

COUNCIL

Monday, 16 October 2017

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Ann McLachlan) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Geoffrey Watt)

Councillors			
	RL Abbey	P Hackett	L Reecejones
	T Anderson	P Hayes	L Rennie
	B Berry	K Hodson	T Smith
	C Blakeley	AER Jones	W Smith
	E Boulton	C Jones	C Spriggs
	A Brighthouse	S Kelly	J Stapleton
	P Brightmore	B Kenny	P Stuart
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Leech	M Sullivan
	C Carubia	I Lewis	A Sykes
	P Cleary	M McLaughlin	T Usher
	W Clements	J McManus	J Walsh
	A Davies	C Meaden	W Ward
	G Davies	D Mitchell	S Whittingham
	P Davies	B Mooney	J Williamson
	WJ Davies	C Muspratt	I Williams
	P Doughty	T Norbury	KJ Williams
	D Elderton	M Patrick	S Williams
	G Ellis	T Pilgrim	G Wood
	S Foulkes	C Povall	
	P Gilchrist	D Realey	

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors		
		JE Green	T Johnson
		J Hale	T Jones
		A Hodson	L Rowlands

49 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Civic Mayor referred to the recent passing of Rob Gregson, former Wirral Councillor, 2012-16, and the Council stood for a minute's silence in tribute to his memory.

The Civic Mayor further informed that on 20 October 2017, 'Show Racism the Red Card', would be holding its third annual WEAR RED DAY. She had agreed in support of the National Campaign, that Councillor Tony Norbury would read a poem prior to the formal opening of the Council Meeting.

Councillor Norbury then read the poem 'A Ritual to Read to Each Other' by William E Stafford ©1998.

Procedural Matters

- (1) It was moved by Councillor RL Abbey and duly seconded, that -
"Standing Order 9 (meeting guillotine) be applied from 9.00pm."

Upon an amendment having been moved by Councillor Blakeley, duly seconded that “the meeting guillotine be applied from 09:15pm”, Councillor Abbey agreed to the revised timing, and the motion was then put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

RESOLVED – That Standing Order 9 be applied from 9:15pm.

- (2) Prior to the calling of Members Declarations of Interest, The Interim Director of Law and Governance provided legal advice in relation to Agenda Item 11 B – Strategic Regeneration Framework – Cabinet decision – 2 October 2017 in relation to those Members appointed to the Planning Committee.

Declarations of Interest

Name	Item No. and Nature of Declaration
Councillor Stuart Whittingham	Item No. 12 (i) – Notice of Motion (Minute No. 70 refers). Prejudicial – by virtue of him being an employee of Arriva (left the Chamber whilst the matter was considered and voted upon).
Councillor Janette Williamson	Item No. 12 (viii) – Notice of Motion (Minute No. 77 refers). Prejudicial – by virtue of her being an employee of DWP (left the Chamber whilst the matter was considered and voted upon).
Councillor Bernie Mooney	Item No. 6 – Cabinet Members’ Reports - Personal – by virtue of her employment.
Councillor Anita Leech	Item No. 12 (viii) – Notice of Motion (Minute No. 38 refers). Personal – by virtue of her being a member of the Prima Leasowe Community Homes Management Board.
Councillor Anita Leech	Item No. 11B – Strategic Regeneration Framework (Minute No. 64 refers). Personal – by virtue of her role on the LCR Scrutiny Panel (left the Chamber whilst the matter was considered and voted upon).
Councillor Warren Ward	Item No. 12 (viii) – Notices of Motion (Minute No. 77 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being an employee of the DWP (left the Chamber whilst the matter was considered and voted upon).
Councillor Steve Foulkes	Item No. 12 (viii) – Notices of Motion (Minute No. 77 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being a Member of the Magenta Living Board.
Councillor George Davies	Item No. 12 – Emergency Notice of Motion (Minute No. 69). Personal - by virtue of his

previous employment at Vauxhall Motors.

Councillor
Adrian Jones

Item No. 12 (viii) – Notice of Motion (Minute No. 77 refers). Personal – by virtue of him being a Member of the Leasowe Community Homes Management Board.

Councillor
Dave Mitchell

Item No. 12 – Emergency Notice of Motion (Minute No. 69 refers) – Personal - by virtue of his previous employment at Vauxhall Motors.

50 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor noted that apologies had been received from Councillors J Green, J Hale, A Hodson, T Jones, T Johnson, and L Rowlands.

The Civic Mayor apprised Council on the following matters:

An urgent item of business to be added to the Council Agenda at Item 12 – an Emergency Notice of Motion on Protecting the Future of the Vauxhall Plant at Ellesmere Port. The reason for urgency being the impact job losses would have on the local economy, Vauxhall being a major employer in the local area.

The many thanks received in appreciation of the Extraordinary Council meeting Freedom of the Borough event held on 15 September 2017 - from family members of the 96 Liverpool Football Club fans who had lost their lives at Hillsborough and other guests who had attended the event. She read out a letter from Margaret Aspinall, Chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group.

The Memorial Dedication Event held on 12 October 2017 in respect of PC David Philips who lost his life 2 years ago whilst on duty in Wallasey. A small replica of the commemoration stone was on display in the Council Chamber for Members to view.

A request had been received to requisition an extraordinary meeting of Council on the subject of anti-social behaviour involving Scrambler Bikes. The Civic Mayor had agreed to the request and the meeting would take place on 11 December 2017 at a time to be confirmed.

The Civic Mayor was pleased to announce that the Council had also recently won the National Transport Award for Road Safety. The Mayor then invited Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to address the Council. Councillor Whittingham in doing so thanked all of the staff involved. The award was on display in the Council Chamber.

51 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10 July (one ordinary meeting and one extraordinary meeting) and on the 15 September, 2017 (Extraordinary Meeting Freedom of the Borough) had been circulated to Members and it was –

RESOLVED – That the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.

52 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 21, the Mayor received petitions submitted by –

- (i). Councillor Bruce Berry on behalf of 212 residents of Moreton and Saughall Massie residents objecting to the proposal to introduce Food Waste Bins.
- (ii). Councillor Bruce Berry on behalf of 4102 signatories regarding anti-social behaviour caused by the menace of Scrambler Bikes, calling upon the Council's Wirral Safer Hub' to set up a dedicated task force to tackle the problem.
- (iii). Councillor Alan Brighthouse on behalf of 92 residents requesting installation of a pedestrian crossing on Shrewsbury Road, Oxton (close to junction of Palm Hill and Palm Grove).
- (iv). Councillor David Elderton on behalf of 1252 residents requesting the dredging of the Ashton Park Lake, West Kirby.
- (v). Councillor Wendy Clements on behalf of 50 residents regarding speeding and inconsiderate parking – Mill Lane, Greasby.
- (vi). Councillor Wendy Clements on behalf of 329 residents concerning the lack of empty parking spaces outside local shops (Greasby), requesting the introduction of a 2 hour parking restriction in the service road.
- (vii). Councillor Lesley Rennie on behalf of 314 residents of Wallasey objecting to the proposal to introduce Food Waste Bins.
- (viii). Councillor Patrick Cleary on behalf of 98 residents requesting effective traffic calming measures and the introduction of safe crossing facilities on Derby Road, Tranmere.

