



# Council

Town Hall  
Wallasey

1 December, 2017

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.00 pm on Monday, 11 December 2017** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

**Contact Officer:** Andrew Mossop  
**Tel:** 0151 691 8501  
**e-mail:** [andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk)  
**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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## AGENDA

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

### 2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive the Civic Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence.

### 3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 34)

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 October, 2017.

### 4. PETITIONS (Pages 35 - 36)

A. To receive petitions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 21.

- B. The following petition is referred to the Council for consideration in accordance with Standing Order 34 –

A petition of some 3,297 signatories, submitted by Mr Richard Shield, of the Wirral Needs Campaign, asking the Council to oppose all privatisation and cuts to Wirral Council and NHS funding by the Tory Government.

The front sheet of the petition is attached and, in accordance with the Petition Scheme, the petition organiser has been invited to address the Council for up to five minutes. The Council should debate the matter for a maximum of 15 minutes before deciding how to respond to the petition.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

To deal with questions from members of the public, in accordance with Appendix 1 to Standing Orders – up to 30 minutes.

## **6. LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND CHAIRS REPORTS (Pages 37 - 64)**

To receive the written reports of the Executive and Policy and Performance Committee Chairs, and to receive questions and answers on any of those reports in accordance with Standing Orders 10(2)(a) and 11.

## **7. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

To consider Members' general questions to the Civic Mayor, Executive or Committee Chair in accordance with Standing Orders 10 (2)(b) and 11.

## **8. MATTERS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES OR OTHER COUNCIL COMMITTEES (Pages 65 - 76)**

To consider and determine any references from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and any other Council Committees.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

- A.** The Council is advised that the Notice of Motion "Tougher Action of Fly-Tipping" referred from Council at its meeting on 16 October, 2017 (minute 68 refers) was considered by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 November, 2017 (minute to follow in supplement). In accordance with Standing Order 7(5) the Council will be asked to consider the recommendation of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- B.** The Council is advised that the Notice of Motion "Making More Time for Pedestrians" referred from Council at its meeting on 16 October, 2017 (minute 68 refers) was considered by the Business

Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 November, 2017 (minute to follow in supplement). In accordance with Standing Order 7(5) the Council will be asked to consider the recommendation of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- C. The Council is advised that the Notice of Motion “Wirral Well-Made Need for Infrastructure Support” referred from Council at its meeting on 16 October, 2017 (minute 68 refers) was considered by the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 November, 2017 (minute to follow in supplement). In accordance with Standing Order 7(5) the Council will be asked to consider the recommendation of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee**

#### **D. Minutes of the meetings of 29 June and 31 October, 2017.**

**In respect of minute 10 (29/6/17) (pages 65 – 67),** the Council is requested to:

- (1) agree the transfer of Council’s trusteeship of the Callister Youth Club to new Trustees, to avoid a continuation of its conflict of interest over 19 Argyle Street (Birkenhead);
- (2) reaffirm Council’s decisions to pay into the bank account of the Trust an annual sum equal to the market rent for 19 Argyle Street (currently estimated to be £14,000);
- (3) note the valuation obtained for the Trust’s premises in Slatey Road, Birkenhead but defers any decision on its future disposal or use pending the appointment of new Trustees;
- (4) defer any decision on a change to the objects of the Trust pending the appointment of new Trustees.

**In respect of minute 21 (2) (31/10/17) (pages 70 – 75):**

- (2) as well as the apology at (1) above, *[this refers to (1) in minute 21]* Councillor Reecejones must apologise for her unacceptable behaviour orally at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 11 December 2017.

## **9. VACANCIES (Pages 77 - 84)**

To receive nominations, in accordance with Standing Order 25(6), in respect of any proposed changes in the membership of committees, and to approve nominations for appointments to outside organisations.

1. Councillor Walter Smith sadly passed away on 9 November, 2017. As a result, the following vacancies have arisen and will require consideration at Council.

## **Committees**

- Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny

## **Statutory and Advisory Committees, Working Parties and Panels**

- Education Staff Panel
- Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education
- Young People's Advisory Group
- Members' Development Steering Group

## **2. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

### **Leasowe Community Homes (Prima LCH)**

Councillor Adrian Jones to be nominated for consideration by Prima LCH as a Director

3. The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, at its meeting on 20 November, 2017, considered a report on the appointment of four independent persons to sit on its Committee (minute and report attached) (**pages 77 – 84**). The Council is recommended to approve the appointment of:

Mr G Kerr, Mr J R McCosh, Ms Angele Lloyd Prince and Mr A Wilson

for a period of four years.

## **10. MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL (Pages 85 - 160)**

APPROVAL: To consider any recommendations of the Executive or Council Committees which require the approval or consideration of the Council.

### **CABINET – 6 NOVEMBER, 2017**

#### **A. Revenue Monitoring 2017/18 - Quarter 2 (pages 85 – 97)**

(Minute 52 and Cabinet report attached). The Council is requested to approve funding of £350,000 from General Fund Balances in respect of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018.

#### **B. Capital Monitoring 2017/18 - Quarter 2 (pages 99 – 116)**

(Minute 53 and Cabinet report attached). The Council is requested to approve the inclusion in the programme of 5 new bids, at an additional capital cost of £2.6 million, and approve the revised Capital Programme of £67.5 million.

#### **C. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2017/18 (pages 117 – 140)**

(Minute 54 and Cabinet report attached). The Council is requested

to approve the revision to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in selecting the annuity method within 'Option 3 Asset Life' for calculating the MRP.

## **DELEGATED DECISIONS**

### **D. Statutory Register of Brownfield Land (pages 141 – 150)**

(Executive Member Decision form and report attached, the appendices can be viewed on the website [here](#). (Copies can be provided on request)).

The Council is recommended to make the necessary amendments to the delegated powers for Planning Committee and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services in the Council's Constitution to reflect the new requirements set out in recommendations 1, 3 and 4 of the decision.

### **E. Playing Pitch Strategy (pages 151 – 159)**

(Executive Member Decision form and report attached, the appendices can be viewed on the website [here](#). (Copies can be provided on request)).

The Council is recommended to adopt the Assessment Report and Strategy and Action Plan as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in other decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

## **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL**

F. Council is requested to appoint Shaer Halewood, Director of Finance and Investment, as the Council's Statutory Section 151 Officer.

## **11. NOTICES OF MOTION (Pages 161 - 168)**

Notices of motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1), are attached. They are listed in accordance with Standing Order 7(2), and the full text of each motion is attached. The Mayor, having considered each motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) has decided that they will be dealt with as follows:

- (i). National Budget**  
To be debated.
- (ii). Preparing Communities for the Impact of New Development**  
To be debated.
- (iii). Reducing Single-Use Plastic (SUP) in Wirral Council**  
To be debated.

- (iv). **Domestic Violence**  
To be debated.
- (v). **Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign**  
To be debated.
- (vi). **The United Kingdom's Household Debt Ticking Time-Bomb**  
To be debated.
- (vii). **Economic Viability Assessments from Developers**  
The Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (viii). **Planning Ahead to Use the Community Infrastructure Levy**  
The Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Kelly', written in a cursive style.

Interim Assistant Director: Law and Governance

## 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**

| <b>Name</b>                       | <b>Item No. and Nature of Declaration</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Councillor<br>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<br>Jeanette 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<br>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<br>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<br>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<br>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<br>George Davies | Item No. 12 – Emergency Notice of Motion (Minute No. 69). Personal - by virtue of his previous employment at Vauxhall Motors.                             |
| Councillor<br>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<br>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.

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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

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".

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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.

**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.**

**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.**

**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, 17<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.**

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**Wirral Needs**



**PETITION**

To be presented to Wirral Council before its Annual Budget Meeting (in March 2018)

We call on Wirral Council to:

- Actively **oppose** all privatisation and cuts to Wirral Council and NHS funding by the Tory Government
- **Campaign** for the resources and services which Wirral people really **need** for a good standard of living and which protect the most vulnerable, some of which are detailed in the Wirral Needs Plan
- Ensure that the public know that cuts to local services are **imposed** by the minority Tory Government - and are opposed by the majority Labour Council in Wirral
- Work with other local authorities - regionally and nationally - to organise an effective mass campaign **against cuts** and privatisation to the services people really need

|    | Name          |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1  | ROY HOLBEN    |   |
| 2  | GARY BATHGATE |   |
| 3  | JEFF ADAMS    |   |
| 4  | P. Hill       |   |
| 5  | A. WILLET     |   |
| 6  | D. Newberry   |   |
| 7  | S. Charley    |   |
| 8  | K. Chisley    | 5 |
| 9  | O. Parkin     |   |
| 10 | B. Manks      | 1 |
| 11 | C. JOHNSON    | 1 |
| 12 | M. JOHNSON    | 1 |
| 13 | C. BRACE      | 4 |
| 14 | D. McKAY      | 5 |
| 15 | R. Farley     | 2 |
| 16 | A. Ryan       | 5 |
| 17 | P. Young      | 3 |
| 18 | B. Green      | 3 |
| 19 | C. Young      | 7 |
| 20 | S. Jones      | 7 |

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## COUNCIL

11 DECEMBER 2017

### CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

|                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Phil Davies         |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO</b>           | Leader of the Council          |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Eric Robinson, Chief Executive |

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

#### 1 INCREASE INWARD INVESTMENT

In March this year we announced a £1billion development opportunity and the creation of a joint venture partnership to deliver economic growth, regeneration and jobs across Wirral. The creation of that vehicle, Wirral Growth Company, is on track, and I am confident in January 2018 we will be in a position to agree a deal to commence the most ambitious, entrepreneurial and impactful programme the council has ever embarked upon.

Wirral Growth Company will help us create jobs. It will stimulate economic growth, kick-start regeneration at key sites throughout the borough, and provide a long-term, substantial revenue stream to help us replace some of the funding we have lost through austerity policies.

We will be able to take key sites – land and buildings the council owns but does not use or maximise the full benefit of – to develop homes, offices, industrial, leisure and retail amenities to support the growth of our local economy.

The Council will retain the freehold on the assets it currently owns, but through utilising the financial resources and expertise of our private sector partner, can develop the sites and share equally in the development profits. It will see us being able to create new retail centres, homes, leisure facilities, commercial and industrial facilities – bringing with them hundreds of new jobs in the construction phase alone.

Crucially, it also brings much needed revenue into the Council to support key services for residents. It will bring an immediate, permanent increase in our Business Rates and Council Tax base – income which goes directly to our frontline services, and furthermore, it also brings us significant new income from the rent and leases on the sites we develop, paid through a company dividend.

To me, this programme is truly a *'win-win-win'*; for our residents, the Council and the entire City Region. Wirral Growth Company puts us in the driving seat to create the Wirral we want to see for our residents and, I believe, puts us in a hugely improved financial position as we continue to work to realise our ambitions for Wirral.

We are also supporting our regeneration ambitions through making strategic acquisitions at key sites. Only last month we identified The 'Europa Buildings' in

Birkenhead - home to Mecca Bingo and Wilkos –as a site to be acquired to form a crucial part of a redesigned town centre. Adding this site to existing Council assets will provide greater scope for regeneration and development, and should return a larger share of the development rewards to the Council.

We remain clear in our ambition to seek new investment in Birkenhead as a catalyst for regeneration across the whole borough. Any successful regeneration plan for Birkenhead needs to regenerate a new town centre comprising retail, leisure, residential and office developments. But Wirral Growth Company will also look to develop key sites in Bromborough, Bebington, Moreton and Seacombe in parallel to deliver economic growth and regeneration across Wirral, north to south.

You can read more about the Wirral Growth Company at [Wirralwellmade.com](http://Wirralwellmade.com), and find out more about the plans to buy the Europa Buildings in the [Liverpool Echo](#) and [Wirral View](#).

## **2 GREATER JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

Our Pledge to ensure Greater Job Opportunities for local people is demonstrating real, ongoing positive impacts. Yet again, we are seeing more Wirral residents in work – the employment rate is rising and benefits claims are falling. Through the Devolution arrangement with Government, the Liverpool City Region has secured an additional £3.5 million to develop a ‘Households into Work’ programme, aimed at helping those trapped in worklessness back into training and employment.

The ‘Households into Work’ programme is part of the Combined Authority’s Devolution Agreement with the Government, where funding and decision making is made locally to the benefit and needs of local residents.

The ‘Households into Work’ programme is an example of where assisting residents with tailored support will help them improve their chances of securing good, well-paid and skilled employment. The programme will boost the employment prospects and job outcomes for people across the region by tackling wider family issues such as debt management and health and wellbeing that are impacting on a household as well as providing more traditional employment support. You can find out more about this programme from the [Liverpool City Region combined authority website](#).

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor George Davies                         |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO</b>           | Housing and Community Safety                     |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner - Environment |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relating to his portfolio.

### **1 ENSURING WIRRAL'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE SAFE**

The Safer Wirral Hub is now officially open, providing Wirral residents with a more joined up and efficient service than ever before. We hope and expect this new approach will give us the ability to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour with more resources and more impact than any single agency could deliver alone.

During the second quarter of this year, we have seen a 9% reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents reported, although we have seen an increase in the number of crimes reported to the police. Despite this, Wirral has maintained its position as having the lowest crime rate in Merseyside and has seen the lowest increase in crime of any Community Safety Partnership in the region.

### **2 GOOD QUALITY HOUSING THAT MEETS RESIDENTS NEEDS**

I am delighted the Cabinet last month agreed to start consultation on an extension of our successful selective licensing scheme. Wirral residents demand – and deserve – to live in good quality, safe and attractive housing. The availability of private rented accommodation has more than doubled in Wirral in the last 10 years and while we know that many of these properties are of an excellent standard, managed by responsible landlords, there are others that aren't up to scratch.

We will not tolerate Wirral residents being forced to live in poor conditions by irresponsible landlords. This licensing scheme is a good way for us to tackle this issue and, where a landlord does not live up to their responsibilities to their tenants, we will not hesitate to take action against them.

Selective Licensing, which requires landlords to agree to a range of conditions around the standards of their accommodation, is being extended through some of Wirral's more deprived communities, after helping to drive up the quality of rented accommodation in parts of Birkenhead.

The four new areas proposed are Hamilton Square, Seacombe St Pauls, Birkenhead West and Birkenhead Central. These would join Egerton North, Birkenhead South, Seacombe Library and Egremont Promenade South as Selective Licensing areas.

Read more in [Wirral View](#).

I am also pleased to report continuing excellent performance in improving housing for our residents. Within the current financial year, we have seen 145 new affordable homes built in Wirral, providing opportunities for people to get on the housing ladder in safe, pleasant and attractive new homes.

We are also intervening in the private sector to ensure Wirral residents can live in safe and healthy homes. 166 homes during the past six months have had hazards removed to make them safer, warmer and healthier houses for our more vulnerable residents.

### **3 ZERO TOLERANCE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE**

WIRRAL Council united with colleagues across Merseyside on Saturday, November 25, to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls. The day signalled the start of a 16-day campaign of activism to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

Council buildings including Wallasey Town Hall, Birkenhead Town Hall, and the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, glowed orange to support the UN campaign and people were urged to wear orange to show solidarity.

On November 25 Wirral also supported White Ribbon Day, when people were asked to wear a white ribbon and take the White Ribbon Pledge to end male violence against women. An awareness raising campaign across Merseyside will focus on how people need to talk about what is often a hidden problem and seek help.

Read more in [Wirral View](#).

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Phill Brightmore                      |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Environment                                      |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner - Environment |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

**1 ATTRACTIVE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT**

I was incredibly proud this past month to see Wirral's parks rightly recognised on a global scale. Hosting the World Urban Parks European Congress 2017 was a huge honour for our borough; it is a prestigious event which saw delegates from across the world come together to share good practice and ideas covering the themes of heritage, sustainability and community in our parks and open spaces.

Delegates told me how incredibly lucky we are to have such an amazing mix of parks, coast and countryside within such a small area. They were also impressed by the partnership that exists between our local communities and parks professionals.

Birkenhead Park was awarded the first Gold Standard Large Parks Awards from the World Urban Parks organisation, and Dr Mary Worrall, Senior Manager in Wirral Council's Parks, Coast and Countryside team, was also bestowed with the honour of becoming a Certified Park Professional International (CPPI), the highest award given by the World Parks Academy.

During the event, the congress signed a statement in support of Birkenhead Park being put forward for inclusion on the tentative list for World Heritage Status. Finally, congress signed a statement in support of Birkenhead Park being put forward for inclusion on the tentative list for World Heritage Status. It is absolutely clear Wirral's parks were hugely impressive to professionals from all across the world and receiving such a huge show of support for Birkenhead Park was a perfect way to end a truly fantastic event.

Read more in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

Our successful 'zero-tolerance' approach to environmental crime such as fly-tipping, litter and dog fouling is allowing for more resources to be invested in improving our local environment. A good example of this approach was demonstrated during October, with a second campaign to rid communities of some of the most problematic areas for fly-tipping getting underway.

18 'grot spots' were earmarked for action after local councillors and partners nominated sites in their neighbourhoods – on either privately-owned or unregistered land -that had been particularly blighted by fly-tipping.

The Council used some of the proceeds received from littering fixed penalty notices to get these areas cleaned up, hiring contractors to do the work and, where possible, billing careless or unresponsive owners.

Read more about this work in [Wirral View](#).

I would also like to make sure the Chamber is aware of the Love Where You Live campaign which, during October, helped organise more than 20 community litter picks.

The 'Love Where You Live' campaign encourages local people to team up and clean up their communities. An army of volunteers of all ages took part in the campaign as part of a concerted clean-up campaign in problem areas.

Wirral Council backed the activities by co-ordinating the planned litter picks, providing litter-picking kits to those who need it and arranging for Biffa to take away the full bags of rubbish at the end of each litter pick.

Read more about this work in [Wirral View](#).

## **2 LEISURE & CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

In the past three months, our parks, beaches and open spaces played host to a grant total of 184 different community, leisure, culture and family events. This is a clear demonstration of just how popular these areas are for our residents, and how important they are in making Wirral a fantastic place to live.

Similarly, we are seeing more and more events take place in our libraries – with important community and social events taking place almost every day across the network. We will continue to work to make sure as many Wirral residents as possible are able to access and enjoy these events.

## **3 VIBRANT TOURISM ECONOMY**

The value of Wirral's tourism economy continues to rise, in testament to the hard work of the many businesses in the sector and the support they receive from the Council and our colleagues at Wirral Chamber of Commerce.

We have improved the [visitwirral.com](#) website, where visitors are now able to access an interactive map and a web ticket manager. We are also in the midst of a research study of Wirral hotels and accommodation to enable a new plan to be developed to support hoteliers in the borough.

A great many exciting and ground-breaking events are being developed for 2018, with a full programme of activities and promotions to encourage more visitors than ever to discover and enjoy Wirral next year.



**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Angela Davies                               |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Transformation   |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Paul Satoor – Director for Corporate Services & Reform |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1 WIRRAL GROWTH COMPANY**

We continue to make fast, exciting progress in setting up the Wirral Growth Company. This programme will put the Council in its strongest ever position to drive forward, and direct, regeneration in the borough – putting us in the driving seat to design what Wirral looks like in the future, and creating thousands of jobs, building hundreds of new homes and revitalising our retail centres along the way.

We are now into a detailed process of competitive dialogue with the bidding organisations – huge developers with extensive track records of success – and are working with them every day to create the best deal for Wirral. We expect to be in a position to put the preferred deal forward very early in 2018.

