

CABINET

Monday, 4 September 2017

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council Growth
	Councillors	P Brightmore A Davies G Davies C Jones B Mooney M Patrick C Spriggs J Williamson S Whittingham	Environment Transformation Housing and Community Safety Social Care and Health Children and Families Localism and Engagement Delivering Differently Finance and Income Generation Highways and Transport

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

No declarations of interest were received.

32 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17 July 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

33 **RESIDENT PARKING SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Councillor Phil Davies reported that this item of business had been deferred.

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

The Cabinet noted that no Key Decisions had been taken under delegated powers during the period 7 July 2017 to the date of agenda publication (23 August 2017).



Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation, said:

“A priority in the Wirral Plan is that we are a place where employers want to invest and businesses are able to thrive. Encouraging small businesses to develop and grow is at the heart of this and as business rates represent a significant cost to them, we are keen to ensure small businesses in particular can access rate relief.

The Council already operates a discretionary rate relief policy, which was approved for 2017/18. With the detail behind the government’s proposals for three other schemes now announced, the Council’s policy is being amended in order to provide support for more than 600 businesses and 100 public houses in Wirral this year.

This is a real demonstration that Wirral is a welcoming and supportive place to do business, with a local authority that aims to give them the best possible chance to succeed”.

Councillor Janette Williamson introduced a report by the Revenues Senior Manager which informed that the impact of the 2017 Business Rates Revaluation had been intended to be fiscally neutral. However, the Revaluation resulted in significant variations for some businesses. In recognition of this impact, the Government, in the Spring Budget 2017 had announced the availability of additional funding for businesses affected by the increase. Since then further details had been announced by the Government on the implementation of the proposals.

The report sought approval of additions to the Council’s National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy effective from 1 April 2017 which was appended. The changes related to the Government’s announcements in respect of Supporting Small Businesses, the Discretionary Fund and Support for Public Houses. With the detail behind the initial Government announcement now available, the Policy was recommended for amendment to enable the financial benefits to be given to businesses.

Councillor Williamson reported that the Council had made the process to be followed as simple as possible for all of those who qualified for this discretionary relief and was updating its computer software as quickly as possible in respect of this.

Councillor P Davies informed the Cabinet that he considered that this was a positive report that was picking up the pieces of the Government's re-evaluation exercise. He was pleased that the Council was able to help over 600 small business and 100 public houses this year. The additional funding provided by the Government was welcomed and it was noted that this may be the difference between some businesses' surviving rather than going under.

This was a Key Decision and affected all wards within the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy be amended to incorporate the changes in respect of Supporting Small Businesses, the Discretionary Fund and Support for Public Houses; and**
- (2) the National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief Policy as detailed in the Appendix to the report be approved for 2017/18.**

36

MAKING WIRRAL'S COMMUNITIES SAFE - THE SAFER WIRRAL HUB



Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety said:

“Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, making sure Wirral residents feel safe and are safe, could not be more important. Our residents have told us repeatedly that this should be among our top priorities and I am delighted and proud we have been able to create such an innovative and potentially powerful new approach.

For many years, we have worked in close partnership with our colleagues at Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service – working together to prosecute offenders, to tackle problem areas and issues, and doing all we can to make our communities safer places to live and visit. Last year we launched the Wirral Plan and

two of its twenty pledges laid out ambitious five year strategies to tackle Domestic Violence and to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe.

Now, we are going much further, and creating a fully integrated Police and Community Safety Service – the Safer Wirral Hub. The first of its kind in our region, our new combined unit will allow for more visible presence in communities, more joined up approaches to tackling issues such as domestic violence, anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood nuisance.

I believe this is a hugely important step. It will help make Wirral safer, it will help tackle the issues our residents tell us are a problem, and – even in times of continuing austerity and cuts to resources – it is an imaginative and radical plan to deliver a better service to our residents”.

Councillor George Davies introduced a report by the Strategic Commissioner - Environment that contained the following quote (from Ensuring Wirral's Neighbourhoods were Safe, March 20169):

“Success in building safer neighbourhoods is beyond the ability of the Police or the Council alone and requires an even greater partnership approach within and across all partner agencies communities.”