RESOLVED – That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with Standing Order 34.

53 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

The Civic Mayor announced that Paddy Cleary, Unison Branch Secretary had been invited to speak on Notice of Motion (vi) – NJC Pay to Councils. She informed that given that Council might not be able to debate this Motion due to the guillotine having been invoked by the time the item of business had been reached, she had agreed that he may address the Council at this time.

Mr Cleary spoke in support of the Motion on behalf of his membership.

54 **LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND OSC CHAIRS' REPORTS**

The Mayor introduced the summary reports from the Leader, Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Chairs and asked for questions on any of the reports. The time allocated to Questions to Cabinet Members and OSC Chairs expired before all answers could be fully provided to all the questions asked. The Mayor indicated to Council that written responses would be provided subsequent to the meeting.

The following responses were provided at the meeting:

The Leader, Councillor Phil Davies responding to a question from Councillor Chris Blakeley on the work undertaken in respect of an impact assessment – moving Civic Function from Seacombe to Birkenhead informed that he would provide a written response on the matter.

The Leader, Councillor Phil Davies responding to a question from Councillor Brian Kenny on the number of apprentices (a 2/3rds drop) as reported in an article in The Times newspaper informed that the procedures and budget restrictions imposed by Central Government were regressive and counter-productive to the aim of getting young people into employment. He informed that the Council had agreed a £175,000 growth item to help this important project in Wirral, but he would be taking up the matter of the inflexible attitude of the Government regarding the scheme's operation with the Minister.

The Leader, Councillor Phil Davies responding to a question from Councillor David Elderton requesting an update on the discussions with Peel Holdings re the development of Wirral Waters, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and Housing informed that ongoing discussions had confirmed Peel Holding's intentions for residential development and that further public announcements were expected in coming months. He added that the ITC appeared to be on the back burner at present, but development of the Business Centre was close to reaching an agreement. He added that Members should and would continue to press Peel Holdings if they had any concerns over any elements of the planned project.

The Leader, Councillor Phil Davies responding to a question from Councillor Gerry Ellis on whether he was aware that of the developers (the Jack Nicklaus Group) Working Capital and their past history re housing development in Wales, informed that funding had been received from the developer and results of an 8 week assessment would be reported to the Cabinet. Relevant phases of the project would of course include due diligence.

The Leader, Councillor Phil Davies responding to a question from Councillor Phil Gilchrist regarding Wirral Growth Company and requesting that Councillors be kept informed as the preferred bidder emerges. He informed that the project had reached the procurement stage and the joint venture provided an exciting model to lever in Capital Funding. He stated that it was expected that a preferred partner would emerge by the New Year, but the

matter was currently going through legal process and therefore a confidential matter.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport responded to a question from Councillor Chris Blakeley regarding the reasons for the delay in a decision to introduce residents parking initially scheduled for the Cabinet meeting of 4 September 2017. He explained that the report had not been pulled, but simply deferred for further information.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport responded to questions from Councillor Lesley Rennie and Councillor Phil Gilchrist on the outcome of the survey comparing unlit streetlights (2016) and the promise that all lights would be repaired by April 2017. Councillor Whittingham informed that Wirral was responsible for 37,470 lighting columns and 4,860 illuminated signs / bollards (totalling 42,330 illuminated assets) along with a few hundred thousand metres of private underground electricity cable which was outside the remit of Scottish Power.

The total number of known unlit units at this time was 2,650 which equated to circa 6.3% of the Council's total assets. The national average was 5%

The 'Unlit' categories -

- Unlit due to supply faults
- Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)
- Vandalism or life expired equipment

The above being estimated circa 2,150 - this number would increase exponentially and quantities were unknown due to Road Traffic Collisions, vandalism and the ageing stock.

Councillor Whittingham informed that those streetlights identified as unlit via the Council's night-time inspections regime and member of the public reporting which required attendance this figure was approximately 500 units.

Approximately 100 streetlights issued and attended per week (this was managed through a closely monitored maintenance budget, which had seen a significant decrease over recent years). On average 80% of streetlights were repaired and 20% condemned or required follow-up works for example required electricity supply repairs.

Reduced maintenance budgets due to austerity cut, created challenges in managing demand pressures and expectations. However, the Service had secured £500k capital investment which would address a significant number of the condemned streetlights, this street lighting programme commenced early in November 2017. The Service was in the final stage of contract award for the repair and replacement of the long term faults on condemned streetlights, this work was planned to start within the coming weeks and was programmed for completion by the end of March 2018.

Officers were also working on a business case for phase two of the LED replacement scheme, which would see a significant number of lights replaced

with new energy efficient LED bulbs lighting units across the borough, and huge advances had also been made, over the last few years with regard to 'phase one' LED replacement programme which incorporated most of the borough's main road lighting (7,553 lighting units) and as such dramatically reducing the Council's overall energy consumption. Not only had energy consumption reduced but the Council's carbon output had also reduced; thus helping towards meeting environmental commitments. Following from this installation a lot of work was being carried out with the view of securing funding for a 'phase two' LED installation project which if successful could incorporate the remaining lighting stock.

The Mayor informed that the following questions would receive a written response:

Councillor Tom Anderson asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore - Cabinet Member for Environment on the matter of BWB Consultants Library, Leisure Review – Value for Money.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore - Cabinet Member for Environment on the matter of Dog Fouling and resources allocated to tackling it.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Chris Jones - Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health requesting an update on services functions formerly administered at Girtrell Court.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on due diligence and reasons for the deferring of the decision to introduce residents parking at the Cabinet meeting on 4 September 2017.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor Bernie Mooney - Cabinet Member for Children and Families on the support provided to schools to improve performance in respect of deaf children.

Councillor Brian Kenny asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson - Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation on the accuracy of the figure quoted for the Council's reserves (£94million).

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce asked a question of Councillor George Davies – Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety on information included in the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) re crime (figures down over the past 11 years) and the current actions re Scrambler Bikes to alleviate the problems.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce asked a question of Councillor Matthew Patrick - Cabinet Member for Localism and Engagement on why the promised revenue from third parties advertising in the Wirral View had failed to materialise.