Members can expect detailed briefings and extensive communications about this programme in January. More information about the Growth Company, including the invitations to tender and the business case which we took to the market, is available on [wirralwellmade.com](http://wirralwellmade.com).

**2 LIBRARIES, LEISURE & CULTURE REVIEW**

We are continuing an extensive review into our Library, Leisure and Cultural services, seeking to find a new way to provide the services to ensure they are sustainable for the long term and are able to meet our residents' needs.

We know the services in this review are important to people. Their impact on residents' health, wellbeing and general quality of life cannot be underestimated. Therefore any changes to how and where they're provided must be delivered sensitively, and in way which ensures a quality service can be provided sustainably for the long-term.

Cabinet recently considered a report which outlined the consultation process which had been delivered so far, and instructed officers to continue work on developing the business case to redesign the services – using the feedback from

staff, members of the public and partners to underpin any new model which is proposed.

That work is now in process, and we expect further progress to be made in early 2018 with reports to Cabinet and more conversations and engagement with all stakeholders.

### **3 CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services has provided an extensive updated on the progress within Children's Services.

A Transformation Plan for children's services is now in place and is being delivered, working to support and complement the existing Improvement Plan which was developed in response to the Ofsted inspection last year.

### **4 ACCESS WIRRAL**

Later this month Wirral residents will start to see communications and promotions encouraging them to take advantage of a much-improved online system for managing Council Tax and Housing Benefit payments.

Part of the Access Wirral transformation programme, the new systems will allow residents to manage their benefit and tax payments in a much easier, more accessible way – reducing their need to call the council or visit One Stop Shops to perform simple tasks.

**COUNCIL**

**11 DECEMBER 2017**

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Christine Jones                           |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Social Care and Health                               |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Graham Hodgkinson, Director of Adult Social Services |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1 WIRRAL RESIDENTS LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES**

An innovative, ambitious and imaginative programme designed to reduce the harm caused by super-strength alcohol has been judged the best in the country.

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) presented its Best Project Award to the people behind Wirral's 'Reducing the Strength and Custodians' scheme – delivered in partnership between the council's public health teams and colleagues within Environmental Health and Trading Standards under Cllr Brightmore's leadership.

Reducing the Strength' is now embedded in Birkenhead, Tranmere, Rock Ferry and New Ferry working with local off licences encouraging them to stop the sale of super-strength, low-cost beers and ciders. The scheme is now expanding into Seacombe and other areas.

In naming the Wirral project as the national award winner, the judges said: "this project stood out because of its ambition and its success in tackling this important social and public health problem.' You can read more about this fantastic recognition in [Wirral View](#).

Last month also saw the launch a new campaign, '5 Ways to Wellbeing' to coincide with World Mental Health Day. Physical and mental health is inextricably linked. Just as we're advised to eat 5 fruit and veg a day to improve our physical health, our campaign is proposing 5 easy ways to improve mental wellbeing.

Small changes can make a big difference. With one in four people experiencing mental distress during their lifetime, it's never been more important to take care of your mind and body. Our campaign will help people access support, connect people and make simple changes to their lifestyle to improve their wellbeing. Find out more at [www.wirral.gov.uk/5ways](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/5ways).

We are also working at the moment to ensure everyone who is eligible for a free flu jab takes advantage of it. Residents are being encouraged to ask their GP, pharmacist or midwife for more information, or visit [www.nhs.uk/staywell](http://www.nhs.uk/staywell).

## **2 OLDER PEOPLE LIVE WELL**

We continue to see encouraging progress in the employment rate for people aged over 50, which at 34.7% is rising at a faster rate than the UK average. We are also seeing continued improvement in the healthy life expectancy level for male and female residents, both of which rates are now higher than at the start of the Wirral Plan.

One example of us working differently with our partners is the Age Friendly programme. Mentioned briefly in my last update to Council, I am pleased to see the campaign is beginning to be rolled out across key locations in the borough.

To mark the International Day of Older People, the council and our partners including Age UK Wirral, Wirral Chamber, and local businesses launched a new initiative - 'Age Friendly Businesses' in Birkenhead. Those carrying the Age Friendly logo guarantee elderly visitors the minimum of a chair, the loo and a drink.

Look out for the Age Friendly logo in shops in Wirral and find out more from [Wirral View](#).

## **3 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LIVE INDEPENDENTLY**

Our progress towards integrating our services with NHS partners continues to gather pace, and allow for better, more efficient and joined up services for our residents.

Wirral is now one of only 9 health and social care systems in the UK to be fully approved through the Better Care Fund, which is yet another demonstration of our robust approach to ensuring reducing resources are targeted at creating the biggest impact for local people.

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Bernie Mooney                               |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Children and Families                                  |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Deborah Gornik, Acting Director of Children's Services |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1 VULNERABLE CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

At time of writing, Paul Boyce is preparing to start work as Wirral's Director of Children's Services. Starting officially on 4 December 2017, Paul brings with him a huge amount of experience and expertise as a leader in his field.

Transforming the performance of children's services in Knowsley was Paul's most recent achievement, but throughout his career he has been able to consistently deliver excellent services for children despite huge challenges.

I am delighted we have been able to secure someone of Paul's calibre to continue our improvement and help us build on the positive momentum we have built over the past few months. I would also like to once again place on record my thanks to Deborah Gornik, who has worked tirelessly as interim director to deliver major improvements in our services.

I think it is important all Members are fully aware of the challenges facing children's services in Wirral, and throughout the UK. After seven years of austerity, resulting in the gradual erosion of support services, family support and early intervention, it is not an exaggeration to say children's services in Britain have reached their breaking point.

Today, in Wirral, we have more children in our care than ever before. More than 830 children are being 'looked after' by the authority and, throughout England and Wales, 90 children every day are being taken into care by councils. This is a national problem, which is affecting Wirral in exactly the same way as it is affecting other areas in the country. It is bringing with it huge financial pressure. Across the UK, 75% of all councils reported overspending their children's social care budgets – to the tune of £605 million.

Considering these facts, it was hugely disappointing to see the Chancellor offer no support for children's services in the autumn Budget last month. Once again, it is left to local government to pick up the pieces of failed national policies – having to find ways of taking what is left of our resources and using them to keep children safe.

We will invest in keeping vulnerable children safe. We must find the money to provide services which are of the highest possible quality for our children – we have said numerous times that nothing is more important and we will deliver on that pledge.

A new package and recruitment campaign to attract social workers to Wirral will launch during December. This new campaign will help us recruit and retain experienced, talented social workers and – crucially – allow for the stability young people need when building relationships with professionals. The campaign should also reduce our reliance on recruiting agency staff to fill vacancies. I hope to bring an update on the progress of this campaign to the Improvement Board and to the Council in the coming months.

Finally in this area, I am happy to inform Members of a new model of providing support to vulnerable children, which has been launched by the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board. The new model is called Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) and has a focus on understanding how issues affect the child's lived daily experience.

The SFEF model was developed by a group of professionals from all public services, in partnership with Professor Jan Horwath from Sheffield University and has been informed by the real experiences of families. Following successful launch events in the summer of 2017 the model 'went live' on the 30th October 2017.

## **2 CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL**

9 in 10 children in Wirral are now accessing early education through the 2 year old offer, which is fantastic news and will lead to our children starting school ready to learn and achieve better outcomes.

90% of organisations who provide early education across the borough are also rated as either 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, which is yet more proof that our work in this area is paying dividends.

Every month, Wirral View carries stories and features to provide parents with helpful information on services available to them. The most recent edition can be found [here](#).

## **3 REDUCE CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY**

Universal Credit will have a major impact on vulnerable families in Wirral. We are doing all we can to support local people and make sure they get the best advice to help them cope with these huge changes.

Over the summer, we have seen a big increase in the number of working parents taking advantage of the free 30 hours childcare. Following extensive promotion in Wirral View and across the local media, the number of eligible people benefiting from the offer has risen from 60% to 75%. We hope more eligible parents will take advantage of this support in the coming months.

The 'community connectors' service which we commissioned continues to deliver good results, helping vulnerable residents with issues as diverse as debt management, working with housing associations and landlords, food and heating and transport.

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Matthew Patrick                           |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Localism & Engagement                                |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Fiona Johnstone, Director of Strategy & Partnerships |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

**1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

I am pleased to confirm Community Action Wirral is to launch a ‘volunteering section’ within Wirral View in the coming weeks, allowing community organisations and charities to advertise volunteering vacancies – for free – to local residents. Connecting local people with services is exactly why Wirral View was created in the first place and I am delighted we are able to work with our partners to create such a helpful feature.

Encouraging and enabling local people to volunteer their time and expertise is extremely important, and why we developed the ‘Wirral Together’ volunteering strategy earlier this year: it is good for the community, and good for the health and wellbeing of the people who volunteer.

That is why I was so pleased to create our new policy to allow Council staff to take time off from work to volunteer at local community organisations. We are now in the process of fully rolling out the policy and I hope to be highlighting to the Chamber many examples of how this new policy has supported local causes in the coming months.

Members will also be aware that we have been conducting an extensive review of our Neighbourhood working model and constituency committees. I would like to thank all Members who have given up their time to provide extremely valuable opinions, ideas and suggestions for how we might improve the approach. I will be bringing initial ideas and proposals to Cabinet in the coming weeks, and I will of course be seeking the views of Members of all parties to develop a collaborative new approach which meets the needs of our residents.

During this review, I am pleased to say that the positive work with local communities has not slowed down at all. The points below give a short update on the progress which has taken place across the borough.

£7,000 was secured from the Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner to deliver The Pathfinder Project, which is a partnership of Gautby Road Community Centre, police, Youth Offending Team and Birkenhead Constituency. The project aims to prevent reoffending in young people by providing a range of interventions after a first arrest. Interventions include workshops and gym sessions with Sean 'Masher' Dodd, visits to HMP Altcourse and training at Fulwood Barracks, support from Youth Offending Team and Positive futures after care.

Over 30 Birkenhead groups attended the Royal Horticultural Society's North West in Bloom awards ceremony in Southport on 2nd and 3rd November. They all won awards and were given certificates. Oxtun won the best village cup and Wirral was highly commended on participating in the competition with such diverse and high level projects.

In partnership with New Brighton Coastal Community Team, colleagues facilitated the opening in October 2017 of an Information Point to support the circa 1 million visitors to New Brighton a year. The Visitor Information Point is located in Marine Park (opposite Morrisons), utilising a formerly empty room at the rear of the bowling pavilion. Working with the local community, the Information Point is operated and staffed entirely by volunteers from the New Brighton Community Partnership who is working with local traders and groups to promote the many things to see and do across the resort. New Brighton-related merchandise by local artists and small businesses is also being promoted from the Information Point, which is operating on key weekends for tourism.

The constituency teams have been working hard to support the residents of New Ferry and its various community based organisations on a number of projects. New Beginnings (soon to be formed as a Community Interest Company) formed from a willing group of volunteers, supporting their community in the aftermath of the explosion in March this year. In this short period of time they have generated funds, secured external funding and are now set to open their Community Resource and Support Centre at the end of January.

Eastham Connects had its partner launch on Wednesday the 22nd of November at the Delamere Centre in Eastham. Individuals and groups from all parts of a Wirral neighbourhood are looking to come together in a major new initiative aimed at tackling social isolation. The local constituency committee, elected members and community representatives are spearheading the project which they hope will pull the local community closer together and work in a cohesive way to improve the wellbeing of some of the area's most vulnerable or isolated residents.

Last year the Council started work on an exciting partnership with the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) to deliver their Theatre for Democracy module. I have been delighted to oversee this work, given the opportunity it presents to develop new ways of engaging with our local communities. The eight week module involves Community Drama students from LIPA meeting regularly with community groups in a number of areas to research and create a series of performances, with a focus on identifying ideas and solutions for sustainable change and improvement. A number of groups have been recruited with support



from the constituency teams and have been working with LIPA for some weeks culminating in a series of performances at Meadowcroft in Bromborough, the Heart of Egremont Community Centre, the Carrbridge Centre in Woodchurch and Livingstone Community Centre in Birkenhead. The students have been exploring a wide range of issues with those involved including transport links, anti-social behaviour, volunteering and mental health. LIPA students will then present the findings of the project to myself, Council officers and partners on the 13th December at Birkenhead Town Hall.

Finally, the Connect Us project has worked with the neighbourhoods and engagement team and a range of other organisations to map and share information about events over the festive season which individuals and families can access to alleviate hardship or loneliness. Wirral View will include as much as possible of what's available either in its published version on the 'what's on' website and the list is being circulated widely across all community networks.

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**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Chris Spriggs                               |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Delivering Differently                                 |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Paul Satoor – Director for Corporate Services & Reform |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**1 INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES**

I was delighted recently that the Cabinet agreed to move forward on developing an all age disability and mental health service. Making sure residents are able to access the very best, most efficient, services possible is so important, particularly for the most vulnerable people.

For too long, navigating between the NHS, social care and other related services has been incredibly complex, frustrating and challenging for people. People want one phone number to call, one person to speak to, who can give them advice and make sure they get the services they need.

Wirral has made huge progress. We are integrating our services at every level with our colleagues in the NHS, creating the seamless, efficient and well-designed services which people want, need and expect. This report is another significant step on this process and I am delighted we have been able to make it happen so quickly.

I believe this new, integrated service will help many people all across Wirral get better support and enjoy more tailored services to meet their needs.

**2 DELIVERING WIRRAL'S CULTURE STRATEGY**

Thousands of residents enjoyed a spectacular weekend of events on Bonfire Night this year, the centerpiece of which was the hugely impressive River of Light. The event, coming back for its second year and in a much-improved format, received overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Wirral visitors headed to New Brighton to grab the best vantage points, and the fun began at 4pm with illuminated street entertainment and UV face painting animating the promenade, followed by fire dancing displays and live music from Bring The Fire Project and the Katumba drummers, who entertained the crowds until 6pm.

At 6.30pm the fireworks display by Titanium Fireworks - the company behind London's New Year's Eve celebrations, Edinburgh's Hogmanay and displays at the London Olympics and Paralympics - was launched from Fort Perch Rock.

This year's display was also complimented by a specially commissioned soundtrack, broadcast to the crowd along the New Brighton promenade.

It was a truly spectacular event, enjoyed by thousands of local residents. You can read more about it in the [Wirral Globe](#) and the [Liverpool Echo](#), as well as see what Wirral residents had to say and re-watching the live feed on the council [Facebook page](#).

Also in November we saw the Wirral Society of Arts Open Exhibition at the Williamson, launched by Professor Phil Redmond CBE. This was another hugely popular event and demonstrated Wirral's growing reputation as a centre for artistic and cultural excellence.

The Wirral Society of Arts held their 8th Open Exhibition from 6th October until 18th November. This increasingly popular Exhibition showcases work from national and local artists. The WSA has been a fundamental part of the Williamson's life and history for much of its existence.

We continue to work with a number of individuals, groups and organisations to develop a number of exciting opportunities for Wirral over the next few years. These include the Tall Ships Regatta in May, and the Wilfred Owen Festival which will be held at the beginning of November 2018.

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Stuart Whittingham                      |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Highways and Transport                             |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner-<br>Environment |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

**1 TRANSPORT AND TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

I was pleased to announce our intention to take back control of the borough's highways maintenance. This means the authority will take over direct responsibility for key areas such as maintenance of streetlights, carriageways, footpaths, drainage, culverts and drains and pot hole repairs.

It will also oversee winter maintenance, Coastal protection infrastructure and minor highway improvements. The contract with BAM Nuttall was coming to an end and we believe we can deliver this service more effectively by taking direct control.

It is a significant step in ensuring residents in Wirral receive the service they expect and the best value for the money we spend on our highway network.

Two major investments in Wirral's transport infrastructure are being rolled out at the moment, which is great news for residents, businesses and visitors to our borough.

The first will see a further 600 street lights in Wirral are being replaced with new LED lamps, as part of an ongoing programme of work to modernise and improve the borough's street lighting network. In the latest phase of work 280 lighting columns will also be replaced.

I am delighted the council has made a major investment to help us continue our street light replacement programme and address the current issues we have with broken lighting equipment.

With these significant investments, I am confident that a number of problem locations with longstanding street lighting faults will be tackled and that we are now moving towards a modern, energy efficient and more reliable street lighting network that is fit for the future.

Further information and a full list of locations where the latest phase of work will take place can be found on the [Council's website](#) and you can read more about the investment in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

Wirral residents will also soon benefit from improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists using Tower Road in Birkenhead, after the council secured £2.1m from the National Productivity Investment Fund.

The route is currently closed as work continues to replace two bridges over the docks between Birkenhead and Wallasey, but it set to re-open early in 2018.

The new funding will be used to provide major public realm improvements to the route, including high quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, shared areas, and reduced carriageway widths to reduce traffic speeds.

This extra funding will provide a much-needed upgrade to an essential route between Wallasey and Birkenhead, cutting congestion, improving safety and shortening journey times for drivers. It will also help boost local economic growth by supporting people on key routes to get to work.

Finally, I am delighted to report that the phone box which has become synonymous with Wirral band OMD has been returned to its rightful place, after a successful campaign from fans supported by the Council.

The telephone box was removed earlier this year as part of BT's payphone removal programme, with no objections having been received as part of the public consultation process towards the end of 2016.

However, once fans realised that the kiosk had been removed, they quickly organised themselves into a campaign group to call for its reinstatement, if not as a public telephone as a kind of tourist attraction for OMD fans from near and far, who regularly visited the site as part of their travels.

I was delighted to support their campaign, and immediately instructed officers from the highways team and Wirral West Constituency Committee to work with colleagues from BT: the box was secured and placed into quarantine while arrangements for its recovery were put in place. It was great to see the reaction of fans – and indeed the band members themselves – when the phone box was officially reinstalled last month.

Read more in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

**COUNCIL**

**11 DECEMBER 2017**

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>REPORT OF</b>                   | Councillor Janette Williamson               |
| <b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>       | Finance & Income Generation                 |
| <b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b> | Tom Sault – Assistant Director :<br>Finance |

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

**DELIVERING A FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE BUDGET**

We are working hard to deliver a balanced budget in the current year. This includes the achievement of £45 million of savings and additional income agreed at the Budget Council in February. Services, particularly social care, are facing hugely increased demand. The additional investment into Children’s Services to safely support this vulnerable group has been highlighted by colleagues and does present a challenge this year, and indeed, in future years.

Managing within the existing resources is a big ask, and one which is incredibly important if we are to continue providing safe, good quality and sustainable services to residents.

So far, we are making excellent progress, and are expecting to have a small under-spend this year. This should help our position in future years, which based on current projections look extremely challenging.

The changes to local government funding will see the ending of the Revenue Support Grant, the increasing reliance on Business Rates, the reducing or ending of other grants for such as Education Support whilst we are faced with massive increases in demand for social care services. This all puts our budgets and services under incredible pressure.

It was very disappointing, therefore, to see no real support for local government provided in the latest Autumn Budget statement from the Chancellor. He has been consistently lobbied – by this Administration and many other councils – to tackle the funding crisis enveloping public services. Whilst providing support for Health there was nothing forthcoming for Children’s care services. In a speech which barely mentioned Local Government, the Chancellor failed to take his opportunity to fix these problems.

That leaves it, once again, to local Councils to attempt to take less money and do more with it. We are working hard now to progress proposals to increase our income and deliver improved services through closer working with partners. But

more is needed and we are developing new proposals, and are asking all elected members – regardless of party – to support the process and help us create a budget which is collaborative, allows us to deliver our 20 Pledges and which meets the needs of Wirral residents.

