

CABINET

Monday, 16 January 2017

Present: Councillor P Davies (Chair) Leader of the Council
Strategic Economic Development,
Finance & Devolution

Councillors G Davies Housing & Community Safety
C Jones Adult Social Services
AR McLachlan Transformation, Leisure & Culture
B Mooney Environment
M Patrick Community Engagement &
Communications
S Whittingham Highways and Infrastructure
J Williamson Public Health

Apologies Councillors T Smith Children & Family Services

80 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

81 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

82 EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

It was reported that no Key Decisions had been taken under delegated powers during the period of 30 November 2016 (date of publication of the last Cabinet agenda) to the date of this meeting.



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

“This type of in-depth ‘task and finish’ review is an example of the Council’s approach to overview and scrutiny having a real impact on policy development and important decisions. This particular report is extremely helpful, with Members of all three main political parties in Wirral providing a detailed review and analysis of the subject.”

At its meeting on 30 November 2016 the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had referred the Scrutiny Review, ‘Number of Councillors’ to the Cabinet. The review had been undertaken in response to a Notice of Motion presented to the Council in October 2014.

Councillor Steve Foulkes, a Member of the Scrutiny Panel who had carried out the review attended the Cabinet meeting and introduced the report, completed in November 2016 which set out the Panel’s findings. He informed that the Chair of the Panel, Councillor Phil Brightmore had been unable to attend the Cabinet meeting because of his work commitments.

Councillor Foulkes informed that the Panel had considered the role of the local councillor in Wirral, the role of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and the available data comparing the number of Councillors in Wirral with other local authorities in England. Panel Members had wanted to reach an informed view on whether or not the Council should actively progress a referral to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to conduct an Electoral Review. The Cabinet was noted that the work carried out was aligned with the Wirral Plan Pledge – Community Services are Joined up and Accessible.

Councillor Foulkes reported that the Panel, having reviewed the Commission’s remit, processes and timescales for Further Electoral Review, had accepted that the only mechanism to change the number of councillors in Wirral would be via such a review. The Panel had concluded that it would take a significant amount of resources to prepare for and undergo a review and the Commission timescales demonstrated that this would be a lengthy process, with a less than certain outcome. Any potential savings were unlikely be realised for up to two years.

Councillor Foulkes informed that the Panel had been encouraged by evidence which demonstrated that the Council compared favourably against other councils in respect of electoral equality, as a recognised measure of council size. Of particular note was the ward level data on electoral variation which showed that Wirral was within the Commission's parameters on electoral equality across its wards and, therefore, would not trigger the threshold for a Further Electoral Review.

The Panel had been further reassured that the cost of councillors in Wirral was lower than many of its neighbouring and similar sized national authorities, as evidenced by comparisons of Members' Allowance Schemes and acknowledged by the recent meeting of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances. The Panel had noted the potential annual saving which a reduction in councillors could deliver, although the Panel believed that any cost saving identified would need to take into account increased costs associated with a likely rise in demand on officer workloads.

The Panel was conscious that statistical comparisons with other authorities should not be used alone to determine the number of councillors and the Panel recognised the uniqueness of each area and the need for each council to tailor its services to the needs of each community. An understanding of the varied role of the local ward councillors in Wirral had been considered by the Panel to be equally important when forming its conclusions. The evidence from the comparisons made was that the Council was providing reasonable value for money and Members had not had an increase in their allowances for a number of years.

Councillor Foulkes reported that having reviewed both general and Wirral specific definitions of the role of councillors, considered average hours per week spent on council business, and the variety of factors which affected the ward councillors' workload, the Panel had concluded that the role of the councillor in Wirral was wide-ranging and varied and placed a significant demand on councillors' time. The Panel had been concerned about the impact a reduction of councillors may have on councillors' ability to fulfil their roles effectively. Currently, the community was well represented although the Council was under represented by woman, ethnic minorities and the disabled.

Councillor Foulkes also informed that the Panel was aware of the significant changes facing councils in the future and the uncertainty around councillors' roles as these were adapted to meet new challenges. In this context, the Panel had concluded that any review of the number of councillors in Wirral should not take place until the extent of these changes and their impact on roles was better understood. This had been the unanimous view of the Review Panel.

Councillor Janette Williamson noted that there was cross party acknowledgement that the Council provided good value. This was based on

factual evidence and she hoped that more people could be encouraged to stand for election onto the Council.