Councillor Wendy Clements asked a question of Councillor Chris Jones - Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health on a presentation by Simon

Banks, Chief Officer, NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group referring to shortage of Doctors and Nurses – and how a reported additional £1m allocation to Wirral University Teaching Hospital (WUTH) in June 2017 was being spent.

Councillor Wendy Clements asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson - Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation on budget transparency regarding care leavers council tax exemption and whether this would be considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Warren Ward asked a question of Councillor Phillip Brightmore - Cabinet Member for Environment on the significance of the Congress Event in Wirral.

Councillor Paul Stuart asked a question of Councillor Matthew Patrick - Cabinet Member for Localism and Engagement on information relating to the practice of information sharing across Constituency Committees.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor George Davies – Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety on the maintenance and repair of communal areas in low rise flats – not actioned for 15 years and whether when he next met with Magenta Living would he please enquire about this.

Councillor Jean Stapleton asked a question of Councillor Christine Spriggs – Cabinet Member for Delivering Differently for an update on her work as a portfolio holder.

Councillor Adam Sykes asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport regarding the £1.2m allocation for the tree maintenance programme, and when work on high risk trees would be completed.

Councillor Gerry Ellis asked a question of Councillor Matthew Patrick - Cabinet Member for Localism and Engagement regarding the planned Golf Resort and the expected date for, and completion of, public consultation.

Councillor Gerry Ellis asked a question of Councillor Matthew Patrick - Cabinet Member for Localism and Engagement on whether he was satisfied with the efforts to date to engage with residents of Wirral West.

Councillor Patrick Cleary asked a question of Councillor Mike Sullivan – Business Overview and Scrutiny Chair on Road Safety Casualties (particularly high), the Police and Crime Commissioner’s priorities, overdue strategy and lack of challenge to officers to introduce meaningful measures.

Councillor Steve Williams asked a question of Councillor Mike Sullivan – Business Overview and Scrutiny Chair on what actions needed to be taken before the Report into Residents Parking could be submitted to the Council.

The paragraph beginning, ‘Councillor Wendy Clements asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson....’, was subsequently amended by Council at its meeting on 11 December, 2017 (minute 81 refers) to read, ‘Councillor

Wendy Clements commented on the Council Tax exemption for care leavers and asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson - Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation on the part played by scrutiny workshops in budget setting.'

55 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

In accordance with Standing Order 10(2) the Council had been advised of three questions.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, on matters relating to street lighting outages, completion of repairs and expected time taken to deal with the backlog. Note: Councillor Stuart Whittingham replied to this question under the previous item (minute 54 ante refers).

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies - Leader of the Council, on the content of the Cabinet Portfolio Summary Reports and various projects and initiatives that had already been reported in newspapers or the Wirral View. Councillor Phil Davies replied accordingly.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Christine Spriggs - Cabinet Member for Delivering Differently, on a proposal for changing All Disability and Mental Health (item 39, Cabinet, 2 October 2017) that had been withdrawn as 'more work was required on it', following concerns outlined by the staff in an email to all Members of the Council (21 September 2017), and that at a subsequent meeting for staff, on 10 October 2017, it was agreed that 'more work' (as stated at the Cabinet meeting), included the issue of secondment of the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team. Councillor Christine Spriggs replied accordingly.

56 MATTERS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES OR OTHER COUNCIL COMMITTEES

In accordance with Standing Order 7 (5) the Council was asked to consider the following recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (see minutes 57 to 59 post).

57 NOTICE OF MOTION - GREEN BELT

The Mayor advised of a referral from Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (5 July, 2017), which originated as a Notice of Motion at Council on 20 March, 2017, "Green Belt" (minute 152(1) refers). The minute from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 July, 2017 (minute 6) was attached together with the Notice of Motion.

Moved by Councillor Paul Stuart as the Chair of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes it was –

RESOLVED (58:0) (One Abstention) – That the resolution of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.

58 **NOTICE OF MOTION - PAVILIONS IN SPORTS GROUNDS**

The Mayor advised of a referral from Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (21 September, 2017), which originated as a Notice of Motion at Council on 20 March, 2017, "Pavilions in Sports Grounds" (minute 152(2) refers). The minute from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September, 2017 (minute 19) was attached together with the Notice of Motion.

Moved by Councillor Paul Stuart as the Chair of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and seconded by Councillor Adam Sykes it was –

RESOLVED (58:0) (One Abstention) – That the resolution of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.

59 **NOTICE OF MOTION - FAIR VOTES**

The Mayor advised of a referral from Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee (21 September, 2017), which originated as a Notice of Motion at Council on 10 July, 2017, "Fair Votes" (minute 34 refers). The minute from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 September, 2017 (minute 20) was attached together with the Notice of Motion.

In respect of this item, the Committee did not pass a resolution, therefore, the Council was asked to note the minutes as set out on the agenda front sheets and pages 73-74 of the agenda papers.

RESOLVED (58:0) (One Abstention) – That the minute of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Notice of Motion 'Fair Votes' be noted.

60 **VACANCIES**

In accordance with Standing Order 25(6) the Council was requested to deal with the following matters in respect of the membership of committees and appointments to outside organisations.

Committees

Audit and Risk Management

Councillor Angela Davies to replace Councillor Anita Leech (Councillor Leech will become a deputy).

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Deputy

Councillor Jerry Williams to replace Councillor Chris Spriggs.

Planning Committee – Deputy

Councillor Brian Kenny to replace Councillor Christina Muspratt.

Outside Bodies

Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust

Councillor Mike Sullivan (to be re-appointed for 3 years until 27 September, 2020).

Liverpool Airport Consultative Committee

Councillor Ron Abbey to replace Councillor Phillip Brightmore.

Liverpool City Region Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Gillian Wood to replace Councillor Anita Leech.

Mersey Port Health Committee

Councillor Mike Sullivan to replace Councillor Stuart Whittingham as a member.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham to replace Councillor Tony Jones as a deputy.

West Kirby Charities

Councillor Eddie Boulton (to be re-appointed until 16 October, 2021).

Councillor David Elderton (to be re-appointed until 7 September, 2021)

Ms Johanna Wynne to replace Mrs Gill Conlon (appointed until 30 January, 2021).

RESOLVED – That the above appointments be approved.

61 **TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH (TFN) - INCORPORATION AS A SUB-NATIONAL TRANSPORT BODY**

Council noted that the consent of each Highway Authority within the area of each Combined Authority was required to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State as the Regulations contained provisions giving TfN highway powers to be exercised concurrently with the Local Highway Authorities.

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

Council consent to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State to establish (TfN) as a Sub-National Transport Body, under S102J of the Local Transport Act 2008.

RESOLVED (58:0) (One Abstention) - That Council consent to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State to establish Transport for the North (TfN) as a Sub-National Transport Body, under S102J of the Local Transport Act 2008.

