote itself, attract investors and translate their interest into sustainable new businesses, economic growth and jobs for Wirral residents”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report which informed that economic development had become a major local government activity over the past two decades. This was because many cities and boroughs had recognised how important it was to support the growth in jobs in their area and in particular, had looked to attract highly skilled jobs which paid well.

To support this, a range of policies had been adopted in relation to land clearance, retail development, public transport, roads, housing, and marketing. Where councils initially concentrated on creating an environment for businesses to flourish, changes to the UK economy had prompted a more assertive and commercial approach to regeneration.

As government capital grant reduced and access to traditional bank finance became harder for the public sector to raise, councils were exploring opportunities for new ways to lever in investment to support growth, including

the use of their own property and land assets, borrowing, pension funds and more flexibility to be active in the bond markets.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a 'power of competence' which further encouraged councils to introduce innovative trading models around development companies in recognition that the private sector and investors wanted to work with councils through specific company structures.

Wirral Council was no different. The implementation of the Council's new operating model had put the organisation in a position where we were more able to understand and capitalise on the opportunity for growth in the borough: studies had been commissioned to understand how transport and infrastructure could be improved, strategic land acquisitions had been made and proposals were being developed for further land assembly. The Council was regularly being contacted by leading investors and was working towards the launch of a compelling investment proposition to further drive awareness of and interest in Wirral as a place to do business.

Whilst the strategic leadership of the growth agenda would sit within the Council alongside other related statutory functions such as planning, there was a need to create delivery structures which could more easily partner and work with the private sector. Through the Council's Transformation Programme, work was being undertaken to complete an options appraisal to establish a property company (PropCo). This would be presented to the Cabinet in February 2017. It was anticipated this company would lead the Council's development activity and secure increased income for the Council which could be used to support service delivery.

The preliminary work undertaken to develop the options appraisal for a property company had identified an urgent need to initiate further activity to:

- More effectively promote Wirral's growth agenda and potential to investors in a strategic, structure, highly professional and commercial fashion.
- Promote opportunities to existing businesses to secure improved and increased space.
- Ensure inward investment was managed in an integrated and strategic way with our partners.
- Join up Partners, Council, Investors, Businesses and Residents around a single vision for Wirral's regeneration.

The report recommended that further work be undertaken over the next four weeks with a view to establishing the case for a wholly owned Local Authority company, in addition to the proposed PropCo, to undertake the work detailed in the report. This activity supported the ambitions of the Wirral Plan, in particular the Pledges and priorities described within the Wirral Growth Plan.

## **RESOLVED: That Cabinet**

- (1) instructs officers to develop a business case and supporting business plan confirming the viability of the preferred option, to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting in February 2017;**
- (2) in the case of a viable arms-length company, instructs Officers to develop a legal framework and governance structure for approval; and**
- (3) authorises officers to assemble a project team to progress work on the set up of a new structure.**

67

## **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2015/16**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“Wirral Council’s accounts have once again received an unqualified opinion from our external auditors – demonstrating the confidence with which our financial management is viewed.*

*External Audit has rightly highlighted the findings of the recent Ofsted inspection into Children’s Services as an issue, and has highlighted it in their Value for Money assessment. Improvements to these services continue at pace, and the Council remains committed to delivering the excellent services Wirral residents deserve”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced this report, which reminded Members that the Council’s Constitution allocated responsibility for the approval of the Statement of Accounts to the Audit and Risk Management Committee. The draft Statement for 2015/16 published on 30 June 2016 was subject to audit by Grant Thornton, the Council’s External Auditors, and their findings were presented and approved at the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting on 26 September 2016. The Statement of Accounts 2015/16 had been published on 30 September 2016 – the statutory deadline for publication.

The Accounts included the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) accounts as the Council was the Administering Authority for MPF. As the MPF received a separate Audit Findings Report, this had been considered by the Pensions Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2016 and the Audit and Risk Management Committee as part of the approval of the Accounts.

These had been finalised and published and were being reported to the Cabinet for information and noting.

The Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 and action plan had been considered and approved at the same meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

The Cabinet noted the content of the Annual Audit Letter 2015/16 that had been presented to Audit and Risk Management Committee on 22 November 2016.