Residents will be able to review these proposals, and provide their views through a consultation exercise. Regular updates will be published on Wirral View and through the local media.



|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT TITLE</b> | <b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS</b> |
| <b>REPORT OF</b>    | <b>THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS</b>      |

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides Members of the Council with an update on the work carried out by each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report includes contributions from each of the Committee Chairs. Members of Council are requested to note the contents of the report set out in section 3 below.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

Members are requested to consider the contents of the report and whether they have any questions for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 To update Council Members on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 N/A

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **ADULT CARE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 3.1 This is the second report of the Adult Care and Health scrutiny committee in this municipal year. During that time the committee has developed and agreed its work programme which is now well underway. At the time of writing the November Meeting has not taken place. It is a full agenda with some key discussion points which will ensure for strong debate & scrutiny.
- 3.2 As reported in October the closure of the Eastham Walk in Centre was carried out without consultation. Following the September scrutiny meeting, the CCG has agreed that this closure would be a temporary one. Council have yet to secure a date for re-opening Eastham WIC and this scrutiny committee will keep the situation under review.
- 3.3 Since the last meeting of the Adult Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair met with the Chief Officer of NHS Wirral CCG to discuss further service changes, this time within Urgent Care provision. This is a change that is being led by NHS England. The Chief Officer has been invited to present the options being considered by NHS Wirral CCG to the November Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.4 The Chair was invited by the Chief Officer of Health Watch Wirral to visit the Continuing Health Care Hub Office in Stoke. This visit was arranged to gain a broader understanding of the Dynamic Purchasing Scheme process and the way services are commissioned. As a result of the visit concerns have been raised that will need to be addressed by the ongoing task & finish group for Continuing Health Care funding (CHC).

Councillor Julie McManus

#### **BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 3.5 At the time of writing this update, November's Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting has not taken place. The significant item on this agenda is Universal Credit and how it will be implemented locally. There is great interest from all Members in Universal Credit and it is an aspect that cuts across the remit of all four O&S Committees due to the wide-ranging impact affecting a number of service delivery areas. Through dialogue with the Chairs of the other Overview & Scrutiny Committees, it is anticipated that further scrutiny activity will be coordinated appropriately.

- 3.6 As agreed by Committee, pre-decision scrutiny of the Road Safety Plan will be undertaken through a workshop approach in December and this is open to all Members of the Committee. This scrutiny activity was initially instigated through a Notice of Motion heard at Committee on 'Reducing Pedestrian Casualties'. The final report will be presented to Committee at January's meeting before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member following this. Pre-decision scrutiny remains a strong emphasis of the work programme and this will include a review on the Council's Commercial Strategy next year.
- 3.7 The Task & Finish Scrutiny Review on Resident Parking was considered by Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and the implementation of these recommendations will be monitored by Committee to evaluate review the impact they have had for the residents of Wirral.
- 3.8 The work of the LCRCA Overview & Scrutiny is now progressing at a considerable pace. A Task & Finish Scrutiny Review on the process for preparing the Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy programme has commenced and the first evidence session has been held with Planning and Development officers. There are number of evidence sessions scheduled for December and it is anticipated that the review will be complete by January 2018. The outcomes from the review will be presented to the Business O&S Committee at that time.
- 3.9 A session for Members to review the progress on the delivery of Wirral Waters by Peel Holdings is also to be scheduled early in the New Year and Members will consider particular areas which require the session to be focussed on.

Councillor Mike Sullivan

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT**

- 3.10 Since the last Chair's report the Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee has met on one occasion and has continued to monitor the Improvement Journey closely. A standing item on the committee agenda is the Improvement Journey Update, presented by the Interim Director for Children. This outlined progress made since September and gave members an opportunity to scrutinise the authority's plan to safely bring down the number of Children in Care.
- 3.11 The Safeguarding Children Annual Report came to the committee from the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) which gave members a breakdown of the current local picture as well as demonstrating progress which the WSCB had made against the seven recommendations it was given in the Ofsted report.
- 3.12 The committee also received an update regarding the Zero Tolerance Towards Domestic Abuse pledge. This consisted of an overview of progress already made, namely the integration of statutory services through the opening of The Safer Wirral Hub, a high profile advertisement campaign designed to raise the profile of Domestic Abuse as a serious issue, and the commissioning of rehabilitation courses to ensure perpetrators become better equipped to build healthy relationships.

3.13 The second of the committee's Reality Check visits took place on October 18th. Members visited the Leaving Care Team and had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the service area as well as shadow staff. Members discussed the progress made since the Ofsted report, including improved contact with care leavers and the introduction of a traffic light 'RAG' priority rating, as a recognition of work still to be done,. These future steps include further individualising Pathway Plans, extending the current care leavers drop-in hub and managing the increased demand on the service after a change in legislation required support for care leavers up to the age of 25.

## **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

3.14 The programme of Reality Check visits will continue, with the next visit taking place at the Early Childhood Service on December 7th.

3.15 The Statutory Care Plan Scrutiny Review Task & Finish group has reviewed the scoping document and further planned its evidence sessions, which are due to take place in late 2017 and early 2018.

3.16 A training session for Committee members is scheduled for mid-January, the purpose of which is to provide members with an overview of Children's Services in addition to informing the future scrutiny work programme.

Councillor Tom Usher

## **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT**

3.17 The task & finish panel looking into the implications of the Modern Slavery Act met for its first evidence session in November. The Panel met with representatives from the Council's Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing departments. Further evidence sessions with Housing Services and Children's and Adults Safeguarding representatives are planned in the New Year. The Panel will then meet with the Council's partners including the Police and representatives from local charitable and voluntary organisations. The Panel will report findings back to the committee shortly after the review concludes.

3.18 A Reality Check Visit to a number of the borough's sports pavilions and changing facilities took place in November. This was well attended and a feedback report capturing Members reflections and recommendations was reported to the Committee meeting on 30th November 2017. Reality Check Visits offer Committee members a different method of performing their scrutiny role, providing an opportunity to test information in policies and senior officer reports with first hand evidence, through observation of services and facilities and talking directly to front line staff. Committee Members are invited to suggest other areas within the Environment remit for future Reality Check Visits.

3.19 At the time of writing this update, November's Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting has not taken place. Agenda items for this meeting include a Notice of Motion on Fly Tipping and a review of Litter and Dog Fouling Arrangements in the borough. Representatives from the Council's partner Kingdom have been invited to talk to Committee regarding this item. A report on Local Authority Powers to

Require Drivers to Switch off Engines Whilst Parked will also be considered by Committee.

3.20 A special meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been requested, to discuss the recent letter from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government regarding the Council's failure to adopt a 2004 Act Local Plan. This meeting is scheduled to take place on 7th December at 4pm.

3.21 Other items scheduled on the committee work programme this municipal year include; The Climate Change Strategy, Social Isolation, Management and Regulation of Private Sector Housing and the Perception of Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour on Wirral.

Councillor Paul Stuart

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are none arising from this report.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are none arising from this report.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are none arising from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 N/A

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None - the report is for information only.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Report compiled by:  
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**APPENDICES – N/A**

**REFERENCE MATERIAL – N/A**

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

| <b>Council Meeting</b>   | <b>Date</b>             |
|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report to Council</b> | <b>16 October 2017</b>  |
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report to Council</b> | <b>20 March 2017</b>    |
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report to Council</b> | <b>19 December 2016</b> |
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair's Report to Council</b> | <b>17 October 2016</b>  |
| <b>Scrutiny Annual Report to Council</b>                         | <b>11 July 2016</b>     |

## STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 29 June 2017

Present: Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors P Stuart P Gilchrist  
C Blakeley B Kenny  
G Ellis Jones

Independent Member Prof R Jones

### 8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ron Abbey, Bill Davies and John Hale.

### 9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they were.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist and Independent Member Professor Ron Jones declared a personal interest in relation to the item of business below by virtue of knowing one of the Trustee applicants.

### 10 CALLISTER YOUTH CLUB

Colin Hughes, Group Solicitor (Corporate) introduced the report of the Assistant Director: Law and Governance that updated the Committee on developments since its decision on 6 July 2016 to consider, after receiving further advice from the Charity Commission, the future use or disposal of Slatey Road; the appointment of new trustees of the Club; or the transfer of the properties to another suitable charity subject to any necessary consents from the Charity Commission.

The Group Solicitor informed that objections had been received to the proposal to change the objects of the Trust when advertised in the local press on 23 November 2016.

The Committee was requested to determine whether it should retire from the Trust and if so what steps should be taken to appoint replacement Trustees. Members noted that six residents of Birkenhead had offered to become

Trustees of the Trust in substitution for the Council (which had a potential conflict of interest as a result of its use of the Trust's premises in 19 Argyle Street, Birkenhead).

The Group Solicitor informed that the proposed transfer of Trustee responsibilities was required to avoid a continuation of the conflict of interest over the Council's occupation of the Trust's premises at 19 Argyle Street for the use of its Response Service. He further informed that the proposed payment of an annual sum of £14,000 to the Trust for the Council's use of 19 Argyle Street was based on the market rent estimated by independent valuers.

The Committee noted that the decision on the future use of Slatey Road involved a complex consideration of a number of relevant factors and therefore the Council should not tie the hands of future Trustees by making a decision now, and a decision on the change of the objects of the Trust should again be left to the new Trustees who would be responsible for running the Trust.

Members also noted that, although the six candidates for Trustees have completed questionnaires, the Charity Commission's general guidance, as confirmed with the Group Solicitor, was that applicants wishing to become Trustees should be interviewed by the existing Trustees prior to any decision on appointment being made in order to clarify any matters and ascertain whether there were any conflicts between the interests of the Trust and those of the applicant(s).

Members discussed the most practical method for candidate interviews, and agreed that a cross-party panel comprising 3 Elected Members be established for the purpose, and a suitable date for interviews in September be arranged i.e. after the summer holiday period.

**Resolved -**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- (1) that the transfer of Council's trusteeship of the Callister Youth Club to new Trustees, to avoid a continuation of its conflict of interest over 19 Argyle Street (Birkenhead) be agreed;**
- (2) that Council's decisions to pay into the bank account of the Trust an annual sum equal to the market rent for 19 Argyle Street (currently estimated to be £14,000) be reaffirmed;**
- (3) that Council note the valuation obtained for the Trust's premises in Slatey Road, Birkenhead but defers any decision on its future disposal or use pending the appointment of new Trustees; and**



- (4) that Council defers any decision on a change to the objects of the Trust pending the appointment of new Trustees.

The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee further:

**Resolved – That**

- (5) a Sub-Committee to interview the six applicants who have offered to become Trustees of the Callister Youth Club be established, comprising:

Cllr M McLaughlin (Labour)  
Cllr C Blakeley (Conservative)  
Cllr P Gilchrist (Liberal Democrat); and

- (6) if applicants be considered eligible and suitable, the sub-committee shall have the delegated powers to instruct the Assistant Director: Law and Governance to take the necessary steps to appoint all or any of them as Trustees in substitution for the Council; or
- (7) should the Sub-Committee resolve not to appoint any or all of the six applicants as Trustees it shall have the delegated authority to advertise in the local press and/or in any other appropriate way for candidates to be considered for the role of Trustees of the Callister Youth Club; and that such outcomes be reported back to this Committee.

11 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee gave consideration to whether discussion on the exempt documentation relating to the financial affairs of the Callister Youth Club and information relating to individuals should be held in the presence or in the absence of the press and public. The Assistant Director informed that, in the light of the information contained in the appendices his advice was to consider the information in private session. He also advised the Panel to consider this in the light of the public interest.

**Resolved - That under section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraphs 3 and 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act in that it contains commercially sensitive information. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.**

12 **CALLISTER YOUTH CLUB**

The Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee gave consideration to documentation relating to the financial affairs of the Callister Youth Club and information relating to individuals.

**Resolved – That**

- (1) the report's appendices be noted; and**
- (2) arrangements be confirmed for the candidate interviews.**

# STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 31 October 2017

Present: Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors P Stuart P Gilchrist  
C Blakeley B Kenny  
WJ Davies B Mooney (In place  
G Ellis of RL Abbey)

In attendance: Prof RS Jones – Independent Person

## 18 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor M McLaughlin announced that it had not been possible to arrange for signers to be in attendance at the meeting to assist Councillor L Reece Jones (the Subject Member) who had hearing difficulties. The soonest that they were able to attend was 6pm. She asked Councillor Reece Jones if she was happy and comfortable to go ahead without them or would she like the meeting adjourned until 6pm.

Councillor Reece Jones confirmed that she was happy and comfortable with the arrangements in the meeting room and that the meeting could go ahead. She informed that she had brought a Mr Michael Chard with her to provide her with assistance.

## 19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Abbey and J Hale.

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

Councillor C Blakeley informed that he was the subject Member of a complaint.

Professor RF Jones informed that he had been present at the Standards Panel meeting on 15 June 2017.

**STANDARDS PANEL DECISION OF 15TH JUNE 2017 CONCERNING COUNCILLOR LOUISE REECEJONES AND FURTHER REVIEW**

Councillor M McLaughlin introduced the Interim Director: Law and Governance who then presented his report and supporting appendices. He informed that the Standards Panel, at its meeting on 15 June 2017, had considered an investigation into allegations that Councillor L Reecejones had breached the Members' Code of Conduct and had determined that she had done so.

This decision had required a number of actions to be taken, including reporting the outcome to a public meeting. This decision had been subject to a request for an appeal which had been unsuccessful as the former Director: Law and Governance had considered there to be insufficient grounds to allow it. The Interim Director's report set out the steps that had, or had not been taken by Councillor Reecejones and others in responding to the actions required.

Members were informed that the procedure that was being adopted for the meeting was that the Committee would receive the report, Members could then ask any questions they may have and then the complainants would each be invited to make a short statement. Councillor Reecejones would then be invited to respond and then the Committee would debate and decide what was to happen next.

The Committee considered the background to the allegations in detail and noted that the sanctions the Panel had agreed would be imposed on Councillor Reecejones were as follows:

- (a) The Monitoring Officer should write a formal warning letter to Councillor Reecejones reminding her of the need to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (b) Councillor Reecejones must apologise in writing to all the complainants for breaching the Members' Code of Conduct within 14 days of receiving this Decision notice;
- (c) The Labour Political Group Leader be asked to consider whether party disciplinary action should be taken against Councillor Reecejones and whether she should be removed (through Council) from all outside bodies to which she has been appointed;
- (d) The Monitoring Officer shall arrange both internal and external training for Councillor Louise Reecejones as soon as practicably possible. Should Councillor Reecejones fail to attend the training arranged, the Monitoring Officer shall report this fact to her Political Group Leader for consideration and action; and

- (e) The Panel's decision shall be reported to the next public meeting of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee for consideration.

The Committee received an update on the next steps from the Interim Director, following the Standards Panel's decision being relayed to Councillor Reecejones on 28 July 2017. It noted that to date Councillor Reecejones had not fulfilled any part of what was required of her and the Committee was presented with evidence from the Interim Director and the complainants to support this.

It was noted that on 28 July 2017 the former Director: Law and Governance had received further allegations against Councillor Reecejones from the complainants concerning her behaviour at the Standards Panel meeting and, in particular, that she was continuing with her social media posts making false allegations against them. He determined that as these related to the same causal events and matters already heard they would be included in the review rather than beginning a whole new Standards Panel process. Members noted that the subsequent conclusions of this review were as follows:

- "Although nobody is actually named in the post, in light of the background history and the small community in which the complainants and Councillor Reecejones move it is my view that it is likely that others would know to whom Councillor Reecejones was referring and this could have had the effect of sullyng their reputations.
- "... it is my view that it can be argued that the act complained of, although not signed in an official capacity, was done in a manner which failed to maintain a clear distinction between her personal capacity and role as a councillor and therefore created a risk that there could be a negative impact on the Council and others.
- "I therefore find Councillor Reecejones to be in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct in relation to her post of 11 July 2017. This failed to treat the complainants with respect and engaged in conduct which was contrary to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct."
- "I am compelled to conclude that in her conduct in relation to this investigation Councillor Reecejones has failed to show respect to the Standards process and therefore to the need to maintain high standards of conduct as a councillor."

The Committee was made aware that counter-allegations made by Councillor Reecejones against the complainants had been made both directly and publicly, whereas by contrast the complainants had maintained their silence whilst formal investigations were conducted at the request of the Council and the Police.

The Committee was also presented with a report from the Labour Group Chief Whip which stated that Councillor Reecejones had had the Party Whip withdrawn for an indefinite period by the Labour Group, and also with a statement from the Labour Party Acting Regional Officer informing that this had been reduced on appeal to a four month suspension, backdated to September 2017. This was because of mitigating circumstances that the Regional Labour Party had heard from Councillor Reecejones and it was dependant on her fulfilling certain requirements.

Members asked a number of questions and made various comments and, as a result, it was expressed that it had become clear to the Committee that Councillor Reecejones had not shown respect to the Standards process and that she had not co-operated fully with the original investigating officer.

The Committee heard from the three complainants who in turn described the impact that Councillor Reecejones` actions had had on their lives and that of their families. They informed of their disappointment that the actions of the Wirral Labour Group had not been supported by the Regional Labour Party. Committee Members felt the need to apologise for that and commented that in its actions the Labour Appeal Panel appeared to have failed to recognise the seriousness of this case and the impact that the behaviour of a Labour Councillor had had on the complainants and their families.

The complainants stated that they wanted the false allegations to stop now and that as recently as this week Councillor Reecejones had made a false allegation on social media.

Councillor Reecejones informed the Committee that she had apologised to all of the complainants but that the Interim Director had perceived that the way she had done this had not been in the spirit of the Standards Panel's decision. Consequently, Councillor Reecejones asked for advice on how to apologise.

Councillor Reecejones informed that she would never seek to deceive or discredit another person. She reported that her Facebook was locked and the screen shots of 11 July 2017 were not her Facebook posts. She asked that they be sent to Merseyside Police. She had done so and received a crime number but had been told that as she had not received the screen shots directly they would only be considered if the complaint was submitted by the Council. Councillor Reecejones also informed that she had not been advised to apologise in respect of the further complaints. She considered that the whole investigation had been about fraudulent documents.

The Interim Director reported that any allegation that Cllr Reecejones wished to make to the police was a matter for her, although of course the Council would co-operate with Merseyside Police. However, it had not been contacted by them over this matter.

Councillor Reecejones told the Committee that she had suffered catastrophic reputational damage and that had affected her life and that of her family. Her university studies had suffered and she had received a death threat. She stated that she had not been charged with any offense

Councillor McLaughlin stated from the Chair that holders of the public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. The Members' Code of Conduct was based on the seven principles of public life that were set out in the Localism Act, 'The Nolan Principles'. These included the principles of selflessness, integrity, honesty and leadership. The Standards Panel's decision in June had shown how the wrongs committed might be put right. Councillor McLaughlin considered that what Members had heard today was that, instead, Councillor Reecejones' conduct had continued in the same vein as before, seeking to wrongfully blame and victimise the complainants in this matter and doing as little as possible, as late as possible, in order to maintain her position.