62 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 5 (2) five matters had been submitted for approval or consideration (see minutes 63 to 67 post).

63 **ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor George Davies

That this Council formally adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism, namely:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

The recommendation was put and carried (58:1) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (58:0) (One abstention) – That the IHRA definition that “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities” be formally adopted.

64 **STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK**

Councillor A Leech having earlier declared an interest in this item left the Council Chamber whilst the matter was debated and voted upon.

The recommendations of the Cabinet of 2 October, 2017 in respect of the Strategic Regeneration Framework (minute 41 refers) were submitted for the adoption by Council.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was recommended to Council that -

- (a) **the Strategic Regeneration Framework be adopted as a material planning consideration in relation to development proposals which come forward; and**
- (b) **the Strategic Regeneration Framework be used to inform the content of the emerging Core Strategy Local Plan.**

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

“Council declines to accept the recommendations of Cabinet and refers the matter back to Cabinet to reconsider its recommendations for the following reasons:

1. Some of the aspirations within the regeneration framework do not align with existing land use planning policies in the existing UDP and the emerging local plan
2. The emerging local plan and any future Site Specific Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans are the appropriate method of determining land use allocations for planning purposes”

Following a debate and Councillor P Davies having replied, the amendment was put and lost (22:33) (One abstention).

The original motion was put and carried (33:22) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (33:22) (One abstention) - That

- (1) **the Strategic Regeneration Framework be adopted as a material planning consideration in relation to development proposals which come forward; and**
- (2) **the Strategic Regeneration Framework be used to inform the content of the emerging Core Strategy Local Plan.**

65 **INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES**

The recommendations of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances – 17 July, 2017 – Members' Allowances Scheme were submitted for adoption by the Council.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was recommended to the Council that the report and recommendations contained therein be agreed.

RESOLVED (One abstention) – That the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances (17 July, 2017) Members' Allowances Scheme be adopted.

66 **REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18 QUARTER 1 (TO JUNE 2017)**

The recommendations of the Cabinet made at its meeting on 17 July, 2017 in respect of the Revenue Monitoring 2017/18 Quarter 1 (to June 2017) (minute 25 refers) were submitted for the approval of the Council.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was:

RESOLVED (One abstention) - That

- (1) **the Quarter 1 forecast year end overspend of £4.2 million, of which £3.9 million relates to Children's Services and related legal costs, be noted;**

- (2) the £8.5 million distribution from the Revenue Budget Contingency be approved;
- (3) the receipt of £0.18 million of New Homes Bonus Returned Funding Grant, which will be added to General Fund Balances, be noted;
- (4) Officers continue to identify actions and take measures to effectively manage the overall budget and reduce the impact of the projected overspends;
- (5) the £1.225 million 'one-off' funding from General Fund balances for an extended borough wide programme of tree maintenance works be approved; and
- (6) the £0.125 million for a rolling programme of tree inspection and maintenance be added to the Council budget projections from 2018/19 onwards, be noted.

67 **CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18 QUARTER 1 (TO JUNE 2017)**

The recommendations from the Cabinet meeting of 17 July, 2017 in respect of the Capital Monitoring 2017/18 Quarter 1 (to June 2017) (minute 26 refers) were submitted for the approval of the Council.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was:

RESOLVED (One abstention) - That

- (1) the spend at Quarter 1 of £4.8 million, with 25% of the financial year having elapsed be noted and that this is suppressed by the inclusion of amounts that were charges against 2016/17 in accord with accounting practice;
- (2) the revised Capital Programme of £88.0 million be agreed; and
- (3) agreement be given to the Growth Fund scheme being amended to provide a combination of business loans and grants rather than just loans.

68 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Notices of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1) were reported to the Council. The Civic Mayor having considered each motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) had decided that they would be dealt with as follows:

Emergency Notice of Motion – Protecting the Future of the Vauxhall Plant at Ellesmere Port.
To be debated.

(i). Tyred Campaign
To be debated.

(ii). Eastham Walk-In Centre
To be debated.

(iii). Saving our NHS for Wirral's People
To be debated.

(iv). Care Leavers Council Tax Exemption
To be debated.

(v). Disabled Workers and the national Minimum Wage
To be debated.

(vi). NJC Pay to Councils
To be debated.

(vii). New Ferry
To be debated.

(viii). Universal Credit
To be debated.

(ix). Action on Scrambler Bikes
Extraordinary meeting of the Council to be scheduled for 11 December 2017.

(x). Tougher Action on Fly-Tipping
Referred to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(xi). Making More Time For Pedestrians
Referred to Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(xii). Wirral Well-Made Need for Infrastructure Support
Referred to Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That

(1) the Notice of Motion, 'Action on Scrambler Bikes be referred to an extraordinary meeting of Council scheduled for 11 December, 2017;

(2) the Notice of Motion, 'Tougher Action on Fly-Tipping', be referred to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

(3) the Notice of Motion, 'Making More Time for Pedestrians', be referred to the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and

(4) the Notice of Motion, 'Wirral Well-Made Need for Infrastructure Support' be referred to both the Business Overview and Scrutiny

**Committee and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

69 **EMERGENCY MOTION - PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF THE VAUXHALL
PLANT AT ELLESMERE PORT**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

“This Council is extremely concerned at the announcement yesterday by the PSA Group, owners of Vauxhall, that it intends to shed 400 of the 1,800 staff at the Ellesmere Port plant by the end of the year.

Council agrees to take all appropriate action to help ensure the future of the plant at Ellesmere Port and to protect the jobs on this site which are so vital to the economy of Wirral and the wider area.”

Following a debate and Councillor P Davies having replied, the motion was put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (58:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

70 **MOTION - TYRED CAMPAIGN**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis

“On Monday 10 September 2012 a coach bound for Liverpool carrying 53 people from the Bestival music festival on the Isle of Wight, left the road and crashed into a tree instantly killing Michael Molloy (18), Kerry Ogden (23) and the coach driver, Colin Daulby (63), and left others with life changing injuries. The inquest into the crash found that the front nearside tyre which was actually older than the coach itself, at 19 years, was responsible for the crash. In 2014, Liverpool City Council unanimously agreed a motion in support of Michael’s mother Frances calling for a change in the law requiring a ban on tyres older than six years on commercial vehicles. Despite the wide spread public and political support for this campaign, no change in the law has been made, shamefully leaving others are risk from faulty and dangerous tyres.

Council notes that Frances Molloy has launched “Tyred” – the official campaign to pressure Government – to change the law to ban the use of tyres older than ten years on commercial vehicles.

Council wholeheartedly supports “Tyred” and instructs the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition to call together cross-party support for a change in the law.

Council further resolves to support the “Tyred” campaign until such a change in the law is achieved and to draw the attention of the Local Government Association, especially its Environment and Transport Board, to this Council’s view that the concerns should be fully addressed.