Councillor Phil Davies drew attention to the financial position of the Council following the audit showed an in year revenue under spend of £1.3 million and year-end balances of £22.2 million. He thanked all the Officers who had been involved with the accounts.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 and Annual Audit Letter be noted; and**
- (2) progress on delivering the actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement be monitored by Audit and Risk Management Committee.**

68 **REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17 (QUARTER 2)**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“Ongoing national austerity policies continue to place huge pressure on local government, particularly in relation to funding social care for adults and children.*

*Providing these services – at the right quality – is absolutely vital to support our most vulnerable residents. Wirral has taken positive and proactive action to ensure our budget is sustainable and we are able to manage this hugely increased demand.*

*We will continue to work hard to ensure our resources are well-managed, used to deliver best value for Wirral residents, and enables us to deliver our 20 Pledges”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report which set out the projected revenue position for 2016/17 as at the end of quarter 2 (30 September 2016). The latest forecast was an under spend of £0.2 million for 2016/17, being an improvement of £1.3 million on the quarter 1 forecast. (£1.1 million over spent).

The over spend in the Families and Wellbeing Directorate had increased during the second quarter. The Treasury Management report on the agenda recommended to Council the adoption of the annuity method for calculating Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in respect of capital financing. This change would contribute a significant one-off saving in 2016/17 and compensate for the over spends elsewhere in the 2016/17 budget.

The report also provided details of the re-allocation of existing budgets to reflect the New Operating Model which had been implemented on 1 November 2016.

Councillor Davies highlighted a forecasted over spend of £3.6 million which related predominantly to Community Care, where a number of ongoing pressures existed around demographics and demand. The actions to deal with these at the start of the year were now experiencing slippage.

A number of savings were rated red or amber and were mainly prior year savings. Progress of these was being closely monitored, however delivery of them was challenging as they related to changes in care. Resources were identified within – and had been allocated from – the Revenue Budget Contingency to offset the pressures in 2016/17.

Adult Social Care Budgets across the country are under pressure with local authorities, public sector agencies and private providers all highlighting concerns to the Government. Councillor Davies informed that there was a real crisis in social care and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not taken the opportunity to announce some help for local authorities on this in his Autumn Statement.

Councillor Ann McLachlan made reference to the Government's decision to let local authorities increase council tax by 2% to fund social care and informed that it had not taken account of changing demographics and that people are now living longer. The Council tax base in Wirral was mostly in the A, B and C bands so the situation was dismal for Wirral and the situation regarding social care was disgraceful.

Councillor Bernie Mooney agreed with Councillor McLachlan and informed that more needed to be done to highlight the issues and that the Government must find ways to invest more into care services for the elderly and the disabled.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the quarter 2 forecast year end underspend of £0.2 million, which contains a number of significant variances, be noted;**
- (2) Officers identify actions and take measures to assist to reduce the impact of the projected overspends;**
- (3) the significant in-year contribution offered by the change in Treasury Management assumed in the projections be noted;**
- (4) the realignment of budgets to reflect the New Operating Budget are referred to Council for approval; and**
- (5) Cabinet believes that the failure by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to announce any additional funding to tackle the crisis in social care in his recent Autumn Statement was a huge missed opportunity. Cabinet requests that all parties on the Council make strong representations to the Government to make extra resources available for social care, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that Councils like Wirral can continue to provide good quality care to the most vulnerable members of the community.**

69 **CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17 (QUARTER 2)**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“The Capital Programme demonstrates the major investment we are making in Wirral: improving schools, housing, roads and public buildings. We are also making use of new opportunities to utilise capital funding to deliver transformational change to public services, ensuring we can deliver on our 20 Pledges even with vastly reduced financial resources”.*

Councillor Phil Davies provided the Cabinet with an update on progress towards delivering the Capital Programme 2016/17 as at the end of September 2016.

The report recommended the Cabinet to approve the 2016/17 Capital Programme of £38.1 million which had taken into account re-profiling identified during both the 2015/16 final accounts process, latest reviews of

the current year and additional grant funding notified to the Council. The Cabinet noted that the expenditure to date was £10.6 million.

Councillor Tony Smith highlighted the new classroom that had been constructed at Ellera Park School to meet capacity needs. This project had included improved external accessibility and play areas. He also drew attention to the two classrooms that had been extended at Mersey Park School to provide additional space and improved IT. The Cabinet was informed that a resource/group room had been constructed to provide additional space for small group work and break out space.