Therefore, Councillor McLaughlin proposed that:

- (1) the apology to be provided should be provided in writing to each of the complainants within 14 days of Councillor Reecejones receiving the outcome of this meeting and be worded in such a way as to show that she appreciates that, through her actions in breaching the Members' Code of Conduct, she damaged others and she undertakes to apologise for that and agrees not to do that again;
- (2) this Committee considers that Councillor Reecejones has failed to abide by the Standards Panel's decision and wishes to make it clear that it expects her to write personally to the complainants and make a full and public apology for her actions, as set out in the Panel's decision;
- (3) this Committee finds that Councillor Reecejones continued to seek to victimise the complainants even after the Standards Panel's decision was made and then sought to cover that up when a further complaint was submitted, showing herself to be an unreliable witness before the investigators and the Panel;
- (4) this Committee asks that the Labour Group considers this further information and what steps it might now take in terms of Group and Party discipline within their procedures;

- (5) the Chair of the Committee be requested to write to the Leader of the Labour Group to express how seriously the Committee regards the original breach and further actions and to ask that the actions of the Labour Group and Labour Party should reflect the seriousness of the situation;
- (6) this Committee asks Councillor Reecejones to now fulfil the actions required of her to make a full and public apology to the complainants and to cease her victimisation of them; and
- (7) this Committee formally apologises to the complainants in this case, on behalf of the Council, and in the absence of Councillor Reecejones having done so as required by the Standards Panel. Their decision to come forward and highlight the issues they identified was both brave and borne out of nothing other than their desire to do the right thing. As a result, they became the targets in a series of accusations and allegations, as outlined in the paperwork before the Committee that, as the Council instigated reports show, were false and indeed vindictive. Their behaviour was and continues to be exemplary and they should be applauded.

A Member also proposed that as well as the apology at (1) above, Councillor Reecejones must apologise for her unacceptable behaviour orally at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 11 December 2017.

These proposals were seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart and put to the vote and it was

**RESOLVED (unanimously): That**

- (1) the apology to be provided should be provided in writing to each of the complainants within 14 days of Councillor Reecejones receiving the outcome of this meeting and be worded in such a way as to show that she appreciates that, through her actions in breaching the Members' Code of Conduct, she damaged others and she undertakes to apologise for that and agrees not to do that again;**
- (2) as well as the apology at (1) above, Councillor Reecejones must apologise for her unacceptable behaviour orally at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 11 December 2017;**
- (3) this Committee considers that Councillor Reecejones has failed to abide by the Standards Panel's decision and wishes to make it clear that it expects her to write personally to the complainants and make a full and public apology for her actions, as set out in the Panel's decision;**



- (4) this Committee finds that Councillor Reecejones continued to seek to victimise the complainants even after the Standards Panel's decision was made and then sought to cover that up when a further complaint was submitted, showing herself to be an unreliable witness before the investigators and the Panel;**
- (5) this Committee asks that the Labour Group considers this further information and what steps it might now take in terms of Group and Party discipline within their procedures;**
- (6) the Chair of the Committee be requested to write to the Leader of the Labour Group to express how seriously the Committee regards the original breach and further actions and to ask that the actions of the Labour Group and Labour Party should reflect the seriousness of the situation;**
- (7) this Committee asks Councillor Reecejones to now fulfil the actions required of her to make a full and public apology to the complainants and to cease her victimisation of them; and**
- (8) this Committee formally apologises to the complainants in this case, on behalf of the Council, and in the absence of Councillor Reecejones having done so as required by the Standards Panel. Their decision to come forward and highlight the issues they identified was both brave and borne out of nothing other than their desire to do the right thing. As a result, they became the targets in a series of accusations and allegations, as outlined in the paperwork before the Committee that, as the Council instigated reports show, were false and indeed vindictive. Their behaviour was and continues to be exemplary and they should be applauded.**

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### STANDARDS AND CONSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2017

#### 25 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Interim Assistant Director: Law and Governance introduced a report on the appointment of Independent Persons to sit on the Committee.

In 2012 four Independent Person appointments were made but two had since resigned. There remained two Independent Persons who sat on the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee and Panel as their term of office had been subsequently extended until 15 July 2020.

A further recruitment exercise was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 5 December, 2016 (minute 23 refers) with the aim of appointing more Independent Persons because it was recognised that there were benefits to having independent voices on the Committee and its Panel, as Elected Members could take advantage of their expertise and experience. Therefore, it was considered very important to build up the pool of Independent Persons that could be called upon to assist the Council with Standards matters etc. and so increase resilience.

Independent Persons could also be requested to offer advice in respect of complaints made against Elected Members and could be called upon in the event of the proposed dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer in accordance with their statutory role.

The report updated the Committee on the recruitment of Independent Persons. The Selection Panel, consisting of Councillors David Elderton, Phil Gilchrist and Moira McLaughlin met on 14 September 2017 and interviewed four candidates. All four were deemed worthy of selection, subject to satisfactory references.

A Member suggested that a brief biography of each of the new independent members could be published on the website and the Interim Assistant Director: Law and Governance agreed that he would ask if they were agreeable to this.

**Resolved - That this Committee approves all four potential Independent Persons for recommendation to the Council for appointment, as follows:**

- **Mr G Kerr**
- **Mr JR McCosh**
- **Ms Angele Lloyd Prince**
- **Mr A Wilson**

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**Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee  
Monday, 20 November 2017**

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b> | <b>Appointment of Independent Persons</b>                                |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>    | <b>Assistant Director: Law &amp; Governance<br/>(Monitoring Officer)</b> |

**REPORT SUMMARY**

In 2012 four Independent Person appointments were made but two have since resigned. There remains two Independent Persons who sit on the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee and Panel as their term of office has been subsequently extended until 15 July 2020.

A further recruitment exercise was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2016 (Minute No. 23 refers.) with the aim of appointing more Independent Persons because it is recognised that there are benefits to having independent voices on the Committee and its Panel, as Elected Members can take advantage of their expertise and experience. Therefore, it is considered very important to build up the pool of Independent Persons that can be called upon to assist the Council with Standards matters etc. and so increase resilience.

This approach will ensure good governance within the Council and by Councillors and supports all strategic priorities. Good governance underpins the Council's values and the Wirral Plan.

Independent Persons can also be requested to offer advice in respect of complaints made against Elected Members and can be called upon in the event of the proposed dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or Chief Finance Officer in accordance with their statutory role.

This report updates the Committee on the recruitment of Independent Persons. The Selection Panel, consisting of Councillors David Elderton, Phil Gilchrist and Moira McLaughlin met on 14 September 2017 and interviewed four candidates. All four are deemed worthy of selection, subject to satisfactory references.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended that the Committee approves all four potential Independent Persons for recommendation to the Council for appointment as follows:

- Mr G Kerr
- Mr JR McCosh
- Ms Angele Lloyd Prince
- Mr A Wilson

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 imposes a duty on the Council to “promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted Members” of the Council. The Council is required to adopt a Code dealing with the Conduct that is expected of Members and co-opted Members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity, and must have in place arrangements under which allegations that a Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct can be investigated, and arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made. Those arrangements must include the appointment of at least one “independent person”, whose views must be sought, and taken into account, before any decision on an allegation which has been investigated is taken.
- 1.2 The Council has delegated to the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee the function of investigating and determining any allegations of a breach of the Code of Conduct by individual Members. The Committee comprises of nine Members of the Council and the Independent Persons, who are non-voting Members of the Committee, because a Member who has not been elected does not have a vote unless specifically given by legislation.
- 1.3 In May 2015 the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations were passed. These provide that where a decision to dismiss any statutory officer is to be taken by the Council, prior to making such a decision, the Council must invite at least two Independent Persons to be members of a Panel to consider the matter, and take any recommendations from that Panel into account before making the final decision.
- 1.4 The Chief Officer’s Employment Disciplinary Sub-Committee has this remit in accordance with the Council’s Constitution and Independent Persons appointed to support the Standards regime must be invited to sit on this Sub-Committee if there is a need for it to meet. If there are none, or they are unable to participate, any Independent Persons appointed by another authority may be invited to participate. It is considered most appropriate to utilise the Council’s own Independent Persons appointed to support the Standards regime for this purpose, and it is, therefore, proposed that this role be added to their job description. There has not been a requirement for this Sub-Committee to meet yet.
- 1.5 Independent Persons fulfil a statutory role in relation to Members’ conduct issues. The appointment of a further four Independent Persons, as part of the Council’s Standards Framework, will provide resilience in case of illness or other absence.
- 1.6 In 2012 the Council appointed four Independent Persons but over the years two have resigned. To boost the pool of Independent Persons and so allowing more flexibility, following the Committee’s approval, a further recruitment process got underway earlier in the year. As a result it is

proposed to recommend to the Council that the four candidates that recently had successful interviews by the Selection Panel be appointed for a four year term of office.

## **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 To make less than the four recommended new Independent Person appointments or to make none at all.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Standards Committees had Independent Members until July 2012. The Localism Act 2011 made significant changes to the Standards regime in local authorities, including the abolition of Independent Members from this date. A new role of Independent Person was established.

- 3.2 It is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 that the Council must appoint at least one independent person to advise its Standards Committee, particularly on investigations into allegations that a Member has breached the Code of Conduct, and to advise any individual Member of the Council who is the subject of a complaint under the Code of Conduct. The appointment process must satisfy the requirement in the Act that the vacancy for an Independent Person must be advertised in such manner as the authority considers is likely to bring it to the attention of the public. There is an advert, application and interview process followed by confirmation of appointment(s) by the Council.

- 3.3 Following an extremely successful recruitment process in 2012, the Council, at its meeting on 16 July 2012 agreed the appointments of the following Independent Persons to the Standards Committee for a four year team of office (until 16 July 2016):

- Professor RS Jones
- Mr C Jones
- Mr D Burgess-Joyce
- Mr B Cummings

(Minute No. 43 refers.)

- 3.4 Early in 2015 Mr D Burgess-Joyce, who had provided excellent support to the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, resigned as an Independent Person in order to stand for election to the Council in the Greasby, Frankby and Irby Ward. He was subsequently elected in May 2015 and became a Member of the Council.

- 3.5 The three remaining Independent Persons continued to provide excellent independent support to the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee and the Monitoring Officer. They have gained substantial knowledge and experience in the role. Consequently, they were invited and agreed to continue as Independent Members of the Committee when their term of office came to an end. They were subsequently, re-appointed by the Council at its meeting on 14 July 2016, for a further four year term of office

(until 15 July 2020). Unfortunately, in June 2017 Mr B Cummings resigned because of ill health.

(Minute No. 33 refers.)

- 3.6 The law provides that a person may not be an Independent Person if he or she is a Member, a co-opted member or an officer of the Council, or a relative or close friend thereof. It also provides that a person may not be appointed if they were a Member or co-opted member during the past five years.
- 3.7 Following the Committee's approval, the recruitment process commenced early in 2017. It involved an advertisement, application process and interviews held by a Selection Panel of Members drawn from the Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Independent Persons receive a payment of £25 for each meeting they attend and the payment for the use of their private motor vehicle to and from the meeting is made at the rate of 45p per mile.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The position of Independent Persons is a statutory requirement through the Localism Act 2011, and the scope of the role has been extended as detailed in Paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 None specific to this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The recruitment process will ensure that there are Independent Persons in place to undertake the duties set out in the Localism Act 2011, which reduces the risk of both reputational damage to the authority and the risk of any decision by a Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee being open to challenge due to lack of a required Independent Person.
- 7.2 The Council previously had four Independent Persons it could call on but since 2015 it has only had three. These Persons may not always be available due to other conflicting commitments. Therefore, making additional Independent Person appointments is considered to be prudent and builds in more flexibility. This action will build more flexibility into the Standards process.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Information from neighbouring authorities is that they have had significant difficulties in recruiting to the role of Independent Person.



## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None specific to this report.

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## APPENDICES

None

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

The Localism Act 2011, Part 1, Chapter 7.  
The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting                                      | Date              |
|--|-------------------|
| Council  | 16 July 2012      |
| Council  | 14 July 2016      |
| Standards and Constitutional Oversight Working Group | 19 September 2016 |
| Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee     | 5 December 2016   |

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

CABINET – 6 NOVEMBER 2017

52 REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18 QUARTER 2



**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

“It has been reported for some time that the ongoing national austerity policies continue to place huge pressure on local government, particularly in relation to social care services. Recent announcements regarding the demands for care for children highlight that this is both a national, and local, challenge which brings with it significant costs.

The Council continues to plan and manage its budget in a sustainable way. Mindful that there will always be changing requirements and the subsequent demands on the budget the Revenue Budget Contingency was made available. This helps mitigate the enormous demands on our services and why we are able to react to changing circumstances.

We continue to look for opportunities to make best value of the resources available, ensuring they are well managed, used to deliver best value for Wirral residents, and enable us to deliver our 20 Pledges.”

Councillor Janette Williamson introduced a report which set out the projected revenue position for 2017/18 as at the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2017).

The Quarter 2 forecast was an overspend of £1.2 million for 2017/18 (Quarter 1 reported a forecast overspend of £4.2 million). The improvement was essentially due to the inclusion of unused Revenue Budget Contingency to the forecast. Underlying there was additional investment into Children’s Services and associated legal costs regarding the placement of children which had resulted in budget pressure.

Councillor Williamson commented upon the effects of seven years of austerity on the Council’s finances and the increasing pressures on Children’s Services, which were at crisis point. The Council’s General Fund balances stood at £12m (the absolute minimum level for these, set out by the Council’s S151 Officer, being £10m) and she set out the facts with regard to Council reserves:

- £27m Capital Grants, received in advance to fund specified projects and only to be used to fund these specified projects, otherwise funding had to be returned.

- £4m in Capital Receipts reserve – proceeds from the sale of buildings and land which could only be used to fund current or future capital investment.
- £51m earmarked reserves – only to be used to fund something which would happen in the future and included:
  - £17m to cover potential claims relating to insurance, tax and benefit claims.
  - £16m for specific projects and initiatives including commitments regarding public health contracts, funding for on-going apprentice programmes and similar programmes.
  - £13m relating to Schools Budgets and activities that could only be spent by schools.
  - £4m for the transformation programme to deliver services differently.

She hoped that these figures would set the record straight and put an end to the wilful misrepresentation of the facts.

Councillor Bernie Mooney informed the Cabinet on the situation in Children's Services and that as of last week there were 828 children in the Council's care. The pressures on Children's Services were increasing all around the country with three out of four Council's suffering. So much money had been taken out of the service that funds had had to be moved from early intervention to deal with crisis management. Councillor Mooney had written to both the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer about the situation but as yet had had no reply. She had also written to Lord Porter, Chair of the Local Government Association, and received a sympathetic response as he had also called for the Government to meet the £5.8bn funding gap facing local services by 2020 at the recent National Children and Adult Services Conference.

Councillor Phil Davies commented upon the fact that Lord Porter, Conservative Chair of the LGA, was asking for the Government to provide more money to Local Authorities spoke volumes. He hoped that the Government would address the issue in the forthcoming budget. There was a huge determination to make sure that the Council delivered good quality frontline services.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the Quarter 2 forecast year-end overspend of £1.2 million, which incorporates a £4.8 million variance relating to Children's Services and related legal costs, and the projected General Fund Balances of £12 million at 31 March 2018, be noted.**
- (2) officers continue to identify actions and take measures to effectively manage the overall budget and reduce the impact of the projected overspends.**
- (3) the request for funding of £350,000 from General Fund Balances in respect of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 be referred to Council for approval.**



**COUNCILLOR  
JANETTE WILLIAMSON**

**CABINET**

**6 NOVEMBER 2017**

**REVENUE MONITORING 2017/18**

**QUARTER 2 (TO SEPTEMBER 2017)**

**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

'It has been reported for some time that the ongoing national austerity policies continue to place huge pressure on local government, particularly in relation to social care services. Recent announcements regarding the demands for care for children highlight that this is both a national, and local, challenge which brings with it significant costs.

The Council continues to plan and manage its budget in a sustainable way. Mindful that there will always be changing requirements and the subsequent demands on the budget the Revenue Budget Contingency was made available. This helps mitigate the enormous demands on our services and why we are able to react to changing circumstances.

We continue to look for opportunities to make best use of the resources available, ensuring they are well managed, used to deliver best value for Wirral residents, and enable us to deliver our 20 Pledges.'

**REPORT SUMMARY**

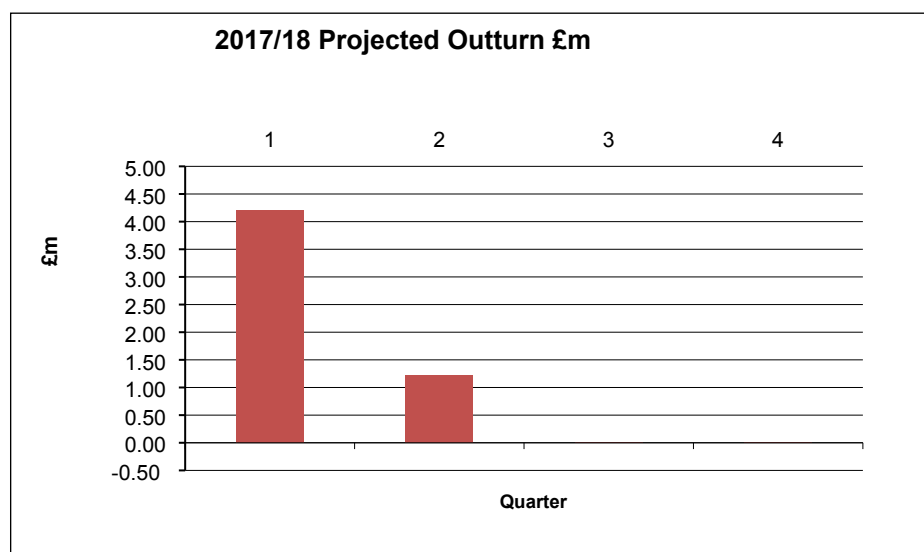
This report sets out the projected revenue position for 2017/18 as at the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2017).

The Quarter 2 forecast is an overspend of £1.2 million for 2017/18 (Quarter 1 reported a forecast overspend of £4.2 million). The improvement is essentially due to the inclusion of unused Revenue Budget Contingency to the forecast. Underlying there is additional investment into Children’s Services and associated legal costs regarding the placement of children which has resulted in budget pressure.

Elsewhere on the Agenda the Treasury Management Mid-Year report estimates a £2 million in year saving on interest/investments which is included in the above figures. The report also recommends that Council amend the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for assets funded from supported capital. By adopting an asset life annuity approach an in year reduction of MRP charges could be realised in 2017/18. Subject to Council and external audit agreement but would improve the overall Council in year financial position by up to £4.1 million.

The headline position is shown in the graph.

**Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2017/18 General Fund Variance**



This is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 The Quarter 2 forecast year-end overspend of £1.2 million, which incorporates a £4.8 million variance relating to Children’s Services and related legal costs, and the projected General Fund Balances of £12million at 31 March 2018, be noted.
- 2 Officers continue to identify actions and take measures to effectively manage the overall budget and reduce the impact of the projected overspends.
- 3 The request for funding of £350,000 from General Fund Balances in respect of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 be referred to Council for approval.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Council, having set a Budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure the delivery of this Budget is achieved. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so corrective action can be taken when required which is enhanced with the regular reporting of the financial position.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 This is a monitoring report but any options to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 3.1 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

3.1.1 The 2017/18 Budget was agreed by Council on 6 March 2017. Any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. Changes to the Budget since it was set are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: 2017/18 Original & Revised Net Budget by Wirral Plan Themes**

|                                       | Original Net Budget | Budget Change Quarter 1 Use of Contingency | Budget Change Quarter 1 Use of Balances | Approved Budget Changes Qtr 2 | Revised Net Budget |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                       | £000                | £000                                       | £000                                    | £000                          | £000               |
| People - Children & Families          | 80,616              | 5,000                                      | -                                       | -                             | 85,616             |
| People - Adult Social Care and Health | 75,509              | 2,000                                      | -                                       | -                             | 77,509             |
| Environment                           | 60,719              | -  | 1,225                                   | 0                             | 61,944             |
| Business                              | 37,438              | 1,500                                      | -                                       | -                             | 38,938             |
| Contingency                           | 12,000              | - 8,500                                    | -                                       | -                             | 3,500              |
| <b>Net Cost of Services</b>           | <b>266,282</b>      | <b>-</b>                                   | <b>1,225</b>                            | <b>-</b>                      | <b>267,507</b>     |

3.1.2 The Budget included within it a Revenue Budget Contingency to mitigate the financial risks associated with demand pressures and the delivery of previously agreed savings.