Finally, Council asks the Chief Executive to write to all schools in the Borough asking them to require coach and bus operators they use for school trips etc to adhere to the provisions set out in the Tyred campaign. Council should also ask officers to look at our own procurement procedures with a view to inserting an appropriate clause in any contracts with commercial operators and to also ensure that this standard applies to our own vehicle fleet.”

Following a debate and Councillor P Davies having replied, the motion was put and carried (58:0) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (58:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

71 **MOTION - EASTHAM WALK-IN CENTRE**

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Julie McManus

“This Council condemns the closure of the Eastham Walk-In Centre with just five days’ notice, causing massive inconvenience to local people and with no prior consultation with elected members and the public.

Council demands that Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group provides a definitive date by which Eastham Walk-In Centre will re-open, as promised by its Chief Officer, Simon Banks, at the meeting of Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13th September 2017.

Council expects any future changes – including urgent changes to NHS services – to be formally notified to the Council and the public of Wirral at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure that meaningful consultation takes place and no resident loses out as a result. Council asks The Leader of the Council to write to the CCG outlining its concerns.

The NHS is now facing its seventh year of chronic underfunding by successive Conservative governments. People in Wirral are seeing the appalling consequences of the continuing attacks by Conservative politicians on this country’s most treasured institution.

Council demands that the Government reverses this underfunding and opposes the enforced closure of life-saving local services such as Eastham Walk-In Centre.”

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Wendy Clements
Seconded by Councillor Adam Sykes

Delete paragraphs 4 and 5, and insert:

“Council welcomes the additional £55.98 million announced in April, and the further £20.74 million of government funding announced on 15th June 2017, to

help A&E Departments deal with winter pressures – of which £990,667.00 has been awarded to Wirral University Teaching Hospital.

Council urges the Trust's Chief Executive and Board to ensure this money, together with the extra investment in the NHS since 2010, is used to continue the improvement in patient care for all residents of Wirral, including Eastham."

Following a debate and Councillor M McLaughlin having replied, the amendment was put and lost (17:41) (One abstention).

The original motion was put and carried (41:17) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (41:17) (One abstention) -

This Council condemns the closure of the Eastham Walk-In Centre with just five days' notice, causing massive inconvenience to local people and with no prior consultation with elected members and the public.

Council demands that Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group provides a definitive date by which Eastham Walk-In Centre will re-open, as promised by its Chief Officer, Simon Banks, at the meeting of Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13th September 2017.

Council expects any future changes – including urgent changes to NHS services – to be formally notified to the Council and the public of Wirral at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure that meaningful consultation takes place and no resident loses out as a result. Council asks The Leader of the Council to write to the CCG outlining its concerns.

The NHS is now facing its seventh year of chronic underfunding by successive Conservative governments. People in Wirral are seeing the appalling consequences of the continuing attacks by Conservative politicians on this country's most treasured institution.

Council demands that the Government reverses this underfunding and opposes the enforced closure of life-saving local services such as Eastham Walk-In Centre.

72 **MOTION - SAVING OUR NHS FOR WIRRAL'S PEOPLE**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

"Council welcomes the developing relationship between itself and the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Foundation Trusts that provide services to the public of Wirral.

Council recognises that this involves frequent and regular contact with Officers as part of developing the Wirral Plan and ensuring that valued services meet local needs.

Council, having considered the process followed by the Clinical Commissioning Group in recent months, is firmly of the view that the process of consultation with Councillors and ward members was misjudged and inadequate, causing undue distress and anxiety with a failure to engage at the earliest stage. This was highlighted by the way in which the 'temporary' closure of the Eastham Walk-In Centre was brought about.

Council believes that the free flow of information on proposals under consideration is necessary for the successful development of future working relationships in the best interests of the services provided for Wirral's people.

Council notes that the 'Sustainability and Transformation Plans' are now being described as 'Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships'. The 'partnership' Wirral's people expect to see must not undermine the foundations and principles of our National Health Service, developed through the vision put together by William Beveridge and put into place by Nye Bevan.

This Council will, therefore, remain opposed to changes and savings which place the achievements of our NHS at risk.

In order to study the real impact of any proposals being developed, Council...

- a) urges that when officers from the Local Authority and NHS organisations work closely together, they ensure that adequate reporting processes are in place and are effective so as to enable Councillors to provide a democratic voice at all stages;
- b) wishes to be assured that proposals developed by all partners, including this Council's officers, will involve the opportunity for democratic input at all stages."

The topic having been debated as part of the previous Notice of Motion (Eastham Walk-In Centre – minute 71 refers) the motion was put and carried (58:1) (One abstention) without debate.

RESOLVED (58:1) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

73 **MOTION - CARE LEAVERS COUNCIL TAX EXEMPTION**

Proposed by Councillor Wendy Clements

Seconded by Councillor David Elderton

Council notes that:

1. OFSTED has identified support given to care leavers in Wirral is a key issue.
2. A 2016 report by The Children's Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find

this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.

3. Research from The Centre for Social Justice found that over half (57%) of young people leaving care have difficulty managing their money and avoiding debt when leaving care.
4. The local authority has a duty of care to care leavers as 'Corporate Parents'.

Council believes that:

1. To ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt as they begin to manage their own finances, they should be exempt from paying council tax until they are 25.
2. To write to the Minister of State for Children and Families, urging him to introduce a national exemption for care leavers from council tax up to the age of 25.

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Janette Williamson
Seconded by Councillor Bernie Mooney

To be added:

“Council would like to acknowledge the hard work over the last year of its officers on amending Wirral's Council Tax Base to exempt Care Leavers up to the age of 25 from paying Council Tax. As a Labour Council we recognised the importance of such a move, after the issue was highlighted to us by the Children's Society's 'Wolf at the Door'. We have acted on that and are pleased to announce that as from April 2018 our amended policy will be implemented.

We note that our Care Leavers will already face significant financial barriers as a result of this Conservative government's cruel austerity programme, which disproportionately affects young people. Cuts to working age benefits, proliferation of zero hours contracts and the increase in sub-standard rented housing mean our vulnerable young people are not given the same life chances previous generations were at the same age.

We further note that austerity has pushed more young people into statutory intervention each year - a direct result of Tory Government policies which have hit the least well-off most harshly. This was highlighted by Alison Michalska, president of the Association of Directors of Children's Services recently when she said that austerity policies and an increasingly fragmented approach to public services by this government were taking a toll on communities and punishing the most economically fragile households. She

further said "the unintended consequence of the government's austerity programme has been to drive up demand for child protection services as more and more families find themselves at the point of crisis with little or no early help available".

Despite facing relentless cuts to Wirral's funding from central government, we have made a choice to help our vulnerable young people and ensure that as they learn to budget independently they are free from the fear of Council Tax debt.