Councillor Bernie Moody informed that the public did not understand what Councillors did. The Panel's report had been in depth. Therefore, she hoped that the Council could move forward with people now having a better understanding of the roles of Councillors. She welcomed the report and thanked everyone who had been involved in its preparation.

Councillor George Davies informed that he considered that the Review Panel had completed a good piece of work and it was now on record that good work could be carried out when the political groups worked together.

Councillor Phil Davies also thanked the Review Panel for the good work it had completed including the evidence based analysis of the facts. He informed that as Councillors, they were well placed in the lower quartile regarding funding and ratio of councillors. Compared to neighbouring councils and its comparator authorities, Wirral Councillors represented good value for money. The Review Panel had undertaken some important work which had concluded that reducing 66 Councillors down to 44 was not a particularly smart way forward. The role of the Council was changing massively and would continue to do so. Councillors would have even more important roles to play as government funding continued to reduce, by working in partnership with other agencies and outside bodies.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the findings of the report be endorsed and the recommendation arising from this review be approved; and**
- (2) the Review Panel's report be referred to the Council for its endorsement of its findings.**



Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, 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 are determined to ensure Wirral residents have access to good, high-paying jobs, at businesses which are supported to succeed and expand. The proposals contained within this report are part of our drive to achieve this”.

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report which informed that the Wirral Plan: a 2020 Vision included a number of outcomes and actions relating to economic growth within the Borough. This was based on the recognition that economic development was a critical activity to support Wirral’s residents to access jobs, housing and achieve a good quality of life. To deliver the Wirral Plan the Council was taking an approach which would catalyse and encourage significant amounts of investment into the Borough, including creating appropriate delivery structures which could more easily work with and respond to the private sector.

In December 2016 the Council had agreed a report entitled ‘Delivering Wirral’s Growth’ which had outlined proposals for creating a property company to drive forward investment, regeneration and secure increased income for the Council, and officers had been instructed to present an options appraisal to the Cabinet at its meeting in February 2017. The report had also identified a number of actions which needed to be progressed in parallel to this work in order to capitalise on immediate opportunities for growth within the Borough and also to ensure the establishment of the proposed property company would be supported by a strong and coherent offer to investors. Officers were authorised to progress a number of actions.

The report set out the work officers had undertaken to scope these activities further and to identify how best they could be delivered. The report also set out some key short term opportunities which were critical to raising Wirral’s profile and, therefore, maximising its ability to attract investment. This included ensuring Wirral’s growth opportunities were developed into

propositions for the international property forum, MIPIM, which was taking place in March 2017. The MIPIM conference took place annually and was the key event attended by the world's major development and investment companies looking for investment opportunities.

The Cabinet noted that Officers had reviewed the options outlined in the December 2016 report in respect of the approach that could be adopted to deliver these activities and, given the need to capitalise on these events, to deliver at pace and provide a more co-ordinated offer to investors, it was proposed that these actions could be most effectively and efficiently progressed through a combination of approaches including:

- work carried out in-house – utilising input from officers within the Strategic Hub;
- targeted and initially short term collaboration with key city region partners already active in this area of work. Liverpool Vision has expertise in both marketing and investment and their officers have worked across the city region on events such as the International Festival for Business. Liverpool Vision is currently organising the city region's input to MIPIM 2017;
- the creation of a short term post to drive investor development activity and to ensure that the investment market is fully alerted to the property company proposal.

The Cabinet also noted that this approach would enable work to be carried out in the short term to meet the timescales associated with MIPIM and the establishment of the Property Company, whilst allowing for a review to be undertaken after six months to establish whether there was a need for the activities to be continued, in the light of the setting up of a property company and future city region activities.

These actions would support the Wirral Plan pledges as set out in the Wirral Growth Plan, including:

- Increase inward investment
- Greater job opportunities in Wirral Council
- Thriving Small businesses

Although this was not a key decision, in the light of the time critical nature of these activities, it was considered necessary to request that call-in be waived. This would enable the activities to progress at once and, therefore, ensure that work was completed in time to meet deadlines for key events such as MIPIM. Due to the absence of the Chief Executive, and on his behalf, the Assistant Chief Executive had recommended that call-in be waived.

RESOLVED:

- (1) officers be authorised to work with Liverpool Vision over the next six months to develop the strategic narrative to underpin the proposed Property Company and to deliver value propositions for the promotion of Wirral's growth opportunities. This approach will be reviewed in line with emerging Combined Authority arrangements;
- (2) officers be authorised to create and advertise a temporary post to drive forward investor development activity and to carry out a review to determine whether there was a business case for the continuation on the post; and
- (3) given the urgency to implement these proposals, in order to deliver the time critical activities, the call-in to be waived.