3.1.3 Following a review of the financial position and having regard to the 2016/17 Out-turn it was agreed when reporting quarter 1 in July 2017 that £8.5 million of the Revenue Budget Contingency be allocated. This related to £5 million within People – Children & Families, £2 million in People – Adult Social Care and Health and £1.5 million in Business. After use to mitigate pressures, £3.5 million of the Revenue Budget Contingency remains.

3.1.4 A further £1.225 million was added to the budget funded from General Fund Balances in respect of funding for urgent tree works subject to Council approval. Cabinet of 17 July referred this matter for approval by Council of 16 October.

3.1.5 It is recommended to call upon £0.35 million of General Fund Balances to meet costs of implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into force in May 2018. Preparation for this will be required during 2017/18. GDPR is a European wide initiative which places an increased onus on ‘controllers’ and ‘processors’ to protect personal data. The authority currently meets many of the requirements of GDPR, but the definition of personal data is more expansive than under the UK Data Protection Act. Government has confirmed that the decision to leave the EU will have no impact upon the implementation of GDPR to the UK. Funding is required to undertake the necessary information audit and compliance work including where appropriate enhancing IT systems to ensure compliance with the regulation. Failure to comply can result in significant financial penalties.

3.1.6 The closure of the 2016/17 Accounts resulted in an underspend of £2.9 million on service budgets and £10 million in General Fund balances at 31 March 2017. With the receipt of the Collection Fund surplus from 2016/17 in April 2017 this increased the balances to £14.6 million.

## 3.2 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

3.2.1 The projected Outturn position as at the end of September 2017 and Wirral Plan: 2020 Vision Themes updates are detailed in the following sections.

**Table 2: 2017/18 Projected Budget variations by Wirral Plan Themes**

| Directorates                          | Revised Budget | Forecast Outturn | (Under) Overspend Quarter 2 | RAGBY Class | Change from prev |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| People - Children & Families          | 85,616         | 89,485           | 3,869                       | R           | 709              |
| People - Adult Social Care and Health | 77,509         | 77,510           | 1                           | G           | 201              |
| Environment                           | 61,944         | 62,839           | 895                         | R           | -194             |
| Business                              | 38,938         | 38,889           | -49                         | G           | -187             |
| Contingency                           | 3,500          | 0                | -3,500                      | Y           | -3,500           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                          | <b>267,507</b> | <b>268,723</b>   | <b>1,216</b>                |             | <b>-2,971</b>    |

Contingency: assumed the current unused balance is now available to offset any overspend.

The report classifies the forecast under/overspends for the above areas using a colour RAGBY rating. The ratings are defined as follows:

- Overspends **Red** (over +£301k), **Amber** (+£141k to +£300k), **Green** (range from +£140k to -£140k)
- Underspends **Blue** (-£141k to -£300k), **Yellow** (over -£301k).



### **3.3 WIRRAL PLAN THEMES UPDATES**

#### **3.3.1 People - Children & Families**

- The predicted overspend is £3.9 million which is after the allocation of £5 million from the Contingency as highlighted in Section 3.1.
- Agency social worker costs are impacting due to a number of vacant posts within the existing establishment together with a number of posts requiring sickness / maternity cover. Whilst there is an ongoing strategy to recruit Social Work posts the shortages are a regional / national issue. At this stage there is a £1.5 million overspend forecast.
- The numbers of Looked After Children (LAC) are continuing to rise. The current number is 819 (795 were reported in July). Numbers for the remainder of the year have been forecasted using the ARIMA Statistical Model which determines the number by March 2018 will rise to 846. The projected overspend is £7 million with £5 million covered by the Contingency. This assumes a full year provision for children, more of whom are placed through independent fostering agencies. Whilst care placements are carefully managed through the weekly Planning for Children Panel, numbers continue to increase.
- Services for children with disabilities are forecast to overspend by £0.5 million as a consequence of the rising costs of domiciliary care and the impact of direct payments together with the savings in this area proving difficult to deliver through increased numbers.

#### **3.3.2 People - Adult Social Care and Health**

- At this point in the year the application of £2 million of the originally identified sum of £5.4 million from the Revenue Budget Contingency is anticipated to be sufficient to meet the projected level of spending.
- There are a number of in-year cost pressures forecast for 2017/18. They will be contained through a combination of effective demand management, income generation and improved processes as a result of the new Integrated Service with the Wirral Community Foundation Trust which commenced on 1 June 2017.

#### **3.3.3 Environment**

- Within Waste & Environment the £0.4 million overspend relates to the planned saving in the cost of the Waste contract. Whilst unlikely to be realised in year, officers are working on a series of options that may deliver the required saving in subsequent years.
- There is a £0.8 million projected overspend in Sports & Recreation. This is largely due to slippage in implementing savings options. Consultation is underway around the operational changes at Woodchurch Leisure Centre. There will similarly be savings slippage owing to delays in the capital works at Leasowe Recreation Centre. Leisure Centre income is down on anticipated levels with work ongoing to investigate and understand the reasons behind the shortfalls.

- Income levels at Golf Courses continue to fall below target and Parks & Countryside staff are working closely with Leisure Officers to improve the quality of the golf courses and enhance the golf offering. Actions to mitigate the pressures include holding all non-critical expenditure and alternative income arrangements are being explored.

### 3.3.4 **Business**

- Projected net overspend within Assets of £0.5 million. This involves costs relating to Old Market House and vacant sites such as the Municipal Building and Dock Road Depot. These costs have been partially offset through the use of £0.5 million from the Revenue Budget Contingency and a re-profiling of the Property Maintenance Programme.
- As referred to under the People - Children Theme the increasing demand pressures are also impacting upon Legal Services. Increased external legal fees from cases within Children's Services are projected to result in a net £0.9 million additional cost above budget.
- Business Services receive income for services provided. These comprise the IT Service Level Agreement with schools, printing services on behalf of schools and for internal functions and support for external organisations such as Edsential and Wirral Evolutions. With the opportunity of schools and others to source services elsewhere there is a potential shortfall in income of £0.6 million with negotiations ongoing.
- At this stage there is a predicted underspend within Treasury Management as a consequence of the on-going use of internal funds to minimise the requirement for external borrowing which defers the need to borrow and delivers one-off savings. These are forecast to be up to £2 million.
- The Treasury Management Mid-Year report also recommends a change in the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy in respect of supported capital. If agreed by Council and external audit this could realise reduced costs of up to £4.1 million in 2017/18. The impact of this is not yet assumed within the above monitoring figures but will be built in once approval is received from Council.

### 3.3.5 **Revenue Budget Contingency**

- The Contingency established when the Budget 2017/18 was approved was £12 million At Quarter 1 £8.5 million of the Contingency was allocated across the Themes with the amount remaining being £3.5 million (see Section 3.1.3). For the purposes of this budget monitoring report the £3.5 million of unused Contingency is now assumed as being available to offset any overspend.

### 3.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

3.4.1 A summary of the position of 2017/18 savings at 30 September 2017 is below.

**Table 3: Savings Implementation 2017/18 (£000's)**

| BRAG                              | Number of Options | Approved Budget Reduction | Amount Delivered at Q2 | To be Delivered |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| B - delivered                     | 30                | 22,440                    | 22,440                 | 0               |
| G – on track                      | 13                | 6,575                     | 2,630                  | 3,945           |
| A - concerns                      | 9                 | 2,930                     | 1,300                  | 1,630           |
| R - high risk/ not achieved       | 10                | 3,940                     | 0                      | 3,940           |
| <b>Total at Quarter 1 2017-18</b> | <b>62</b>         | <b>35,885</b>             | <b>26,370</b>          | <b>9,515</b>    |

\* A number of red savings have been covered by allocating the revenue Budget Contingency

3.4.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2017/18 savings by the ratings below.

- **Blue:** Represents savings which have already been realised.
- **Green:** Savings on track to deliver
- **Amber:** Some concerns regarding delivery and will require closer scrutiny and monitoring.
- **Red:** High risk of not being achieved.

### 3.5 INCOME AND DEBT

#### COUNCIL TAX

3.5.1 Council Tax collection is 0.4% down on last year although in cash terms £3.6 million more cash has been collected. An element of the lower collection rate relates to lower discounts and exemptions being awarded and those impacted paying more and needing longer to pay. To address the position limited overtime is being worked, recruitment to vacant posts is underway and additional support engaged to undertake basic processing.

**Table 4 : Council Tax Comparatives**

|                 | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Actual</b>  |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                 | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2016/17</b> |
|                 | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    |
| Cash to Collect | 154,460        | 146,467        |
| Cash Collected  | 83,661         | 80,031         |
| % Collected     | 54.2%          | 54.6%          |

## BUSINESS RATES

- 3.5.2 Business Rates volatility is often mentioned when discussing collection. The current position is that Business Rates is currently 3.2% ahead of this time last year. The amount to collect has reduced by £3 million after revaluation and new reliefs, Underlining the volatility of Business Rates £1 million was refunded on one assessment in June with more expected and a business went into liquidation owing £250,000 rates. New assessments are being added to the list and the provision for loss on collection for 2017/18 was increased substantially last year.
- 3.5.3 The Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget on 8 March 2017 announced 3 reliefs to aid Businesses for 2017/18 due to the increase in Rateable Values from the new valuation list. To date there have been 420 recipients of the new Local Discount, 17 of Supporting Small Business Rate reliefs and 85 Public Houses. Compensation will be provided by way of a Section 31 Grant.

**Table 5: National Non-Domestic Rates Comparatives**

|                 | <b>Actual</b>  | <b>Actual</b>  |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                 | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2016/17</b> |
|                 | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    |
| Cash to Collect | £73,248        | £76,218        |
| Cash Collected  | £42,569        | £41,812        |
| % Collected     | 58.1%          | 54.9%          |

- 3.5.4 The Local Government Finance Bill 2017, which would have brought in 100% Business Rate Retention on a national basis fell with the calling of the General Election and is not presently programmed. However the Government is seeking more authorities to pilot Business Rates Retention with Wirral part of the already agreed Liverpool City Region pilot.

## DEBTORS

- 3.5.5 The table shows the outstanding debt by Wirral Plan Themes and the date invoices were raised. This year has seen 37,723 invoices with a value of £43 million raised and £44 million of payments (including amounts for prior years).

**Table 6: Accounts Receivable Outstanding Arrears Analysis**

| Theme         | 2017/18<br>Less than<br>30 days | 2017/18<br>More than<br>30 days | 2016/2017        | 2015/16          | Pre<br>2015/16   | Total at<br>Quarter 2 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|               | £                               | £                               | £                | £                | £                | £                     |
| Business      | 3,119,132                       | 538,486                         | 499,293          | 531,812          | 980,224          | <b>5,668,947</b>      |
| Environment   | 255,222                         | 45,752                          | 190,783          | 41,000           | 213,714          | <b>746,471</b>        |
| People        | 3,087,629                       | 3,484,049                       | 6,020,825        | 2,546,323        | 3,074,762        | <b>18,213,588</b>     |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>6,461,983</b>                | <b>4,068,287</b>                | <b>6,710,901</b> | <b>3,119,135</b> | <b>4,268,700</b> | <b>24,629,006</b>     |

3.5.6 In accordance with proper accounting practice, income is credited to the relevant financial year's accounts of the service area at the point invoices are raised. A provision for bad debt is maintained and is assessed each year. Should non-payment occur after proceeding through all necessary recovery procedures, any properly authorised write off will be charged against the bad debt provision.

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The estimated General Fund Balance position is calculated in the table below

**Table 7: Summary of the Projected General Fund Balances**

| Details  | £m          |
|--|-------------|
| Actual Balance at 1 April 2017                                     | +10.0       |
| Add: Increase from Collection Fund surplus 2016/17                 | +4.6        |
| Add; Additional Returned New Homes Bonus Grant                     | +0.2        |
| Less; Tree maintenance programme                                   | -1.2        |
| Less: Potential Overspend at September 2017                        | -1.2        |
| Less: Potential Unfunded New Ferry Costs                           | -0.3        |
| Less Memorial Event Funding per Cabinet 17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017 | -0.1        |
| <b>Projected Balance 31 March 2018</b>                             | <b>12.0</b> |

4.2 The table does not include the request for £350,000 from Balances in respect of the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 as this requires Council approval.

4.3 The projected General Fund balance is above the £10 million set as the minimum needed when setting the 2017/18 budget.

4.4 Earmarked Reserves excluding School Balances totalled £38 million at 30 September 2017. These include reserves relating to the cost of transformation, mitigation of future financial risks and specific project support.

#### 5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The entire report concerns the duty of the Council to avoid a budget shortfall. The Chief Finance Officer has a personal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 Section 114A to make a report to the executive if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to it to meet that expenditure.

#### 6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

## 7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:
- Senior Leadership / Directorate Teams reviewing the financial position.
  - Use of the Revenue Budget Contingency.
  - Availability of General Fund Balances.

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

## 9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report on financial performance.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Chris Kelly  
Principal Accountant  
Telephone 0151 666 3417  
Email chriskelly@wirral.gov.uk

## APPENDIX

Appendix General Fund Revenue Budget 2017/18

## SUBJECT HISTORY

| <b>Council Meeting</b>                       | <b>Date</b>  |
|--|--------------|
| Budget Council                               | 6 March 2017 |
| Cabinet – Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 Outturn | 26 June 2017 |
| Revenue Monitoring 2017/18 Quarter 1         | 17 July 2017 |

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18

## ORIGINAL BUDGET AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 6 MARCH 2017

| Department   | Council Budget<br>£m |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>Expenditure</b>                                 |                      |
| <b>People: Children and Families</b>               |                      |
| Children & Families                                | 62.2                 |
| Children & Families Schools                        | 18.4                 |
|  | <b>80.6</b>          |
| <b>People: Adult Social Care and Public Health</b> | <b>75.5</b>          |
| <b>Environment</b>                                 |                      |
| Environmental Protection                           | 27.8                 |
| Housing & Communities                              | 15.9                 |
| Leisure & Culture                                  | 17.0                 |
|  | <b>60.7</b>          |
| <b>Business</b>                                    |                      |
| Business & Tourism                                 | 2.8                  |
| Resources  | 0.1                  |
| Transformation & Improvement                       | 1.7                  |
| Transport, Tech & Infrastructure                   | 32.8                 |
|  | <b>37.4</b>          |
| <b>Revenue Budget Contingency</b>                  | <b>12.0</b>          |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                | <b>266.2</b>         |
| <b>Income</b>                                      |                      |
| Business Rates Baseline                            | 67.9                 |
| Business Rates Top Up                              | 51.8                 |
| Business Rates S31 Grants                          | 1.5                  |
| New Homes Bonus                                    | 2.3                  |
| Council Tax Requirement                            | 127.4                |
| Contribution from Balances                         | 15.3                 |
| <b>Total Income</b>                                | <b>266.2</b>         |
| <b>General Fund Balances at 1 April 2017</b>       | <b>10.0</b>          |

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## MINUTE EXTRACT

### CABINET – 6 NOVEMBER 2017

#### 53 CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18 QUARTER 2



**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

“This report demonstrates the major investment we are making against our priorities. It shows the sensible and pragmatic steps we are taking to make best use of the resources available to develop our assets to support our services to the public.”

Councillor Janette Williamson introduced a report, which provided an update on the progress in delivering the Capital Programme 2017/18 as at the end of September 2017. It recommended that Cabinet agree an amended 2017/18 Capital Programme of £67.5 million which took into account re-profiling, new bids, revised grants etc. identified since the quarter 1 monitoring report. Expenditure to date was £13.7 million.

Councillor Williamson informed the Cabinet of the five new bids which were in the Capital Programme:

- Cyber security - £1.562m
- Street Lighting - £0.5m
- Eureka Project - £0.308m
- Thermal pool covers - £0.15m
- Collaborative working for Children’s Services - £0.102m

Councillor Stuart Whittingham welcomed the extra investment in street lighting on top of the previously agreed sum of £0.5m from the March Budget. Street lighting continued to be a concern to Members and the public and this extra investment would allow the Council to undertake more replacement of stock.

Councillor Phil Davies welcomed the financial assistance for the Eureka project which would be a fantastic development at Seacombe Ferry if it could be brought to Wirral, and which could bring 250,000 visitors each year. The Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, was also very keen on securing this project for Seacombe. There was a lot of work still to be undertaken on this project.

**RESOLVED: That -**

- (1) the expenditure at Quarter 2 of £13.7 million, with 50% of the financial year having elapsed, be noted;**
- (2) the inclusion in the programme of the 5 new bids, at an additional capital cost of £2.6 million, be approved and referred to Council;**
- (3) the revised Capital Programme of £67.5 million be agreed and referred to Council.**



**CLLR JANETTE WILLIAMSON**

**CABINET**

**6 NOVEMBER 2017**

**CAPITAL MONITORING 2017/18**

**QUARTER 2 (TO SEPTEMBER 2017)**

**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

‘This report demonstrates the major investment we are making against our priorities. It shows the sensible and pragmatic steps we are taking to make best use of the resources available to develop our assets to support our services to the public.’

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on the progress in delivering the Capital Programme 2017/18 at the end of September 2017. It recommends that Cabinet agree an amended 2017/18 Capital Programme of £67.5 million which takes into account re-profiling, new bids, revised grants etc. identified since the quarter 1 monitoring report. Expenditure to date is £13.7 million.

This matter is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 To note the expenditure at Quarter 2 of £13.7 million, with 50% of the financial year having elapsed.
- 2 To approve for inclusion in the programme and refer to Council the 5 new bids at an additional capital cost of £2.6 million (paragraph 3.3.1).
- 3 To agree and refer to Council the revised Capital Programme of £67.5 million (Table 1).