Wirral is prepared to fulfil its pledge to look after the most vulnerable and we call on the Conservative government to do the same by:

1. reversing its cruel and harsh austerity programme
2. providing young people with an economically and emotionally secure future
3. a fairer funding formula for Wirral Council to provide the services its residents expect and need"

Following a debate and Councillor W Clements having replied, the amendment was put and carried (41:17) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put and carried (41:17) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (41:17) (One abstention) -

Council notes that:

- 1. OFSTED has identified support given to care leavers in Wirral is a key issue.**
- 2. A 2016 report by The Children's Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.**
- 3. Research from The Centre for Social Justice found that over half (57%) of young people leaving care have difficulty managing their money and avoiding debt when leaving care.**
- 4. The local authority has a duty of care to care leavers as 'Corporate Parents'.**

Council believes that:

- 1. To ensure that the transition from care to adult life is as smooth as possible, and to mitigate the chances of care leavers falling into debt**

as they begin to manage their own finances, they should be exempt from paying council tax until they are 25.

- 2. To write to the Minister of State for Children and Families, urging him to introduce a national exemption for care leavers from council tax up to the age of 25.**

Council would like to acknowledge the hard work over the last year of its officers on amending Wirral's Council Tax Base to exempt Care Leavers up to the age of 25 from paying Council Tax. As a Labour Council we recognised the importance of such a move, after the issue was highlighted to us by the Children's Society's 'Wolf at the Door'. We have acted on that and are pleased to announce that as from April 2018 our amended policy will be implemented.

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We further note that austerity has pushed more young people into statutory intervention each year - a direct result of Tory Government policies which have hit the least well-off most harshly. This was highlighted by Alison Michalska, president of the Association of Directors of Children's Services recently when she said that austerity policies and an increasingly fragmented approach to public services by this government were taking a toll on communities and punishing the most economically fragile households. She further said "the unintended consequence of the government's austerity programme has been to drive up demand for child protection services as more and more families find themselves at the point of crisis with little or no early help available".

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- 1. reversing its cruel and harsh austerity programme**
- 2. providing young people with an economically and emotionally secure future**
- 3. a fairer funding formula for Wirral Council to provide the services its residents expect and need.**

MOTION - DISABLED WORKERS AND THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

Prior to consideration of this matter, and having declared an interest in this matter, Councillor L Reecejones left the Council Chamber whilst the matter was debated and voted upon.

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Council notes and endorses the All Age Disability Strategy at Priority Two (Young people and adults with disabilities have access to employment and are financially resilient) and notes that, in drawing up the Strategy, people with disabilities have told us “they should have the same access to education and work as all citizens” and that “everyone has a unique contribution to make and when this is recognised, people will feel and be valued”.

Council, therefore, expresses its disappointment that Birkenhead MP Frank Field (chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee) has fallen into the trap of advocating a lower wage for people with certain disabilities. <http://www.learningandwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/LW-Opp-for-All-FINAL.pdf> (Pages 106-113).

Council notes that no reliable evidence has ever shown that this is effective and it also perpetuates the stereotype that some disabled people are worth less than others.

Council believes that Mr Field’s views are both wrong and insulting and invites Frank Field MP to withdraw his suggestions and to apologise.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9 the Council did not debate the matter, and having been formally moved and seconded, the motion was put to the vote.

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

Delete everything after the first paragraph and insert the following:-

“Council welcomes the ambitious Government target to assist a further one million people with disabilities into employment, but recognises that progress in achieving this has, so far, been slow and that there are substantial challenges involved, as set out in the work of the eleven contributors, including Frank Field M.P. in the report “ Opportunities for All -Transforming Employment For All Disabled People And Those With Health Problems,” recently produced by the Learning and Skills Institute and the Shaw Trust.

Council regrets that the findings of the Parliamentary Work and Pensions Select Committee, as set out by its Chair Frank Field have been distorted by

some to indicate that a reduction in the National Living Wage is advocated, and notes with concern the distress this misrepresentation may have caused to people.

Mr Field has clearly stated that though the impact of the National Living Wage for disabled people and those seeking to employ them has been examined by the committee, there is no suggestion that any disabled person should receive less than the National Living Wage and that his preference is that it should remain sacrosanct.

In fact, Frank Field's contribution recognises that to achieve the ambitious Government target will require a change of culture and attitude in society as a whole, and will need to put the experience of those with disabilities at the centre of developing the right policies.

It also recognises that some disabled people, particularly those with severe disabilities, do require extra support in their work environment, with their health needs and to meet their extra financial needs.

The report also acknowledges that potential employers will need encouragement and incentives to help them to provide for employment for those people with disability.

Council therefore concludes that this report and the further work of the Work and Pensions Committee will be useful in informing the implementation of our local strategy to help people with severe disabilities achieve the aim of gaining and keeping a job."

The amendment was put and carried (51:5) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was then put and carried (51:5) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (51:5) (One abstention) -

Council notes and endorses the All Age Disability Strategy at Priority Two (Young people and adults with disabilities have access to employment and are financially resilient) and notes that, in drawing up the Strategy, people with disabilities have told us "they should have the same access to education and work as all citizens" and that "everyone has a unique contribution to make and when this is recognised, people will feel and be valued".

Council welcomes the ambitious Government target to assist a further one million people with disabilities into employment, but recognises that progress in achieving this has, so far, been slow and that there are substantial challenges involved, as set out in the work of the eleven contributors, including Frank Field M.P. in the report " Opportunities for All -Transforming Employment For All Disabled People And Those With Health Problems," recently produced by the Learning and Skills Institute and the Shaw Trust.

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In fact, Frank Field's contribution recognises that to achieve the ambitious Government target will require a change of culture and attitude in society as a whole, and will need to put the experience of those with disabilities at the centre of developing the right policies.

It also recognises that some disabled people, particularly those with severe disabilities, do require extra support in their work environment, with their health needs and to meet their extra financial needs.

The report also acknowledges that potential employers will need encouragement and incentives to help them to provide for employment for those people with disability.

Council therefore concludes that this report and the further work of the Work and Pensions Committee will be useful in informing the implementation of our local strategy to help people with severe disabilities achieve the aim of gaining and keeping a job.