Councillor Smith also highlighted the development at Stanley School that included two additional classrooms with the latest and most up to date learning facilities, providing excellent teaching environments which were comfortable and provide safe spaces. These classrooms would have assisted lifting and hygiene facilities and the latest IT equipment. He also reported that The Hive, Wirral's soon to be opened Youth Zone, was progressing according to schedule with the completion date expected mid-February 2017. Councillor Smith informed that Officers had done an excellent job and he thanked them.

Councillor S Whittingham informed that expenditure had been incurred on various highway maintenance schemes such as hot road asphaltting where 20 schemes were either complete or underway with spend totalling £0.75 million, Micro asphaltting with 7 schemes complete or underway totalling £0.67 million and Surface dressing with 12 schemes complete or underway totalling £0.43 million. He also informed that the scheme to replace the docks bridges, which had attracted significant Government grant funding over the next two years, had commenced.

Councillor B Mooney reported that the West Kirby Flood alleviation works also involved grant funding and a re-profiled business case had been submitted to the environment Agency. Approval was awaited so the funding had been re-profiled to 2017/18.

Councillor George Davies informed that £0.7 million of grant aid had been provided for the provision of essential aids and adaptations giving disabled people better freedom of movement in and around their homes. He also informed that the home improvement scheme had provided £0.3 million of financial assistance and intervention to remedy poor housing conditions in the private sector.

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet**

- (1) notes the spend to date at Month 6 of £10.6 million, with 50% of the financial year having elapsed; and**

- (2) agrees and refers to Council the revised Capital Programme of £38.1 million (as shown in Table 1 of the report) which also includes a number of recommended virements as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

70 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING MID-YEAR 2016/17



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“The effective management of all of our resources is vital to the success of the Council. This includes our proactive approach to Treasury Management which will deliver a cash benefit of £8.7 million during 2016/17.*

*Achieving savings of such significant levels provides huge support to the front-line services residents rely on. We are able to achieve these savings from making business decisions regarding borrowing and investments to take advantage of commercial and funding opportunities alongside the security, liquidity and return on any investments”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report that informed that the Council’s treasury management activity was underpinned by CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), which required the production of annual Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommended that Members were informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

The report fulfilled the Authority’s legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) Investment Guidance.

The Cabinet noted that proactive Treasury Management activity resulted in previously identified one-off savings in 2016/17 of a minimum of £5 million:

- £2.5 million from a combination of reduced 2016/17 interest payments and revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge in 2016/17.
- a further £2.5 million being generated in associated backdated adjustments as a result of revising the Council’s MRP policy.

Councillor Davies reported that this 2016/17 one-off saving would increase to £8.7 million subject to the approval of the Council in relation to amending the Treasury

Management Strategy in calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision (as detailed in the report):

- £3.2 million from a combination of reduced 2016/17 interest payments and revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) charge in 2016/17.
- £5.5 million being generated in associated backdated adjustments as a result of revising the Council's MRP policy.

The Cabinet also noted that for 2017/18 the saving from the change to the MRP policy would increase from the previously agreed £0.45 million to £1.25 million as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Councillor Davies highlighted the excellent work Treasury Management had carried out flagging up the savings. This was really helpful and had taken the pressure off the overall budget. He was pleased with the magnitude of the savings made during Year 1.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2016/17 be agreed;**
- (2) the selection of the annuity method within 'Option 3 Asset Life' for calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) be endorsed and this amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy be referred to the Council for approval;**
- (3) the current estimated saving of £5.0 million from Treasury Management activities in 2016/17 be noted;**
- (4) subject to (2) above, it be noted the Treasury Management savings for 2016/17 will increase to £8.7 million; and**
- (5) subject to (2) above, it be noted that the Treasury Management savings for 2017/18 will increase to £1.25 million and this will be reflected in Budget 2017/18.**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“Every year, this Council faces a growing challenge to set a budget which enables us to protect the vulnerable and improve the lives of our residents. To achieve this we have to balance the rising costs and demand for services with the income we raise from Business Rates and Council Tax and the shrinking grants we receive from Central Government.*

*To deal with these challenges, Councils like Wirral have historically survived by making minor reductions to services, small increases in charges and asking our staff and our partners to do lot more with a lot less. This time, the truth is incremental change will no longer get the job done.*

*Over the next four years, Wirral Council has to find from increased income or spending reductions £132 million. That’s on top of the huge reductions and cuts we have already had to absorb and includes the requirement to find £45 million just next year.*

*We have ambitions for Wirral which we will not lower or compromise. We are planning long term, and will design a budget strategy covering the next four years which will allow us to deliver fundamental redesign of how the Council works and the services it provides.*

*We have spelled out where our priorities lie. The Wirral Plan and our 20 Pledges are our contract with the people of Wirral and we will deliver as promised. In this new age for local government, it is our job to make sure we focus our efforts, our resources and our energy on what is truly important to residents”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report which informed that, over the next four years, the Council was projecting to have a funding gap of £132 million, due in part to the Government’s austerity measures, rising costs and increasing demand for services.