The Cabinet was aware that the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision set out a shared partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan were underpinned through the development and implementation of a set of key strategies and a delivery plan.

It was noted that the communities of Wirral were increasingly diverse and complex, which required a more sophisticated response to the challenges faced both now and in the future. Whether it was child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, cybercrime or new and emerging threats from serious and organised crime such as human trafficking or terrorism, the leaders of the Wirral Partnership acknowledged that if they were to meet their community's needs, they must continue to review and adapt available resources to ensure the maximum benefit to its citizens.

Attached to the report was the Safer Wirral Hub Full Business Case, a key community safety document which articulated how Wirral's community safety and

safeguarding partners would come together to provide services which were critical to supporting the delivery of the Wirral Plan, specifically, but not exclusively Pledge 7 (Zero tolerance towards domestic abuse) and 19 (Ensuring Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe).

The Cabinet noted that during the Schools Summer Holidays anti-social behaviour was high on residents' agendas and that since 2010; the Government had pledged to reduce the number of serving police officers. 2,500 had been cut from Merseyside. The Council was now pooling its resources to do the best it could for the people of Wirral. There were lots of different crimes being committed and anti-social activity in Wirral, therefore, Councillor George Davies was now meeting each month with the Area Commander, Chief Superintendent Ian Hassall to obtain appropriate feedback. Ten years of austerity had led to the Police being in crisis and the Cabinet Member proposed that the Government be called on to release more resources to enable recruitment so that more police officers could go on the beat.

Councillor George Davies informed that the Association of Chief Police Officer's Autumn Conference was due to take place and he proposed that the Leader be requested to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Merseyside and to the Chief Constable for Merseyside asking them to provide a full report to the Conference taking place and support the Cabinet's view that more resources for policing must be provided by the Government.

The Cabinet also noted that safeguarding children and vulnerable adults would be a key part of the project, providing much-needed support to children, adults and families at a critical time. The Hub would be based at the Solar Campus in Leasowe and its official opening would take place on Tuesday, 10 October 2017.

Councillor George Davies informed that he was delighted to present the Hub's Business Case as it was so important in ensuring that people were safe. This was a top priority and the Council was taking a hugely important step, working very closely with the Police and Fire and Rescue Service on this to ensure offenders were prosecuted. This was an imaginative and radical Plan to deliver and the Hub was the first of its kind in the region.

Councillor Bernie Mooney welcomed the report and agreed that due to reduced funding, pooling resources to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour was the way forward. She also welcomed Councillor George Davies' decision to hold monthly meetings with the Area Commander to discuss the situation and informed that it was important that people knew the Council was taking the current situation very seriously. There were not enough resources to deal with criminal and anti-social activity and the proposed report would stand Wirral in good stead. The Council needed to work with the Police and to write to the PCC and Chief Constable. Councillor Mooney considered that early intervention was the answer to a lot of the problems.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham also welcomed the report informing that joined up collaborative working with one point of contact was the way forward. A system that had the confidence of residents was required. Residents complained that they had reported incidents but nothing had been done. Councillor Whittingham believed that this system would bring about improvement in behaviours and made reference to residents being terrorised by youngsters on scrambler bikes.

Councillor Phil Davies commended the Safer Wirral Hub, an innovative way in which partners were working together. He considered that it made sense to pool resources and work in an innovative way. He also referred to scrambler bikes and associated anti-social behaviour that was making residents' lives hell. Councillor Phil Davies considered that the Police were now at breaking point as their resources had been decimated by the Government.

Councillor Phil Davies agreed to write to the PCC and to the Chief Constable asking them to make urgent representations to the Government for more funding to provide more support and protection for the residents of Wirral.

This was a Key Decision and affected all wards within the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Safer Wirral Hub Full Business Case appended in the report with a planned 'go live' date for the new model of 10 October 2017 be approved;**
- (2) officers from the Strategic Hub be instructed to investigate further opportunities to develop the new model under the next phase of the project and report back to a future Cabinet meeting; and**
- (3) the Leader of the Council be requested to write to both the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Chief Constable asking them to make urgent representations to the Government for additional resources for policing in Wirral.**