75 MOTION - NJC PAY TO COUNCILS

Proposed by Councillor Janette Williamson

Seconded by Councillor Chris Spriggs

This Council notes that:

- National Joint Council basic pay has fallen by 21% since 2010 in real terms
- NJC workers had a three-year pay freeze from 2010-2012. This was compounded by the fact an agreement was reached to forgo a 1% pay rise shortly afterwards. This puts Wirral Council workers' pay BEHIND all North West councils who follow NJC pay.
- Local terms and conditions of many NJC employees have also been cut, impacting on their overall earnings, the 4 days unpaid leave amounts to a further 1.6% pay cut.
- NJC pay is the lowest in the public sector

- Job evaluated pay structures are being squeezed and distorted by bottom-loaded NJC pay settlements needed to reflect the increased National Living Wage and the Foundation Living Wage
- There are growing equal and fair pay risks resulting from this situation

This council therefore supports the NJC pay claim for 2018, submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers and calls for the immediate end of public sector pay restraint. NJC pay cannot be allowed to fall further behind other parts of the public sector. This Council also welcomes the joint review of the NJC pay spine to remedy the turbulence caused by bottom-loaded pay settlements.

This Council also notes the drastic ongoing cuts to local government funding and calls on the Government to provide additional funding to fund a decent pay rise for NJC employees and the pay spine review.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Call immediately on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to Government to fund the NJC claim and the pay spine review and notify us of their action in this regard.
- Write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor supporting the NJC pay claim and seeking additional funding to fund a decent pay rise and the pay spine review.
- Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and the pay spine review.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9 the Council did not debate the matter.

Prior to the vote on the motion, Councillor Phil Davies and fifteen Labour Members rose to request a 'card vote'.

A 'card vote' was then taken on the motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the Motion (58) Councillors R Abbey, T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, P Brightmore, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, S Foulkes, P Gilchrist, P Hackett, P Hayes, K Hodson, AER Jones, C Jones, S Kelly, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, T Pilgrim, C Povall, D Realey, L Reecejones, L Rennie, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, A Sykes, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, G Watt, I Williams, KJ Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood.

Against (0)

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan (Civic Mayor)

RESOLVED (58:0) (One abstention) – That the motion be approved.

76 **MOTION - NEW FERRY**

Proposed by Councillor Warren Ward
Seconded by Councillor Irene Williams

Council expresses its outrage that it is over six months since New Ferry was shaken to its core by an explosion in the town centre – leaving many people homeless, businesses damaged or destroyed and people nearby in terror, and the Government has still provided no financial assistance.

This Council commends the actions of its officers who have worked tirelessly to help restore order and normality to the community, and help residents and small businesses to get their lives back on track. Council support has included £300,000 from its scarce reserves.

Despite a long-awaited visit months after the explosion by the minister, Jake Berry MP, during which he heard of the heart-breaking stories of those affected by the blast, Council is astonished that the minister has taken the view that the explosion in New Ferry was not sufficiently serious to qualify for Government assistance and that the cost of recovering from the explosion should fall on the shoulders of Wirral Council Tax payers.

Council also condemns the u-turn by Wirral Conservatives, who, having originally backed Labour's call for Government to provide financial assistance, is now arguing that Wirral Council Tax payers should provide the funding.

Council also notes that the Government has taken a very different stance in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, where substantial public funding has been made available to help residents with urgent needs such as housing.

Council agrees that The Leader of the Council should write to Chancellor of the Exchequer, highlighting the impact which the explosion is still having, and requesting him to include funding in the forthcoming Autumn Statement to deal with emergency needs of residents and businesses in New Ferry and the wider regeneration plans which have been drawn up.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9 the Council did not debate the matter.

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Adam Sykes
Seconded by Councillor Andrew Hodson

*Paragraph 1: **delete:** 'expresses its outrage that it is over' **and insert** 'notes that in the'*

*Paragraph 1: **delete:** 'Government has still provided no financial assistance' **and insert:** 'Cabinet has agreed that the costs of recovery would be met from the Councils own resources (Cabinet, 17th July 2017, p.9 Revenue Monitoring 2017/2018 to June 2017 refers).'*

'Council further notes that in the Strategic Regeneration Framework agreed by Cabinet on 2nd October 2017 that "High level discussions with Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government have taken place to secure investment for the area."

*Paragraph 2: **delete** 'its scarce' **and insert** 'reserves of £9.4 million allocated for emergencies and unforeseen circumstances'*

*Paragraph 4: **delete all after** 'Council' **and insert** 'notes the contents of the letter from the Leader of the Conservative Group to the Leader of the Council concerning New Ferry which included the paragraph: "While you continue to have all-Party support to seek assistance from the DCLG, I would hope that you will now proceed, without delay, to ensure the needs of people in New Ferry are met using the funds that your Administration has for this purpose." Council regrets that the Leader of the Council has rejected the offer from the Leader of the Conservative Group to work with him on this issue.'*

The amendment was put and lost (17:41) (One abstention).

The original motion was then put and carried (41:17) (One abstention).

RESOLVED (41:17) (One abstention) -

Council expresses its outrage that it is over six months since New Ferry was shaken to its core by an explosion in the town centre – leaving many people homeless, businesses damaged or destroyed and people nearby in terror, and the Government has still provided no financial assistance.

This Council commends the actions of its officers who have worked tirelessly to help restore order and normality to the community, and help residents and small businesses to get their lives back on track. Council support has included £300,000 from its scarce reserves.

Despite a long-awaited visit months after the explosion by the minister, Jake Berry MP, during which he heard of the heart-breaking stories of those affected by the blast, Council is astonished that the minister has taken the view that the explosion in New Ferry was not sufficiently serious to qualify for Government assistance and that the cost of recovering from the explosion should fall on the shoulders of Wirral Council Tax payers.

Council also condemns the u-turn by Wirral Conservatives, who, having originally backed Labour's call for Government to provide financial assistance, is now arguing that Wirral Council Tax payers should provide the funding.

Council also notes that the Government has taken a very different stance in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, where substantial public funding has been made available to help residents with urgent needs such as housing.

Council agrees that The Leader of the Council should write to Chancellor of the Exchequer, highlighting the impact which the explosion is still having, and requesting him to include funding in the forthcoming Autumn Statement to deal with emergency needs of residents and businesses in New Ferry and the wider regeneration plans which have been drawn up.

77 **MOTION - UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

Councillors W Ward and J Williamson having earlier declared interests in this item left the Council Chamber whilst the matter was debated and voted upon.

Proposed by Councillor Chris Jones
Seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart

Council condemns the government's misnamed "Universal Credit" scheme as an extension of past Tory/LibDem and current Tory policies crafted to shift to the poorest and most vulnerable in our society the burden of the bank-driven world debt crisis of 2008.

Further, Council calls on the government to listen to the people, listen to members of the Parliamentary Conservative Party who see their votes slipping away, and abandon its Universal Credit proposals.

Universal credit will, for people in or out of work, conflate or replace most of the discrete benefits to which they are now entitled. The LGA shows an expectation of average weekly income cuts of £11.18 from the change to UC but with potentially devastating immediate income gaps of several weeks for the very neediest. These benefits can include those for housing, child care, disability, limited capability for work, caring, etc.