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Capital Programme enables decisions to be taken faster which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of the Programme.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

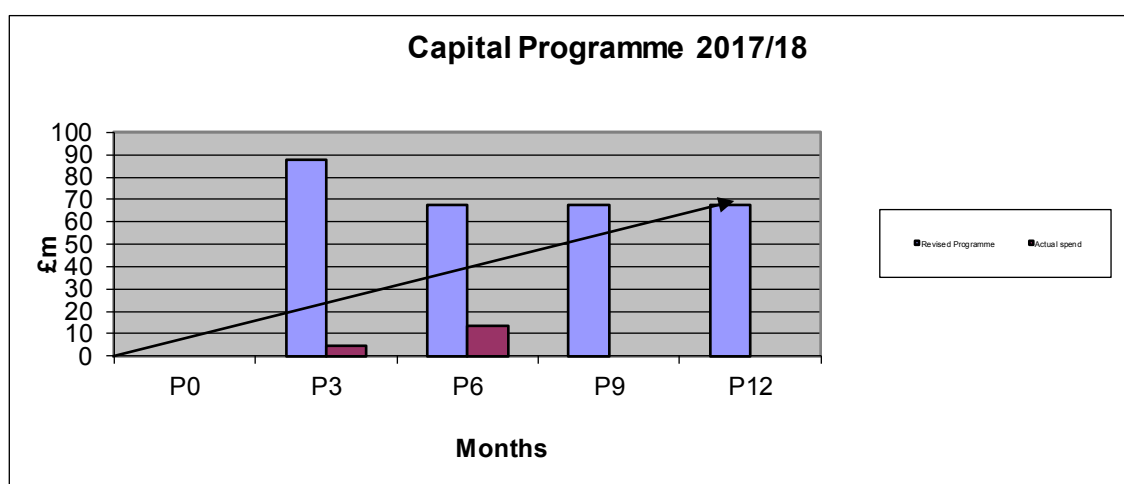
2.1 No other options have been considered.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### OVERALL POSITION AT THE END OF QUARTER 2 (SEPTEMBER 2017)

3.1 The actual spend against the Capital Programme is summarised in Table 1.

**Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit**



#### ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2017/18

3.2 The Programme for 2017/18 is subject to change. It presently reflects the following changes which are then detailed in Tables 1 and 2.

|   | £000          |
|---|---------------|
| Programme agreed by Cabinet on 17 July 2017 | 88,014        |
| Re-profiling to 2018/19                     | (17,387)      |
| New bids (2017/18 cost)                     | 1,812         |
| Grant variations                            | (12)          |
| Reduced requirement                         | (6,486)       |
| Other variations                            | 1,605         |
| <b>Revised 2017/18 Programme</b>            | <b>67,546</b> |

**Table 1: Capital Programme 2017/18 at 30 September 2017**

|                          | <b>Capital Strategy</b> | <b>Revisions Since Budget</b> | <b>Revised Capital Programme</b> | <b>Actual Spend Sept 2017</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                          | <b>£000</b>             | <b>£000</b>                   | <b>£000</b>                      | <b>£000</b>                   |
| Business                 | 32,760                  | 4,069                         | 36,829                           | 6,298                         |
| Environment              | 16,769                  | (10,350)                      | 6,419                            | 1,739                         |
| People                   | 12,250                  | (3,242)                       | 9,008                            | 2,372                         |
| Transformation           | 15,740                  | (450)                         | 15,290                           | 3,276                         |
| <b>Total expenditure</b> | <b>77,519</b>           | <b>(9,973)</b>                | <b>67,546</b>                    | <b>13,685</b>                 |

3.3 The significant variances which have arisen since the Quarter 1 report are:-

### 3.3.1 New Bids

#### **Cyber Security (£1.562m)**

Technology needs to be refreshed to ensure it remains supported and secure. A number of projects are required to ensure that the Council is fully supported which will avoid having to pay very expensive “extended support” fees and include the upgrade to Windows 10; replacement of web publishing server; replacement of Unix servers and upgrading Windows servers. This is essential to maintain the integrity and security of the Council I.T. network. Estimated cost is £1 million in 2017/18 and £0.6 million in 2018/19 with the proposed funding being from Capital Receipts.

#### **Street Lighting (£0.500m)**

This is a revision to an existing scheme with the allocation increased from £0.5 million to £1.0 million. This follows completion of survey works and is required due to public safety concerns and improved performance regarding street lighting. Additional cost is £0.5 million in 2017/18 with the proposed funding from borrowing for which a full year’s cost would be £24,000.

#### **Eureka Project (£0.308m)**

This is financial assistance to Eureka, The National Children’s Museum to develop the Eureka! Merseyside proposal. This will support the required funding applications to bring forward this development. Eureka! Merseyside will create a world-class destination for families at Seacombe Ferry on the current Spaceport site replicating the award winning model in Halifax.

The cost of the project is £11 million with funding agreed subject to final applications from a number of sources. The Council contribution is £0.06 million in 2017/18 and £0.25 million in 2018/19 with the proposed funding being from borrowing for which a full year’s cost would be £13,000.

### **Thermal Pool Covers (£0.150m)**

To install thermal insulating pool covers at six swimming pools. Energy consumption will be reduced and humidity levels easier to control during none use hours, this also has benefits in helping to protect the building fabric. Installation of pool covers also helps to reduce water consumption due to reduced evaporation losses into the pool hall atmosphere. Full year savings is estimated to be £80,000 against the cost of £0.150 million in 2017/18.

### **Collaborative working for Children's Services (£0.102m)**

In order to support the improvements in the service tablet devices have been identified as a requirement to improve both the mobility and service that social workers can provide to their clients. To provide investment to purchase the new technology and support the migration to the new technology the estimated cost is £0.102 million in 2017/18 with the proposed funding being from Capital Receipts.

These bids have all been presented to the Assets and Capital Group where it was recommended to submit these schemes for inclusion in the Programme. The additional full year borrowing costs of £37,000 can be accommodated within the existing Treasury Management budget.

### **3.3.2 Table 2 : Re-profiling and other variations (significant > £0.2m)**

| <b>Scheme</b>   | <b>£000</b> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Business</b>   |             |
| Data centre - funding from Insurance Fund previously agreed and the scheme is now being formally included in the Programme. Alternative methods of funding this scheme are currently being evaluated to maximise value for money. | 1,500       |
| Building refurbishment to increase occupancy - a number of projects are still on hold to avoid unnecessary spend until decisions are made on the usage of key assets. Re-profiled.  | (223)       |
| Cleveland Street. depot - awaiting outcome of Leisure Business Case to determine requirements so re-profiled.   | (370)       |
| Highway maintenance - scheduled programme of works may run into 2018/19. Re-profiled.   | (270)       |
| Wirral Waters Investment Fund - on course to approve over £4 million by March 2018 but based on the timing of the applications, approvals and spend profiles the use is estimated at £0.55 million in 2017/18 so re-profiled.     | (3,450)     |
| Car Parking - tender has resulted in reduced costs for the car parking machines. Reduced requirement.   | (325)       |

| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>£000</b> |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Environment</b>   |             |
| West Kirby Marine Lake integrated accommodation - tenders agreed but commencement for the rest of the works is likely to be March 2018. Re-profiled.   | (511)       |
| Leasowe Leisure Centre outdoor 3G pitches - there are a number of drainage issues which will require further investigation and a review of ground works. Re-profiled.  | (720)       |
| Aids, adaptations and DFGs - spend is influenced by a number of external factors such as the extent, complexity and value of the adaptations required. Re-profiled.  | (1,139)     |
| Restore empty homes - currently working on a programme to commit the remaining grant. Re-profiled.   | (298)       |
| Clearance - currently working on a programme to commit the remaining funding. Re-profiled.   | (1,130)     |
| Home Improvement - this is a rolling of financial assistance and in part relies on the number of claims made. Re-profiled.   | (438)       |
| New house building - currently working with a number of Registered Providers to develop schemes. Re-profiled.  | (217)       |
| Housing Infrastructure Fund - Viability assessments and scoping now commenced but will not be fully committed this year. Re-profiled.  | (500)       |
| Waste vehicles - original scheme involved the Council borrowing on behalf of Biffa, with all associated costs being re-imbursed. The return to the Council was low and BIFFA can now obtain more competitive financing so scheme is no longer required.  | (5,686)     |
| <b>People</b>  |             |
| Pensby Wood - delays caused by planning issues. Re-profiled.   | (397)       |
| School condition, basic needs and primary places - quarter 1 reflected the overall funding available. This is now re-profiled to reflect a more realistic programme for the year given that the majority of the work can only be undertaken during school holidays. £0.272m grant funding was brought forward and utilised in 2016/17. | (5,166)     |

| <b>Scheme</b>   | <b>£000</b>     |
|---|-----------------|
| Citizen & Provider Portal/Integrated I.T. - scheme has been reviewed leading to a reduce requirement of £0.5 million and re-profiling of £0.250 million | (794)           |
| Assistive Technology - various schemes have commenced but an element of re-profiling will be required.  | (315)           |
| Extra Care Housing - possible start for 2 schemes during the current year. Re-profiled.   | (1,500)         |
| Transformation - at this stage a small sum of re-profiling is estimated   | (450)           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>(22,399)</b> |

3.4 Schemes are subject to ongoing review to ensure that a deliverable Programme is in place, that they are compatible with the Wirral Plan and to try and identify any savings. Further detail of progress to date over the Wirral Plan Themes is provided in the following sections.

### 3.5 Business Theme

3.5.1 Spend of £2.6 million has been incurred in respect of the current dock bridges replacement scheme. This major scheme is largely funded through a Government grant and the extensive works are expected to be completed by early 2018.

3.5.2 Other significant spend includes works to refurbish and update Council buildings to increase occupancy and make fit for purpose (£0.6 million) and highways related works (£1.2 million).

3.5.3 The Liverpool City Region has allocated £3.1 million of grant support for Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package (STEP) programme for which a schedule of work has now been drawn up for action by Bam Nuttall for implementation.

3.5.4 Within the Programme is an allocation of £10 million for investment in properties. This is closely linked to the progressing Wirral Growth Company and is intended to funded acquisitions which will, in turn, provide a revenue income stream to the Council. It is anticipated that this funding will be utilised by the year end.

### 3.6 Environment Theme

3.6.1 The largest areas of spend so far this year relate to Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants (£0.7 million) with a further £0.7m of adaptation schemes currently approved.



3.6.2 £0.2 million has been incurred on restoring empty homes. The Old Court House scheme completed in September and it is expected that the Ark will complete in January 2018.

3.6.3 Enabling works are complete in respect of the Integrated Accommodation scheme at West Kirby Marine Lake. The building is now DDA compliant and meets Health & Safety and Fire Safety standards for the coming season. Tenders for the full scheme have now been agreed with commencement expected March 2018.

### 3.7 People Theme

3.7.1 The majority of expenditure charged so far relates to schools related capital (£2.0 million). As with previous years the works to schools are largely programmed to be undertaken during the school holiday periods.

**Woodslee Primary:** improved safeguarding/security and space to the main entrance incorporating new modern toilets for staff and visitors. This project is now complete and has transformed the face of the school immeasurably.

**St Bridget's C of E Primary:** a scheme to replace an old defective mobile classroom with a modern facility including new toilets, refurbishment of two existing classrooms and the creation of an external play area.

**Rock Ferry Primary:** a four phase development to transform early year's provision, main entrance re-modelling, improved office accommodation, classroom and resource/group room re-designs.

**Devonshire Park Primary:** transformation of the girls' toilets from old traditional type to new individual closets to enable the school to utilise each toilet better and discourage any poor behaviour.

**Prenton Primary:** The KS1 area was quite poor and required updating. A full refurbishment was undertaken which included three new sets of pupil toilets, removal of internal walls to create improved teaching space and IT provision.

**Fender Primary:** A new car park for staff has been developed along with additional hard standing and grassed play areas. This has alleviated on the road parking and the extended play areas for pupils.

3.7.2 The Transformation Programme includes significant funding (£10 million) in respect of the Improvement Plan for Children's Services which is being implemented with investment in staff across a number of critical areas. These will help address the needs of those leaving care with more PA's, strengthen the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Safeguarding teams, address high caseloads, improve information within the department and enhance Early Help and Prevention services. The costs will be transferred to the Capital Programme during in the year.

### 3.8 Wirral Growth Fund

3.8.1 As previously reported the funding landscape has changed and the business need is for a mix of grant and loan as opposed to purely loans. Also little interest has been expressed for running this scheme outside of the Council.

3.8.2 The Wirral Growth Plan together with the emerging Strategic Regeneration Framework and proposed Growth Company now provide the focus to accelerate development and support businesses wanting to locate in Wirral. By utilising the skills and knowledge gained from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund, the Council now has the opportunity to support even more businesses moving into Wirral and it is proposed that the Fund be allocated by the Council directly to eligible businesses and it be used to offer a mix of grant and loan. The recyclable investment element will of course reduce.

### FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.9 Table 3 summarises the financing sources for the original and latest Programme.

**Table 3: Revised Capital Programme Financing**

| <b>Capital Programme Financing</b>           | <b>Capital Strategy</b> | <b>Revised Programme</b> |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | <b>£000</b>             | <b>£000</b>              |
| Unsupported Borrowing                        | 35,121                  | 27,200                   |
| Capital Receipts                             | 17,677                  | 16,792                   |
| Grants                                       | 20,571                  | 21,399                   |
| Business Rates (Wirral Waters - ring-fenced) | 4,000                   | 550                      |
| Reserves                                     | 150                     | 1,605                    |
| <b>Total Financing</b>                       | <b>77,519</b>           | <b>67,546</b>            |

3.10 Re-profiling that reduces borrowing will produce revenue savings in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 after which the full budget will be required.

### PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

3.11 Funding for the 2017/18 to 2019/20 Programme is in Table 4. This reflects the 2017/18 Capital Programme agreed by Cabinet on 20 February 2017 with subsequent amendments for re-profiling, grant notifications etc.

**Table 4: Capital Programme Financing 2017/18 to 2019/20**

| <b>Capital Programme Financing</b>           | <b>2017/18 Revised Prog</b> | <b>2018/19 Prog</b> | <b>2019/20 Prog</b> | <b>Total Prog</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|  | <b>£000</b>                 | <b>£000</b>         | <b>£000</b>         | <b>£000</b>       |
| Unsupported Borrowing                        | 27,200                      | 20,404              | 10,470              | 58,074            |
| Capital Receipts                             | 16,792                      | 1,242               | -                   | 18,034            |
| Grants                                       | 21,399                      | 18,521              | 5,700               | 45,620            |
| Business Rates (Wirral Waters - ring-fenced) | 550                         | 6,000               | 5,000               | 11,550            |
| Reserves                                     | 1,605                       | -                   | -                   | 1,605             |
| <b>Total Financing</b>                       | <b>67,546</b>               | <b>46,167</b>       | <b>21,170</b>       | <b>134,883</b>    |

### **SUPPORTED AND UNSUPPORTED BORROWING AND THE REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSUPPORTED BORROWING**

- 3.12 Based on current cost, £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of approximately £55,000 per annum in the following year. As part of the Capital Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 the Council has included an element of Prudential Borrowing and presently there is £58.3 million included over the three years, which will result in approximately £3.8 million of additional revenue costs as detailed at Table 5.

**Table 5: Unsupported Borrowing Forecasts & Revenue Costs**

|                                | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2019/20</b> | <b>2020/21</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    |
| New Unsupported Borrowing      | 27,200         | 20,404         | 10,470         | 0              |
| Cumulative                     | 27,200         | 47,604         | 58,074         | 58,074         |
| Annual Revenue repayment costs |                |                |                |                |
| Cumulative                     | 440            | 2,243          | 3,328          | 3,825          |

### **CAPITAL RECEIPTS POSITION**

- 3.13 In accord with the Capital Receipts flexibilities introduced by the Government capital receipts generated between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2019 can be used to support Transformation. This has been reflected in the Capital Programme for 2017/18 and in the receipts assumptions for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Receipts prior to the 1 April 2016 are not eligible to be used to fund Transformation.
- 3.14 The Capital Programme is partly reliant on the generation of receipts to finance future schemes. Available receipts at 1 April 2017 were £5.6 million with £3.0 million available to fund the Transformation Programme and £2.6 million to fund the ongoing Capital Programme. The table assumes that the proposed spend, set out at Table 1, is agreed. Receipts and funding assumptions are based upon the latest estimates.

**Table 6: Projected Capital Receipts position**

|                          | <b>2017/18</b> | <b>2018/19</b> | <b>2019/20</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                          | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    |
| Capital Receipts Reserve | 5,558          | -272           | 5,036          |
| In - Receipts Assumption | 10,962         | 6,550          | 3,500          |
| Out - Funding assumption | -16,792        | -1,242         | TBD            |
| Closing Balance          | -272           | 5,036          | TBD            |

TBD - To be determined

- 3.15 The assumption for receipts in 2017/18 is predicated on the fact that the anticipated expenditure on the Transformation Programme of £15.2 million (including Children's Services) is to be funded from allowable receipts generated in 2016/17 and 2017/18.
- 3.16 For 2018/19 and 2019/20 there are 2 significant receipts factored into the above table. In 2018/19 the second and final receipt for the sale of Manor Drive (£2.3 million) and the second receipt for Acre Lane (£3.5 million) and in 2019/20 the final receipt for Acre Lane (£3.5 million).
- 3.17 Current estimates indicate a shortfall in receipts for the current year. In order to address this additional sites for marketing will be considered as well as ways to reduce expenditure.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The revised 2017/18 Capital Programme is £67.546 million and anticipated deficit for capital receipts at the year-end £0.3 million.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The possibility of failure to deliver the Capital Programme will be mitigated by the monthly review by a senior group of officers, charged with improving performance.
- 7.2 The generation of capital receipts may be influenced by factors outside the authority's control e.g. ecological issues. Lambert, Smith, Hampton are still providing external support.