The Cabinet noted that the report presented a Financial Strategy to enable the Council to set a balanced budget for 2017/18 and provide provisional budgets for the subsequent three years to 2020/21.

Over this period, it was reported that the Council would review every service currently provided, developing a range of new delivery arrangements to ensure the right outcomes were achieved for Wirral residents at a sustainable cost. The Cabinet noted that the Transformation Programme was a critical programme of work, which would take time to deliver but would ensure the organisation was able to keep its promises to residents within much reduced financial resources.

Under the Government's plans it was noted that local authorities would no longer receive the general Revenue Support Grant and would become largely self-reliant, based on income generated from Council Tax, Business Rates and Fees and charges. A major focus in the Financial Strategy was on generating more income to enable the Wirral Plan to be delivered.

Councillor Davies informed the Cabinet that the challenge was the local tax base, as approximately three quarters of the housing stock in Wirral was in Bands A, B and C. He referred to affluent Councils in the South of England who raised much more Council tax and was of the view that Members needed to continue to lobby the Government to revisit the present system.

Councillor Davies reported that the Council would have to find alternative ways to deliver. The Transformation Programme would set them out and proposals would be put forward in the New Year which would mean a cultural change to the way the Council currently operated. It would need to be more commercial and a whole range of efficiencies would be considered and the Council's reserves would also be put under scrutiny.

Councillors Matthew Patrick, Bernie Mooney and George Davies all concurred with Councillor Davies and reflected on the pain the Government's savage cuts had inflicted on residents and the Council's work force. Councillor Davies responded informing that he would continue to consult with the Trade Unions and would try to find ways to mitigate the effects of the savings being made.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the forecast Budget funding gap for 2017/18, currently of £45 million and the projected Budget funding gap for the period 2017/21 of £132 million be noted;**
- (2) the impact of the Budget reductions and proposals for 2017/18-2020/21 as summarised in Section 3 of the report be noted;**

- (3) Officers be authorised to complete any consultation and engagement with residents, partners and other stakeholders where required on the budget proposals in advance of Budget decisions being made in February 2017;
- (4) the report be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshops which will be scheduled during January 2017 so they can consider the proposals in advance of budget decisions to be made in February 2017; and
- (5) an updated Budget Report and Medium Term Financial Strategy be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 February 2017. This will to cover the updated financial projections, including the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement expected in mid-December 2016, and the outcome from the engagement and consultation undertaken.

## 72 TAX BASE 2017/18



Councillor Phil Davies, Leader said:

*“Ensuring the Council has enough income to provide the services residents rely upon whilst keeping Council Tax levels at a fair and affordable level is important. We continue to protect the most vulnerable in the line with our pledge in the Wirral Plan”.*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report that brought together related issues relating to the proposed Council Tax Tax-Base for 2017/18, upon which the annual billing and Council Tax levels would be set; the proposed Council Tax Discounts and exemptions for 2017/18 and the Council Tax Support Scheme to be used during 2017/18. All of which needed to be approved by Council by 31 January 2017.

Councillor Janette Williamson highlighted the increase in domestic abuse in Wirral and that the Council was honouring its pledge of zero tolerance to domestic violence. Councillor Davies replied that he was proud the Council was continuing to provide discounts to services that carried out fantastic work in the Borough.

**RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Council that**

- (1) the figure of 91,309.5 be approved as the Council Tax-Base for 2017/18;**
- (2) the level and award of each local discount for 2017/18 be:-**

**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 2017/18:-**

**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 Property Premium = 150%. Properties empty for more than two years**

**Council Tax Discretionary Relief Scheme**

**The Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme continues in its current format for 2017/18; and**

- (3) the Council Tax Support Scheme approved for use in 2016/17 be also approved as the Scheme for 2017/18.**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:**

*“The Agenda and Procedure proposed in this report has been discussed with all three Political Group Leaders and enables the requisite arrangements to be put in place for Council to effectively debate and agree its Budget for 2017/18 financial year.”*

The Cabinet considered a report that proposed that the Cabinet recommended to Council that the Agenda and Procedure for Budget Council (6 March 2017) set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

The Assistant Director: Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer proposed a minor amendment to the Speaker’s time allocations in respect of the Group Leaders, that Green Party Member (if applicable) be deleted and informed a revised Budget Council Agenda and Procedure would be circulated with the Council agenda the next day.