Council notes that following a recent DWP presentation, explaining how the shift from the previous arrangements will be put into effect, Councillors who attended became aware that the government's arrangements are too incompetently orchestrated to avoid severe financial distress amongst Wirral's most vulnerable and neediest individuals, families and children.

As the change to UC is intended to begin its Wirral "roll out" during November there are well founded fears that it will precipitate a desperately hungry Christmas-time for many already low-income Wirral residents, negating the very spirit of the Christmas message and forcing more people to rely on foodbanks.

Whilst declaring profound opposition to the seemingly vindictive and cruel speed of the change to UC, Council also observes that the measure is consistent with seamless continuation, by the present Tory government, of the preceding ConDem collaboration government's neoliberal austerity measures.

Finally, Council notes that the Leader of the Conservative Group has already shown his willingness to make a stand against his own government when he believes they are wrong by voting against the hated Bedroom Tax. Council calls on Councillor Lewis to show similar resolve and oppose Universal Credit.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9 the Council did not debate the matter, and having been formally moved and seconded, the motion was put to the vote.

One amendment which had been circulated in advance of the meeting was submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1) and (9), as follows:

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Delete paragraph 1 and replace with...

Council notes that the speed and manner of the roll-out of Universal Credit is causing considerable concern amongst residents entitled to help with their housing costs and caught in the changing administration of benefits.

Council welcomes the detailed analysis of the problems experienced with the roll-out reported in the House of Commons Library Research Paper of 3 October 2017 as set out here...

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06547/SN06547.pdf>

Council is aware that the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced some limited changes to the system at the recent Conservative Party Conference and was closely questioned by MPs in the Commons on 9 October as referenced here...

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-10-09/debates/85FA4177-36D2-4D64-876F-B072176F962B/UniversalCredit>,

...including a question from Frank Field MP.

Council appreciates and recognises...

1. the contribution to the debate in the considered view of Sir John Major that *'universal credit, which, although theoretically impeccable, is operationally messy, socially unfair and unforgiving'*
2. the practical steps outlined by the Liberal Democrats at their recent conference which not only called for more substantial reform of the system but included these practical steps:
 - a) *removing the seven waiting days at the start of a claim, to reduce the amount of time people have to wait for their first payment.*
 - b) *monitoring the impact of payment one month in arrears, and changing it if this results in rising debt and destitution.*

- c) *making sure everyone moving to Universal Credit is told they can get an Advance Payment to help them while they wait for their first payment.*
- d) *making the Universal Credit Helpline free of charge, at least until the roll-out is complete.*
- e) *allowing people to adjust to Universal Credit by offering everyone options in how they would like the benefit to be paid.*
- f) *putting in place a comprehensive support package before Universal Credit roll-out accelerates, to make sure people get advice to manage their money and deal with any complications in the application process.*

Insert new paras after 2f

Council notes that the Government has highlighted an increase in the number of 'advance payments' but the burden is placed on recipients to request this. Council notes that arrangements appear to have been offered and agreed with the Scottish Government and for Northern Ireland whereby much faster payments, available from the first fortnight, are being set up.

Council is concerned that the practical problems with a system have created harsh outcomes and place cruel burdens on those needing help. People face having to make high cost telephone calls and waiting periods when they have few resources to fall back on. The overhauled system was supposed to help by helping people navigate their way through the system and help the transition into work.

Insert at the beginning of original para 2...

Council, in the light of all the concerns raised, requests that the Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions calling upon the Government not only to pause the roll-out and consult widely on further changes to the system but... *(continues with "...further, Council calls on the government)*

Delete original para 6 ("Whilst declaring profound opposition.....)

Councillor Phil Davies and fifteen Labour Members rose to request a 'card vote' on the amendment.

A 'card vote' was then taken on the amendment and the Council divided as follows:

For the amendment (5) Councillors A Brighthouse, C Carubia, P Gilchrist, S Kelly, D Mitchell.

Against (51) Councillors R Abbey, T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, P Brightmore, D Burgess-Joyce, P Cleary, W Clements, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, S Foulkes, P Hackett, P Hayes, K Hodson, AER Jones, C Jones, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, T Pilgrim, C Povall, D Realey, L Reecejones, L Rennie, PA Smith, W

Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, A Sykes, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, G Watt, I Williams, KJ Williams, S Williams, G Wood.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan (Civic Mayor)

Prior to the vote on the motion, Councillor Phil Davies and fifteen Labour Members rose to request a ‘card vote’.

A ‘card vote’ was then taken on the original motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the Motion (39) Councillors R Abbey, A Brighthouse, P Brightmore, C Carubia, P Cleary, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Gilchrist, P Hackett, AER Jones, C Jones, S Kelly, B Kenny, A Leech, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, L Reecejones, PA Smith, W Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, T Usher, J Walsh, I Williams, KJ Williams, G Wood.

Against (17) Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, D Burgess-Joyce, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, P Hayes, K Hodson, I Lewis, T Pilgrim, C Povall, A Sykes, G Watt, S Williams.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan (Civic Mayor)

RESOLVED (39:17) (One abstention) -

Council condemns the government’s misnamed “Universal Credit” scheme as an extension of past Tory/LibDem and current Tory policies crafted to shift to the poorest and most vulnerable in our society the burden of the bank-driven world debt crisis of 2008.

Further, Council calls on the government to listen to the people, listen to members of the Parliamentary Conservative Party who see their votes slipping away, and abandon its Universal Credit proposals.

Universal credit will, for people in or out of work, conflate or replace most of the discrete benefits to which they are now entitled. The LGA shows an expectation of average weekly income cuts of £11.18 from the change to UC but with potentially devastating immediate income gaps of several weeks for the very neediest. These benefits can include those for housing, child care, disability, limited capability for work, caring, etc.

Council notes that following a recent DWP presentation, explaining how the shift from the previous arrangements will be put into effect, Councillors who attended became aware that the government’s arrangements are too incompetently orchestrated to avoid severe financial distress amongst Wirral’s most vulnerable and neediest individuals, families and children.

As the change to UC is intended to begin its Wirral “roll out” during November there are well founded fears that it will precipitate a

desperately hungry Christmas-time for many already low-income Wirral residents, negating the very spirit of the Christmas message and forcing more people to rely on foodbanks.

Whilst declaring profound opposition to the seemingly vindictive and cruel speed of the change to UC, Council also observes that the measure is consistent with seamless continuation, by the present Tory government, of the preceding ConDem collaboration government's neoliberal austerity measures.

Finally, Council notes that the Leader of the Conservative Group has already shown his willingness to make a stand against his own government when he believes they are wrong by voting against the hated Bedroom Tax. Council calls on Councillor Lewis to show similar resolve and oppose Universal Credit.