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been no specific consultation with regards to this report.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Capital Programme and Funding 2017/18

Appendix 2 – Capital Receipts 2017/18

## SUBJECT HISTORY

| <b>Council Meeting</b>                          | <b>Date</b>  |
|---|--------------|
| Capital monitoring reports presented to Cabinet | Various      |
| Capital Programme – Council                     | 3 March 2016 |
| Capital Programme – Council                     | 6 March 2017 |

## Capital Programme and Funding 2017/18

## APPENDIX 1

| <b>Business Theme</b>                     | <b>Revised Programme<br/>£000</b> | <b>Spend to Date<br/>£000</b> | <b>Council Resources<br/>£000</b> | <b>Reserves<br/>£000</b> | <b>Business Rates<br/>£000</b> | <b>Grants<br/>£000</b> | <b>Total Funding<br/>£000</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Building refurb to increase occupancy     | <b>950</b>                        | 562                           | 950                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>950</b>                    |
| Fund to assist land assembly and resale   | <b>468</b>                        | 46                            | 468                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>468</b>                    |
| Cleveland Street transport depot          | <b>120</b>                        | -                             | 120                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>120</b>                    |
| Demolish Bebington Town Hall              | <b>365</b>                        | 3                             | 365                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>365</b>                    |
| Demolish former Rock Ferry High School    | <b>70</b>                         | 61                            | 70                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>70</b>                     |
| Demolish Stanley School                   | <b>30</b>                         | 28                            | 30                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>30</b>                     |
| Demolish former Foxfield School           | <b>11</b>                         | -                             | 11                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>11</b>                     |
| Treasury Building                         | <b>413</b>                        | 184                           | 413                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>413</b>                    |
| Cyber Security                            | <b>1,000</b>                      | -                             | 1,000                             | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>1,000</b>                  |
| Data Centre                               | <b>1,500</b>                      | 555                           | -                                 | 1,500                    | -                              | -                      | <b>1,500</b>                  |
| Children's Services collaboration         | <b>102</b>                        | -                             | 102                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>102</b>                    |
| Eureka                                    | <b>60</b>                         | -                             | 60                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>60</b>                     |
| Industrial Estates                        | <b>150</b>                        | 70                            | 150                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>150</b>                    |
| Millennium Centre re-modelling            | <b>525</b>                        | 148                           | 525                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>525</b>                    |
| Active travel                             | <b>22</b>                         | 21                            | 22                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>22</b>                     |
| Bridges                                   | <b>938</b>                        | 59                            | 788                               | -                        | -                              | 150                    | <b>938</b>                    |
| Highway maintenance                       | <b>2,790</b>                      | 1,190                         | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 2,790                  | <b>2,790</b>                  |
| Transport for growth/integrated transport | <b>2,667</b>                      | 285                           | 1,443                             | -                        | -                              | 1,224                  | <b>2,667</b>                  |
| Coast protection                          | <b>150</b>                        | 5                             | 150                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>150</b>                    |
| STEP                                      | <b>3,450</b>                      | 0                             | 365                               | -                        | -                              | 3,085                  | <b>3,450</b>                  |
| Dock bridges replacement                  | <b>6,445</b>                      | 2,550                         | 1,000                             | -                        | -                              | 5,445                  | <b>6,445</b>                  |
| Replace highways grass cutting machinery  | <b>288</b>                        | 281                           | 288                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>288</b>                    |

**Business Theme (continued)**

|                               | <b>Revised<br/>Programme<br/>£000</b> | <b>Spend to<br/>Date<br/>£000</b> | <b>Council<br/>Resources<br/>£000</b> | <b>Reserves<br/>£000</b> | <b>Business<br/>Rates<br/>£000</b> | <b>Grants<br/>£000</b> | <b>Total<br/>Funding<br/>£000</b> |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Business investment grants    | 888                                   | 147                               | 888                                   | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 888                               |
| Growth fund                   | 600                                   | -                                 | 600                                   | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 600                               |
| Webcasting                    | 225                                   | -                                 | 225                                   | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 225                               |
| Thermal mapping               | 42                                    | -                                 | 42                                    | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 42                                |
| Pothole action fund           | 270                                   | 49                                | -                                     | -                        | -                                  | 270                    | 270                               |
| Street lighting               | 1,165                                 | 54                                | 1,000                                 | 105                      | -                                  | 60                     | 1,165                             |
| Car parking                   | 575                                   | -                                 | 575                                   | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 575                               |
| Investment in properties      | 10,000                                | -                                 | 10,000                                | -                        | -                                  | -                      | 10,000                            |
| Wirral Waters Investment Fund | 550                                   | -                                 | -                                     | -                        | 550                                | -                      | 550                               |
|                               | <b>36,829</b>                         | <b>6,298</b>                      | <b>21,650</b>                         | <b>1,605</b>             | <b>550</b>                         | <b>13,024</b>          | <b>36,829</b>                     |

| <b>Environment Theme</b>                  | <b>Revised Programme<br/>£000</b> | <b>Spend to Date<br/>£000</b> | <b>Council Resources<br/>£000</b> | <b>Reserves<br/>£000</b> | <b>Business Rates<br/>£000</b> | <b>Grants<br/>£000</b> | <b>Total Funding<br/>£000</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Park depot rationalisation                | 260                               | 123                           | 260                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 260                           |
| Parks vehicles replacement                | 47                                | 15                            | 47                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | 47                            |
| Cemetery extensions and improvements      | 260                               | -                             | 260                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 260                           |
| Transport museum                          | 180                               | 2                             | 180                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 180                           |
| Flaybrick cemetery                        | -                                 | 82                            | -                                 | -                        | -                              | -                      | -                             |
| Soft play areas at leisure centres        | 300                               | -                             | 300                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 300                           |
| W.K. Marine Lake integrated accommodation | 200                               | 129                           | 200                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 200                           |
| Bidston tennis centre re-roofing          | 21                                | 11                            | 21                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | 21                            |
| Seasowe Leisure Centre outdoor 3G         | 100                               | -                             | 100                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 100                           |
| Oval Sports Centre redevelopment          | 105                               | 80                            | 105                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 105                           |
| Thermal Pool Covers                       | 150                               | -                             | 150                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 150                           |
| Beechwood skate park                      | 80                                | 75                            | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 80                     | 80                            |
| West Kirby flood alleviation              | 100                               | 14                            | 100                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 100                           |
| CCTV cameras and other equipment          | 100                               | -                             | 100                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 100                           |
| Aids, adaptations and DFGs                | 2,500                             | 715                           | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 2,500                  | 2,500                         |
| Restore empty homes                       | 354                               | 200                           | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 354                    | 354                           |
| Clearance                                 | 200                               | 45                            | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 200                    | 200                           |
| Home improvements                         | 550                               | 198                           | 550                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 550                           |
| New house building                        | 350                               | 36                            | 350                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 350                           |
| Housing infrastructure fund               | 500                               | -                             | 500                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | 500                           |
| Wirral sailing centre                     | 62                                | 14                            | 62                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | 62                            |
| Waste vehicles                            | -                                 | -                             | -                                 | -                        | -                              | -                      | -                             |
|   | <b>6,419</b>                      | <b>1,739</b>                  | <b>3,285</b>                      | <b>-</b>                 | <b>-</b>                       | <b>3,134</b>           | <b>6,419</b>                  |



| <b>People Theme</b>  | <b>Revised Programme<br/>£000</b> | <b>Spend to Date<br/>£000</b> | <b>Council Resources<br/>£000</b> | <b>Reserves<br/>£000</b> | <b>Business Rates<br/>£000</b> | <b>Grants<br/>£000</b> | <b>Total Funding<br/>£000</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Pensby Wood day service re-modelling                       | <b>1,300</b>                      | 101                           | 1,135                             | -                        | -                              | 165                    | <b>1,300</b>                  |
| Family support schemes                                     | <b>191</b>                        | 33                            | 191                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>191</b>                    |
| Stanley Special additional classrooms etc.                 | <b>4</b>                          | -                             | 4                                 | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>4</b>                      |
| School condition allocation                                | <b>3,000</b>                      | 1,077                         | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 3,000                  | <b>3,000</b>                  |
| Private Finance Initiative                                 | <b>85</b>                         | -                             | 85                                | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>85</b>                     |
| Basic needs  | <b>676</b>                        | 406                           | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 676                    | <b>676</b>                    |
| School remodelling (Primary places)                        | <b>2,102</b>                      | 543                           | 1,852                             | -                        | -                              | 250                    | <b>2,102</b>                  |
| Public Health  | <b>200</b>                        | 193                           | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 200                    | <b>200</b>                    |
| Citizen and Provider Portal/integrated I.T for social care | <b>150</b>                        | 17                            | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 150                    | <b>150</b>                    |
| Assistive technology                                       | <b>300</b>                        | 2                             | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 300                    | <b>300</b>                    |
| Community intermediate care                                | <b>500</b>                        | -                             | 500                               | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>500</b>                    |
| Extra Care housing   | <b>500</b>                        | -                             | -                                 | -                        | -                              | 500                    | <b>500</b>                    |
|  | <b>9,008</b>                      | <b>2,372</b>                  | <b>3,767</b>                      | -                        | -                              | <b>5,241</b>           | <b>9,008</b>                  |
| Transformation Programme (including Children's Services)   | <b>15,290</b>                     | <b>3,276</b>                  | <b>15,290</b>                     | -                        | -                              | -                      | <b>15,290</b>                 |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>67,546</b>                     | <b>13,685</b>                 | <b>43,992</b>                     | <b>1,605</b>             | <b>550</b>                     | <b>21,399</b>          | <b>67,546</b>                 |

## APPENDIX 2

### CAPITAL RECEIPTS 2017/18

| <b>Cash Received</b>                     | <b>£000</b>  |
|--|--------------|
| Ex-HRA Magenta Housing Right to Buy      | 633          |
| Acre Lane deposit                        | 250          |
| Renovation loans                         | 151          |
| Windmill public house freehold reversion | 25           |
|  | <b>1,059</b> |

## MINUTE EXTRACT

### CABINET – 6 NOVEMBER 2017

#### 54 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING 2017/18 (MID-YEAR REPORT)



**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

“The success of the Council is reliant upon the effective management of all of our resources. The approach to Treasury Management is a key element and our proactive and risk aware approach has delivered significant financial benefits in recent years.

This has continued this year with Treasury Management projected to deliver a cash benefit of £6.1 million during 2017/18 with £4 million of this recurring in future years.

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

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

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

Proactive Treasury Management activity had resulted in:

- a) Estimated one-off savings in 2017/18 of a minimum of £2 million from reduced interest payments and management of the Authority’s Capital Financing. This has been reflected in the Revenue Monitoring (Quarter 2) Report to Cabinet.
- b) A further saving of £4.1 million being generated in 2017/18 as a result of revising the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy. This saving would be recurring on an annually reducing basis over a 17-year period. Subject to Council

approval of the policy change the impact of this would be reported in the Revenue Monitoring (Quarter 3) report to Cabinet.

Councillor Williamson thanked the Treasury Management Team for a really positive report.

**RESOLVED: That -**

- (1) the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2017/18 be agreed;**
- (2) the revision to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in selecting the annuity method within 'Option 3 Asset Life' for calculating the MRP, be endorsed and that this be referred to Council for approval;**
- (3) the estimated saving of £2 million from Treasury Management activities in 2017/18 be noted;**
- (4) the additional saving of £4.1 million from the revision to the Treasury Management Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in 2017/18 be noted;**
- (5) the revised Authorised Signatory List relating to Treasury Management activity be approved.**



**COUNCILLOR  
JANETTE WILLIAMSON**

**CABINET**

**6 NOVEMBER 2017**

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

**MID-YEAR REPORT 2017/18**

**Councillor Janette Williamson (Cabinet Member for Finance and Income Generation) said:**

‘The success of the Council is reliant upon the effective management of all of our resources. The approach to Treasury Management is a key element and our proactive and risk aware approach has delivered significant financial benefits in recent years.

This has continued this year with Treasury Management projected to deliver a cash benefit of £6.1 million during 2017/18 with £4 million of this recurring in future years.

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

**REPORT SUMMARY**

The Authority’s treasury management activity is underpinned by CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), which requires the production of annual Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommends that Members are informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

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

Proactive Treasury Management activity has resulted in:-

- a) Estimated one-off savings in 2017/18 of a minimum of £2 million from reduced interest payments and management of the Authority's Capital Financing. This has been reflected in the Revenue Monitoring (Quarter 2) Report to Cabinet
- b) A further saving of £4.1 million being generated in 2017/18 as a result of revising the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy. This saving will be recurring on an annually reducing basis over a 17 year period. Subject to Council approval of the policy change the impact of this will be reported in the Revenue Monitoring (Quarter 3) report to Cabinet.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The decisions in this report are key decisions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1 That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2017/18 be agreed.
- 2 That Cabinet endorse the revision to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in selecting the annuity method within 'Option 3 Asset Life' for calculating the MRP and that this be referred to Council for approval.
- 3 That the estimated saving of £2 million from Treasury Management activities in 2017/18 be noted.
- 4 That the additional saving of £4.1 million from the revision to the Treasury Management Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in 2017/18 be noted.
- 5 That the revised Authorised Signatory List relating to Treasury Management activity be approved.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Wirral has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (“the Code”), which includes regular update reports to Members of treasury activity. This report is the mid-year review for 2017/18.
- 1.2 Under the Council Financial Regulations any surplus resources are returned to balances and so used to support the delivery of other Council services.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 No other options have been considered.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Treasury management is defined by CIPFA as: “The management of the local authority investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”
- 3.2 Cabinet approves the Treasury Management Strategy at the start of each financial year. This identifies how it is proposed to finance capital expenditure, borrow and invest in the light of capital spending requirements, the interest rate forecasts and the expected economic conditions. The Authority is able to borrow and/or invest substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are therefore central to the Authority’s treasury management strategy. During the year Cabinet receives a mid-year report on treasury management activities and at the end of each financial year an Annual Report.
- 3.3 A narrative regarding the economic background to this report is included as Appendix 1.

### **THE COUNCIL TREASURY POSITION**

- 3.4 The table shows how the position has changed since 31 March 2017.

**Table 1: Summary of Treasury Position**

|                             | <b>Balance<br/>31 Mar 17<br/>(£m)</b> | <b>Maturities<br/>(£m)</b> | <b>Additions<br/>(£m)</b> | <b>Balance<br/>30 Sep 17<br/>(£m)</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Investments                 | 52                                    | (237)                      | 235                       | 50                                    |
| Loans - Short Term Cashflow | (28)                                  | 243                        | (262)                     | (47)                                  |
| Loans - Capital Financing   | (191)                                 | 4                          | 0                         | (187)                                 |
| Other Long-Term Liabilities | (48)                                  | 1                          | 0                         | (47)                                  |
| <b>Net Debt</b>             | <b>(215)</b>                          | <b>11</b>                  | <b>(27)</b>               | <b>(231)</b>                          |

- 3.5 The increase in Net Debt is the result of taking on additional short term borrowing to fund temporary cashflow requirements. This has enabled savings to be realised by delaying the taking out of more expensive longer term borrowing and providing opportunities to maximise other returns from other funding options.

### **INVESTMENT ACTIVITY**

- 3.6 Both the CIPFA and the CLG's Investment Guidance require the Authority to invest prudently and have regard to the security and liquidity of investments before seeking the optimum yield. These investments arise from a number of sources including General Fund Balances, Reserves and Provisions, grants received in advance of expenditure, money borrowed in advance of capital expenditure, Schools' Balances and daily cashflow / working capital.

- 3.7 **Table 2: Investment Profile**

| <b>Investments with:</b>     | <b>31 Mar 17<br/>£m</b> | <b>30 Jun 17<br/>£m</b> | <b>30 Sep 17<br/>£m</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| UK Banks                     | 12                      | 7                       | 4                       |
| Non-UK Banks                 | 11                      | 11                      | 13                      |
| UK Building Societies        | 1                       | 2                       | 2                       |
| Money Market Funds           | 25                      | 21                      | 14                      |
| Community Interest Companies | 1                       | 1                       | 1                       |
| Pooled Funds                 | 2                       | 8                       | 8                       |
| Other Local Authorities      | 0                       | 8                       | 8                       |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>52</b>               | <b>58</b>               | <b>50</b>               |

At 30 September 2017 the Council held investments of £50 million. The table shows the level of investment increasing from £52 million at 31 March 2017 to £58 million at 30 June 2017 due to the receipts for 2017/18 funding being received in advance. The level then reduced to £50 million as these funds were utilised.



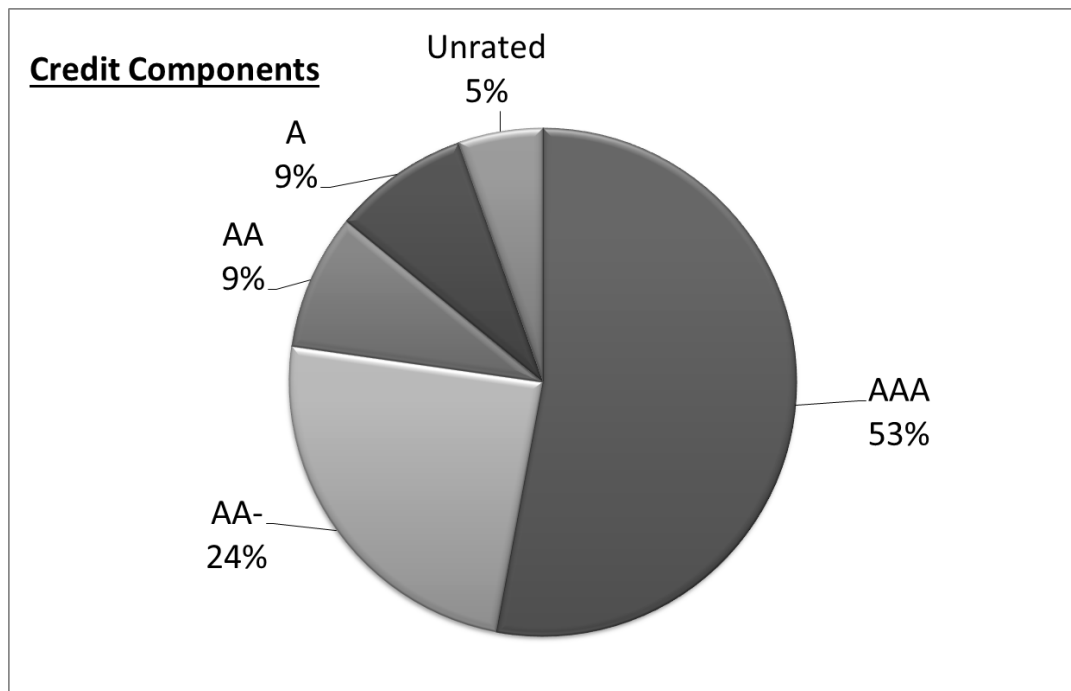
3.8 The table below shows approximately where the investments came from.

**Table 3: Investment Sources**

| <b>Usable Reserves</b>                              | <b>31 Mar 17<br/>£m</b> | <b>30 Jun 17<br/>£m</b> | <b>30 Sep 17<br/>£m</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| General Fund  | 26                      | 9                       | 12                      |
| Earmarked Reserves                                  | 55                      | 55                      | 51                      |
| Capital Receipts Reserve                            | 5                       | 6                       | 7                       |
| Capital Grants Unapplied                            | 15                      | 22                      | 26                      |
|   | <b>101</b>              | <b>92</b>               | <b>96</b>               |
| Internal Borrowing in lieu of<br>External Borrowing | (49)                    | (34)                    | (46)                    |
| <b>Reserves Invested</b>                            | <b>52</b>               | <b>58</b>               | <b>50</b>               |

- 3.9 With short-term investment interest rates having remained at historic low levels, it is more cost effective in the short-term to use internal resources, rather than undertake longer term external borrowing. By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs despite foregone investment income and also reduce overall treasury risk. Whilst such a strategy is most likely to be beneficial over the short term, internal resources are reducing and it is unlikely that such a policy can be sustained long term. The benefits of internal borrowing are monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years, when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to eventually rise.
- 3.10 Security of capital remains the main investment objective. This is maintained by following the counterparty policy set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2017/18 which defined “high credit quality” organisations as those having a long-term credit rating of A- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher.
- 3.11 Counterparty credit quality is assessed and monitored with reference to credit ratings (the Authority’s minimum long-term counterparty rating for 2017/18 is A- across rating agencies Fitch, S&P and Moody’s); Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press.
- 3.12 The chart shows the credit composition of the Council’s investment portfolio as at 30 September 2017:

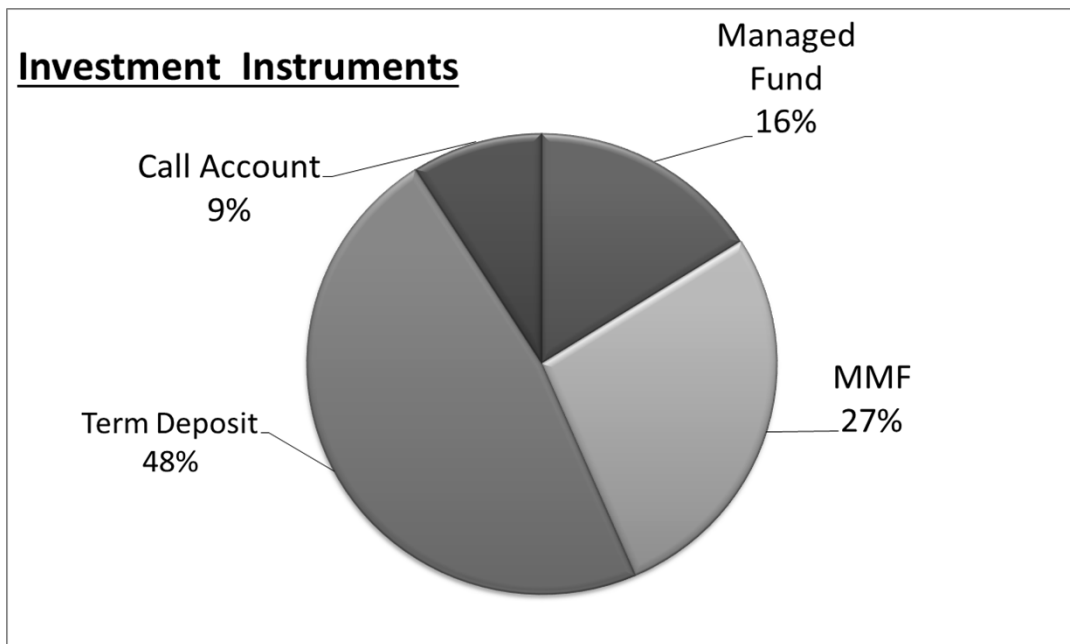
**Chart 1: Investment Portfolio – Credit Components**



Note: 'Unrated' institutions are Building Societies that despite the absence of a formal rating, are deemed credit worthy due to analysis of their performance over a variety of credit metrics. These institutions are subject to a lower counterparty limit than those with formal credit ratings.