**RESOLVED That:**

- (1) with the inclusion of the Assistant Director: Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer’s amendment, the Agenda and Procedure for the Budget Council to be held on 6 March 2017 be recommended to Council for approval; and**
- (2) the Council be recommended to agree that the Assistant Director: Law and Governance be authorised to make any changes to the revised Agenda and/or Procedure for the Budget Council meeting, providing the consent of all three Political Group Leaders has been obtained.**



**Councillor Ann McLachlan, Cabinet Member - Transformation, Leisure and Culture (and Joint Deputy Leader of the Labour Group), said:**

*“The Wirral Plan was created to change people’s lives for the better: the 20 Pledges are our contract with the people of Wirral, and we will deliver as promised. Combined, they will have a huge impact, improving the quality of life every one of our residents can enjoy.*

*We are now well into the delivery phase of our Plan, and we are seeing some real results – concrete evidence which demonstrates the impact we are having all across the borough. We are also clear about where our challenges still exist.*

*We promised Wirral residents we would be open and honest with them about our progress and this report is an important part of that process”.*

Councillor Ann McLachlan introduced a report which provided a progress update on the ongoing delivery of the Wirral Plan and 20 Pledges. It focussed on key activities and successes in Quarter 2 (July to September 2016) and the progress which had been made.

Councillor McLachlan highlighted the following progress that had been made:

- Strong economic performance continued in Wirral, with the number of jobs created continuing to be above target and the overall employment rate had increased by 2.3% since the last comparable period in 2015. The innovative ‘Wirral Ways to Work’ Programme had also supported more than 200 residents since July, seeking to help them find employment and training opportunities.
- The condition of the Borough’s A, B and C roads had returned to an excellent position with targets for 2016/17 being exceeded. This meant Wirral had some of the best roads when compared to all other councils in England.
- A pilot approach to identify socially isolated older people had been completed in Eastham. The event had been led by Age UK Wirral and resulted in 76 people being referred to services across the Wirral Partnership to receive the help and support they needed.

- The take up of the 2 year old offer had improved from 72.2% at quarter one to 74.1%. There was a continuing challenge to ensure all eligible children took up their education places. The underlying data told us Birkenhead had the highest number of eligible children but had the lowest percentage take up. A new approach to tackle this was being developed and would be rolled out over the remainder of the reporting period.
- In line with our strategy to address under-reporting and reduce incidents of repeat domestic abuse, the number of referrals continued to increase in quarter 2 and repeat victimisation had reduced. There remained a challenge to address the perceived under-reporting in households with children. The Tomorrow's Women Wirral Peer Mentor Project had proved to be a highly effective community-based support programme for survivors of domestic abuse. It had resulted in peer mentors being trained up to champion domestic abuse support in order that more victims had the confidence to come forward.
- September had seen a number of successful events across Wirral, such as the Festival of Transport in Birkenhead Park and the Wirral Golf Classic held in Hoylake. As well as fulfilling the objectives of the leisure and culture strategies, these events had also contributed to Wirral's visitor economy.
- The Council continued to see strong performance in littering enforcement. Over 5,700 fixed penalty notices had been issued for littering offences with over 1,900 prosecutions being referred to the courts, out of these 1,398 had been successful in bringing about a conviction. Dog fouling enforcement performance had also increased significantly from last year.

Councillors Janette Williamson and Bernie Mooney both spoke about healthier options in respect of take away food and the 'Take Away for Change' initiative in Rock Ferry that had won a national award. It had been initiated by Trading Standards but was now being run in partnership with Public Health. Members thanked the Officers who were involved with this fantastic project.

**RESOLVED:**

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



**Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member – Housing and Community Safety and Deputy Leader of the Council, said:**

*“The sale of Acre Lane demonstrates our commitment to the Wirral Plan. Rather than an under-used, expensive council office building, the Acre Lane site will soon contain new, high-quality homes for Wirral residents.*

*This supports our Pledge to deliver more housing, and it supports the council’s financial position through generating significant income from the sale of the site”.*

Councillor George Davies introduced a report that advised the Cabinet of the terms for disposal of the site of the former Acre Lane Professional Excellence Centre, Eastham. Attached to the report was a site plan.