85 INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE



Councillor Christine Jones said:

“Giving people the tools and options to remain independent, to feel supported and safe is incredibly important. Moving towards integration between the NHS and social care is a huge step towards achieving this goal and delivering people joined up, effective services which are tailored to suit individual needs.”

Councillor Christine Jones introduced a report which informed that social care services played an important role in enabling vulnerable people to maintain independence and keep well in Wirral. The cost of Adult Social Care was, however significant and it did not operate in isolation. The inter-dependency between Health and Care systems had become increasingly clear over recent years. Nationally, Councils were faced with increasing demand on social care services which presented as a challenge to meet within the available resources. Central Government had directed Local Authorities and NHS providers to integrate social care and health services locally to provide both sustainability and a better experience for people who use those services.

In Wirral, the proposal was to create an integrated commissioning hub to pool social care and health resources and to jointly commission services. The commissioning hub initiative would enable the health and care system to use Wirral's resources together to jointly create a sustainable health and care system. A further proposal was to integrate the frontline assessment and support planning process which would contribute to meeting the challenges of growth and demand, and provide an improved service for local residents. The integrated front line service would deliver the assessment and support planning function for older people and adults and the proposal was that this service would be provided by the NHS Wirral Community Foundation Trust (WCFT) who provided community health services in Wirral. This would involve the transfer of social care staff to the NHS in order to provide joined up seamless health and social care delivery services for older people and adults. A separate proposal for an all age disability, and all age mental health integrated service was planned for 2018.

The report set out key aspects of the integration programme which was focussed on improving outcomes for residents with the aim of delivering the right care in the right place at the right time. It also covered key transformation costs and outlined the main elements of the proposed transfer for staff consultation and detailed the Key Strategic Outcomes.

Councillor Ann McLachlan made reference to the social care crisis, the chronic underfunding by the Government and its huge missed opportunity to address the immediate funding pressures in last year's Autumn Statement. Consequently, she considered that it was very timely that the Cabinet was considering this report.

Councillor McLachlan referred to the Notice of Motion – Crisis in Social Care considered by the Council at its meeting on 19 December 2016 and the decision that had received all party support, to lobby the Secretary of State for Health requesting an urgent meeting to secure the additional funding needed for social care. She informed that the Integration Project would plan for the next four to five years, in light of the funding pressures (demographic growth was ongoing, inflationary pressures and current in year pressures). These pressures would be contained by joining forces with the Wirral Community Foundation Trust.

Councillor McLachlan turned her attention to the Integrated Commissioning Hub which was part of a much bigger project. She informed that the Council was taking a longer term view, delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time. The Council had to ensure that services were right and properly communicated and that staff were consulted. Going forward the Cabinet had to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation to make sure the right level of care was provided and that value for money was achieved. This was one of the key Transformation Projects being brought forward.

Councillor Phil Davies underlined the importance of this agenda. He informed that it was very critical that the Council delivered sustainable services going forward and this involved looking at new delivery models in partnership. The aim was to ensure good quality public services were delivered to the people of Wirral. It was imperative that the Government properly funded social care services. This approach and working more with NHS colleagues would help. The Council would exercise due diligence and hold proper consultations with the Trade Unions and then report back to the Cabinet.

Councillor Phil Davies referred to paragraph 6.5 of the report as follows:

Quality

A Quality and Governance framework will oversee the quality of the service. This will be in the form of a Partnership Governance Board which will include the Council's principal Social Worker for professional standards. This will maintain a focus on the quality of outcomes for residents and ensure that services meet the statutory duties of the council.'

Councillor Davies asked the Director of Health & Care and his Team to give consideration to his proposal that the Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care be invited to sit on the Partnership Governance Board as he considered that this would be a helpful approach to this initiative.

Councillor Davies informed that he looked forward to the detailed business case being presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) further implementation of the integration programme for health and care be approved;**
- (2) a proposed delegation of relevant functions to WCFT, with relevant staff transfer be approved in principle and following approval of final terms and documents, including a full business case, be presented to a future Cabinet meeting;**
- (3) the commencement of formal staff consultation with the staff identified as in scope for potential transfer to the integrated service be approved; and**
- (4) in relation to the Integrated Commissioning Hub it be agreed that work to pool resources and to set out appropriate governance arrangements is progressed and a further report setting out the detailed arrangements be presented to the Cabinet in February 2017.**