The Cabinet noted that the proposals in the report supported the following pledges contained in the Council’s five year plan:

- Council making better use of its assets.
- To build 3,500 new homes.

Details of the minimum offer were appended to the report. The appendix was exempt from publication under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 due to the commercial sensitivities of that information. (Minute No. 78 refers.)

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the terms of the sale as set out in the report be noted;**
- (2) Cabinet authorises officers to accept a guaranteed minimum figure or any other higher figure achieved through negotiation with the developer to reach the final figure depending on the affordable homes outcome;**
- (3) it be noted that as part of the Wirral Plan the proposal in the report supports the pledges to ensure to Council makes better use of its assets and to meet the Council’s target of 3,500 new homes.**

**Councillors Bernie Mooney and Stuart Whittingham left the meeting whilst the next item of business was considered.**

## CHANGES TO THE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS - LEASOWE COMMUNITY HOMES



**Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member – Housing and Community Safety (and Deputy Leader of the Council), said:**

*“It is important housing providers in the borough operate within high standards of governance. This report provides the Cabinet and the Council with important information on changes to the Governance Arrangements for Leasowe Community Homes”.*

Councillor George Davies introduced a report that advised that the Council, as a Company Member of Leasowe Community Homes (LCH) would be required to vote on proposals for LCH to move to a Board that was selected on the basis of skills rather than by constituency nominations and for the company to leave Your Housing Group (YHG) of which it was currently a subsidiary and to become a subsidiary of Pierhead Housing Association (PHA).

Leasowe Community Homes Board (LCH Board) had agreed to move to a Board recruited for the skills and experience necessary to enable the organisation to move into more diverse and commercial areas of business and demonstrate it met the standard required by the Regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the current business in the new operating environment.

YHG and the LCH Board were satisfied that the substitution of PHA for YHG was in the interests of LCH’s tenants and of all three organisations.

### **RESOLVED: That the Cabinet and full Council**

- (1) agrees that Leasowe Community Homes becomes a subsidiary of Pierhead Housing Association and enters into an Intragroup Agreement with Pierhead Housing Association in the terms set out in Appendix 4 of the report;**
- (2) agrees that Leasowe Community Homes move to a Board of Directors that is selected on the basis of skills rather than by constituency nominations;**

- (3) agrees to the removal of Your Housing Group from the constitution of Leasowe Community Homes;**
- (4) agrees that Leasowe Community Homes Memorandum and Articles of Association be revised to reflect the changes and the Minority Protection Agreement be replaced by the Intragroup Agreement.**
- (5) authorises the Council's nominees as Company Members of Leasowe Community Homes to agree the necessary changes to Leasowe Community Homes Memorandum and Articles of Association as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;**
- (6) authorises the Council's nominees as Company Members to vote on the changes (and associated matters) proposed and referred to in the report at the forthcoming Leasowe Community Homes Meeting;**
- (7) refers these agreed decisions to the full Council meeting on 19 December 2016 for confirmatory approval to the extent that they relate to non-Executive functions such as the Council's housing policies but subject to the condition that they Board of Leasowe Community Homes is satisfied after carrying out due diligence enquiries that the proposed arrangements are viable and in the interests of the company and its tenants.**
- (8) the Council nominated Members on the Board of Leasowe Community Homes undertake and be provided with all requisite training necessary to be an effective Director on the Board of Leasowe Community Homes; and**
- (9) the Call-In procedure shall not apply to these (Executive) decisions, the Chief Executive having agreed it was in the public interest that they be taken as a matter of urgency on or before 19 December 2016 which is the deadline Your Housing Group has set for the Council's approval of the changes referred to above.**

**Councillors Bernie Mooney and Stuart Whittingham returned to the meeting.**

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

**RESOLVED: That, under section 100 (A) (4) 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\* of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.**

*[\* paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)]*

**78 DISPOSAL OF ACRE LANE PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE CENTRE  
BROMBOROUGH - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the content of the exempt appendix (reference report Agenda Item No. 14 – Minute No. 75) be noted.**

**Councillors Bernie Mooney and Stuart Whittingham left the meeting.**

**79 LEASOWE COMMUNITY HOMES CONSTITUTION - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the content of the exempt appendix (reference report Agenda Item No. 15 – Minute No. 76) be noted.**