- 3.13 Investments with banks and building societies were primarily call accounts and fixed-rate term deposits. The maximum duration of any new investment was constantly reviewed in line with the prevailing credit outlook during the year as well as market conditions.
- 3.14 In keeping with the DCLG Guidance on Investments, the Council maintained a sufficient level of liquidity through the use of Money Market Funds and the use of call accounts.
- 3.15 For diversification purposes the Treasury Management team invest in a variety of counterparties and financial instruments to help mitigate counterparty and liquidity risks. A summary of the instruments invested in follows:

**Chart 2: Investment Portfolio – Financial Instruments**



- 3.16 There were a few credit rating changes during the first six months. The significant change was the downgrade by Moody's to the UK sovereign rating in September 2017 from Aa1 to Aa2 which resulted in subsequent downgrades to sub-sovereign entities including local authorities.
- 3.17 Ring-fencing, which requires the larger UK banks to separate their core retail banking activity from the rest of their business, is expected to be implemented within the next year. In May, following Arlingclose's advice, the Authority reduced the maximum duration of unsecured investments with Bank of Scotland, HSBC Bank and Lloyds Bank from 13 months to 6 months as until banks' new structures are finally determined and published, the different credit risks of the 'retail' and 'investment' banks cannot be known for certain.
- 3.18 The new EU regulations for Money Market Funds (MMFs) were finally approved and published in July and existing funds will have to be compliant by no later than 21 January 2019. The key features include Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) Money Market Funds which will be permitted to maintain a constant dealing Net Asset Value, providing they meet strict new criteria and minimum liquidity requirements. Currently the MMFs that the Council invests in have Constant Net Asset Values, which means if you invest £1 into the Fund you receive £1 back when you come to redeem the money. MMFs will not be prohibited from having an external fund rating (as had been suggested in draft regulations). Arlingclose expects most of the short-term MMFs it recommends to convert to the LVNAV structure and awaits confirmation from each Fund.

- 3.19 The budget for investment income is £560,000 but achievable income will be in the region of £200,000. This reduction in investment income is attributable to the deliberate decision to reduce borrowing costs rather than chasing the income target as overall this currently provides greater financial benefit to the Council. This policy is attributable to two key factors:
- a) Low interest rates offered for investments and
  - b) The continuing policy of relying on internal borrowing to temporarily fund and thereby delay borrowing for the capital programme, which reduces balances available to put into investments but generates larger savings in interest incurred.
- 3.20 The UK Bank Rate remained at a historic low of 0.25%. The average return on investments at the end of September was 0.4%, with the portfolio invested in secure counterparties with a good level of liquidity. However this does not reflect the savings of an estimated 2.5% on delayed borrowing for amounts internally borrowed.
- 3.21 In terms of enhancing the interest return we are in the process of opening further 'External Pooled Funds' with a view to increasing investment duration for a section of the portfolio. Investment in this type of fund is subject to more volatility compared to traditional terms deposits, however with support from our Treasury Advisor the specific funds have been chosen due to their relatively low volatility. This longer duration is to smooth out any potential drops in the market of that particular asset and should result in a commensurate interest rate increase, with the funds concerned generating a return of approximately 4 - 10% over the past five years. Pooling funds in such a way and the resultant diverse pool of assets is a less risky way of gaining access to different investment sectors, such as bond markets, equities and property without taking on the additional risks if the Council were the sole holders of such assets.
- 3.22 The return on investments, along with our policy of internally borrowing, reflects prevailing market conditions and the objective of optimising returns commensurate with the overriding principles of security and liquidity.

## **BORROWING AND DEBT MANAGEMENT**

- 3.23 The Council undertakes borrowing to fund capital expenditure. As explained in paragraph 3.13, the use of internal resources in lieu of borrowing, in the main, continues to be the most cost effective means of funding capital expenditure. As short-term investment interest rates have remained, and are likely to remain at least over the immediate future, lower than long-term borrowing rates, the Authority determined it was more cost effective in the short-term to use internal resources instead.

- 3.24 The use of internal borrowing will not be sustainable over the medium term. Elements of the Capital Programme will ultimately require funding via borrowing from external sources. Also as Reserves are called upon the resources temporarily available to use in lieu of external borrowing diminish, meaning the Council will reach a point when it is no longer possible to delay borrowing any further. To reiterate internal borrowing does not remove the need to externally borrow, it merely delays incurring the debt and consequently the financing costs.
- 3.25 The decision to continue to use internal resources in lieu of borrowing for capital purposes, thereby reducing borrowing costs will generate savings in 2017/18 of £2 million whilst complying with the Regulations. In future years, as cash flows diminish through use of reserve and/or interest rates rise, external borrowing will have to increase. The Treasury Management team will continue to proactively manage the Authority's cash flow to delay external borrowing for as long as is possible and prudent to generate savings.
- 3.26 With external borrowing reducing, the annual cost of financing this debt has also fallen year on year, generating savings, as illustrated below. These cost reductions, the deferral of further borrowing costs through internal borrowing and policy amendments has provided substantial one-off savings to the Council:

**Table 4: Debt Costs and Savings Achieved**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Capital Financing Loans<br/>£m</b> | <b>Annual Interest Costs<br/>£m</b> | <b>Contribution to General Fund<br/>£m</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2011/12     | 264.4                                 | 10.9                                | 3.0  |
| 2012/13     | 247.1                                 | 10.5                                | 3.7  |
| 2013/14     | 216.9                                 | 9.8                                 | 2.0  |
| 2014/15     | 203.9                                 | 9.4                                 | 2.0  |
| 2015/16     | 199.1                                 | 9.2                                 | 4.0  |
| 2016/17     | 190.6                                 | 9.1                                 | 9.4  |
|             |                                       | <b>Total</b>                        | <b>24.1</b>                                |

*Note 1 – The balance of Capital Financing Loans shown above includes a debt portfolio that is attributable to not only Wirral but to several neighbouring Local Authorities regarding the former Merseyside County Council, which is known as the Merseyside Residual Debt Fund (MRDF).*

*Note 2 – As at 31 March 2017 the £191 million included £39 million of MRDF debt and as at 30 September 2017 the £187 million included £36 million of MRDF debt so the Wirral element was £152 million and £151 million respectively.*

- 3.27 The in-year contributions to the General Fund in 2017/18 of £2 million follow previous year savings made by Treasury Management.
- 3.28 Borrowing options and the timing of such borrowing will continue to be assessed in conjunction with the Council's treasury advisor.
- 3.29 The Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) remains the Council's preferred source of longer term borrowing given the transparency and control that its facilities continue to provide.
- 3.30 Temporary, short dated loans, predominantly from other local authorities remain affordable and attractive for periods of low cash flow, with rates available between 0.2% and 0.4%.
- 3.31 Other Long-Term Liabilities include the schools Private Finance Initiative (PFI) scheme and finance leases used to purchase vehicles plant and equipment. Under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) these are shown on the Balance Sheet as a Financial Liability and therefore need to be considered within any Treasury Management decision making process.
- 3.32 The Council has not entered into any new lease agreements during 2017/18.
- 3.33 The table shows Council debt at 30 September 2017:

**Table 5: Council Debt at 30 September 2017**

| <b>Debt</b>                               | <b>Balance 31 Mar 17 (£m)</b> | <b>Maturities (£m)</b> | <b>Additions (£m)</b> | <b>Balance 30 Sep 17 (£m)</b> |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b><u>Borrowings</u></b>                  |                               |                        |                       |                               |
| PWLB                                      | (31)                          | 4                      | 0                     | (27)                          |
| Market Loans                              | (158)                         | 0                      | 0                     | (158)                         |
| Temporary Cashflow Loans                  | (28)                          | 243                    | (262)                 | (47)                          |
| Interest Free Loans                       | (2)                           | 0                      | 0                     | (2)                           |
| <b><u>Other Long Term Liabilities</u></b> | (48)                          | 1                      | 0                     | (47)                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>(267)</b>                  | <b>248</b>             | <b>(262)</b>          | <b>(281)</b>                  |

*As noted in point 3.9, the increase in debt is in relation to the use of short term cashflow loans.*

## Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

- 3.34 Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008, the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Department for Communities and Local Government's Guidance (DCLG) on Minimum Revenue Provision, most recently issued in 2012.
- 3.35 The broad aim of the DCLG Guidance is to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant. DCLG prescribe various options to calculate this repayment provision.
- 3.36 The 2017/18 Treasury Management Strategy (Cabinet 20 February 2017) agreed the use of Option 1: Regulatory Method for calculating MRP for assets funded from supported borrowing:
- For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008, and for supported capital expenditure incurred on or after that date, MRP will be determined in accordance with the former regulations that applied on 31st March 2008, incorporating an "Adjustment A" of £11.5 million. (Option 1 in England & Wales).*
- 3.37 The system of local government finance has changed considerably since 2008, when this method of calculation was considered appropriate. Government support for this historic capital expenditure was funded via the Revenue Support Grant. Wirral no longer receives this grant.
- 3.38 This Regulatory Method of calculation is a reducing balance calculation, it that the charge to revenue reduces each year. However, included within the calculation is the use of 'Adjustment A' which in effect is never repaid, meaning there would always be an outstanding liability. The value of Adjustment A for Wirral is £11.5 million.
- 3.39 As the Council is free to determine its own calculation method for a prudent provision, it is now proposed that it would be appropriate, reasonable and affordable to amend this calculation to ensure that the historic liability is repaid entirely.
- 3.40 The 2016/17 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report (Cabinet 7 November 2017) amended the MRP policy in respect of 'unsupported' Capital expenditure, resulting in a one-off in year saving of £7 million as well as ongoing savings. This was achieved by adopting DCLG's 'Option 3: Asset Life' method of calculation, specifically a sub-option of Option 3 which is the "Annuity Method".

- 3.41 At the time of revising the MRP policy in respect of ‘unsupported capital expenditure’ last year, a change in respect of the Council’s historic ‘supported borrowing’ element of the MRP policy was not deemed possible. There were a number of technical issues regarding the identification of historic records and development of rationale to support the revised policy which required resolving. Further work and in depth analysis undertaken during the year has led to a solution that can be applied to his area resulting in the proposal to modify the calculation method.
- 3.42 The “Annuity Method”, as applied to the ‘unsupported borrowing, MRP, produces a profile of principal repayments which starts low and increases each year reflecting the time value of money i.e. £1 in year 1 will have more purchasing power than to £1 in year 10. Adoption of this method would release a one off amount £4.1 million in 2017/18 for MRP. There would also be an ongoing saving in future years on a reducing basis which would be £3.8 million in 2018/19 before gradually rising to above the current repayment schedule in approximately 18 years’ time. To be clear this recalculation does not reduce the totally liability, it re-profiles the repayments made from revenue. Appendix 3 illustrates the revised MRP repayment schedule (subject to ratification).
- 3.43 A number of authorities including others on Merseyside are currently calculating MRP using both methods within Option 3 for their historic, supported borrowing.

## **REGULATORY UPDATES**

### Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II)

- 3.44 Local authorities are currently treated by regulated financial services firms as professional clients. But from 3 January 2018, as a result of the second Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II), local authorities will be treated as retail clients who can “opt up” to be professional clients, providing that they meet certain criteria.
- 3.45 The main additional protection for retail clients is a duty on the firm to ensure that the investment is “suitable” for the client. However, local authorities are not protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme nor are they eligible to complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service whether they are retail or professional clients. It is also likely that retail clients will face an increased cost and potentially restricted access to certain products including money market funds, pooled funds, treasury bills, bonds, shares and to financial advice. The Authority has declined to opt down to retail client status in the past as the costs were thought to outweigh the benefits.



- 3.46 The Authority meets the conditions to opt up to professional status and intends to do so in order to maintain their current MiFID status. Indications from our Treasury Advisors is that the vast majority of Councils will also be choosing to opt for Professional status.

#### CIPFA Consultation on Prudential and Treasury Management Codes

- 3.47 CIPFA canvassed views on the relevance, adoption and practical application of the Treasury Management and Prudential Codes, with a deadline for responses of 30 September 2017 which the Council complied with.
- 3.48 The proposed changes to the Prudential Code include the production of a new high-level Capital Strategy report to full Council which will cover the basics of the Capital Programme and Treasury Management. There would be a requirement to demonstrate to Council that capital decisions are taken in line with service objectives. Property acquisition and investment is an area which CIPFA has identified as requiring tighter guidelines and increased governance requirements to ensure secure stewardship of public funds, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. These principles should not be neglected for pure commercialisation.
- 3.49 Amongst the proposed changes to the Treasury Management Code is the potential for non-treasury investments such as commercial investments in properties to be included in the definition of “investments” as well as loans made or shares brought for service purposes.
- 3.50 CIPFA intends to publish the two revised Codes towards the end of 2017 for implementation in 2018/19, although CIPFA plans to put transitional arrangements in place for reports that are required to be approved before the start of the 2018/19 financial year. The DCLG and CIPFA wish to have a more rigorous framework in place for the treatment of commercial investments as soon as is practical.

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

- 3.51 The introduction of the Prudential Code in 2004 gave Local Authorities greater freedom in making capital strategy decisions. The prudential indicators allow the Council to establish prudence and affordability within the Capital Strategy. The indicators as shown in Appendix 2 demonstrate that the treasury management decisions are in line with the Strategy, being prudent and affordable.

#### **AUTHORISED SIGNATORY LIST**

- 3.52 Since the Treasury Management Strategy Statement was approved in February 2017 the Director of Finance & Investments and a Senior Manager for Income Strategy & Policy have been appointed. In light of these additions it is recommended that the Authorised Signatory List be amended to include these officers (Appendix 4).

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 In the financial year 2017/18 proactive treasury management activities are estimated to produce a saving of £6.1 million. This includes £2 million of one-off benefits which has been reflected in the Revenue Monitoring Report for Quarter 2. There is a further £4.1 million from the adoption of the Annuity method for calculating MRP as outlined above which is subject to the approval of Council. And., if approved, will be reflected in the Revenue Monitoring Report for Quarter 3.

4.2 The level of capital debt has reduced to £186.6 million, a decrease of £77.7 million since 2012, despite additional annual capital commitments. This has also contributed to the generation of substantial savings.

4.3 Investment income has also helped to generate resources for service delivery.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council's has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. This requires the annual production of Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the reporting of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The Council is responsible for treasury decisions and activity and none of these decisions are without risk. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are important and the main risks are:-

- Liquidity Risk (Inadequate cash resources).
- Market or Interest Rate Risk (Fluctuations in interest rate levels).
- Inflation Risk (Exposure to inflation).
- Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of investments).
- Refinancing Risk (Impact of debt maturing in future years).
- Legal and Regulatory Risk.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 There has been no specific consultation with regards to this report.

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Sarah Cox  
Principal Accountant  
Telephone 0151 666 3421  
email: sarahcox@wirral.gov.uk

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Economic Background  
Appendix 2 Prudential Indicators 2017/18  
Appendix 3 Minimum Revenue Provision – Revised Repayment Schedule  
Appendix 4 Authorised Signatories

## **SUBJECT HISTORY**

| <b>Meeting</b>                                 | <b>Date</b>      |
|--|------------------|
| Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2017-18 | 20 February 2017 |
| Treasury Management Annual Report 2016-17      | 26 June 2017     |

## **ECONOMIC BACKGROUND**

### **Growth and Inflation**

UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) index rose in August to 2.9%, its highest since June 2013 as the fall in the value of sterling following the June 2016 EU referendum result continued to feed through into higher import prices. The new inflation measure CPIH, which includes owner occupiers' housing costs, was at 2.7%.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.3%, the lowest since May 1975, but pressure on consumers intensified as average earnings grew at 2.5%, below the rate of inflation. With the UK economy being predominantly consumer driven, the strength of consumer spending remains vital to growth. However with household savings falling and real wage growth negative, there are concerns that these will be a constraint on economic activity in the second half of 2017.

Whilst the economic growth consequences of leaving the European Union remain speculative, there is uniformity in expectations that uncertainty over the UK's future trade relations with the EU and the rest of the world will weigh on economic activity and business investment, constrain investment intentions and tighten credit availability, which would result in lower activity. These effects are expected to stifle economic growth in 2017.

### **Monetary Policy**

The Bank of England made no change to monetary policy at its meetings in the first half of the financial year. The vote to keep Bank Rate at 0.25% narrowed to 5-3 in June highlighting that some MPC members were more concerned about rising inflation than the risks to growth. Although at September's meeting the Committee voted 7-2 in favour of keeping Bank Rate unchanged, the MPC changed their rhetoric, implying a rise in Bank Rate in "the coming months". The Council's treasury advisor Arlingclose is not convinced the UK's economic outlook justifies such a move at this stage, but the Bank's interpretation of the data seems to have shifted.

In the face of a struggling economy and Brexit-related uncertainty, Arlingclose expects the Bank of England to take only a very measured approach to any monetary policy tightening; any increase will be gradual and limited as the interest rate backdrop will have to provide substantial support to the UK economy through the Brexit transition.

## **Market Reaction**

The UK government issues bonds to raise funding, these bonds are known as 'Gilts'. The pricing of Gilts depends on market opinion on areas such as interest rate expectation and investors perception of the condition of the economy.

With the Bank of England seemingly edging towards an interest rate rise in the near future, Gilt yields have been accordingly affected. This was exemplified by the yield on 5-year gilts, which rose to 0.80% by the end of September (It had been as low as 0.35% in mid-June).

## PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2017/18

## (a) Net Debt and Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) Indicator

The CFR measures the underlying need to borrow money to finance capital expenditure. The Prudential Code stipulates that net debt (debt net of investments) should not, except in the short term, exceed the CFR for the previous year plus the estimated additional CFR requirement for the current and next two financial years.

|  | £m         |
|--|------------|
| CFR in previous year (2016/17 actual)    | 332        |
| Increase in CFR in 2017/18 (estimate)    | 22         |
| No increase in CFR in 2018/19 (estimate) | 0          |
| Increase in CFR in 2019/20 (estimate)    | 2          |
| <b>Accumulative CFR</b>                  | <b>356</b> |

Net Debt does not exceed the CFR and it is not expected to in the future. This is a key indicator of prudence

## (b) Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

The Operational Boundary for External Debt is based on the Authority's estimate of most likely, i.e. prudent, but not worst case scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Authority's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities comprise finance leases and the Private Finance Initiative that are not borrowing but form part of the Authority's debt.

The Authorised Limit for External Debt is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Authority can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements.

There were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during the first half of 2017/18.

|                                | Operational<br>Boundary<br>(Approved)<br>2017/18<br>£m | Authorised Limit<br>(Approved)<br>2017/18<br>£m | <b>Actual<br/>External Debt<br/>30/09/2017<br/>£m</b> |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Borrowing                      | 424  | 469   | 234   |
| Other Long-term<br>Liabilities | 58   | 63  | 47  |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>482</b>   | <b>532</b>                                      | <b>281</b>  |

**(c) Upper Limits for Fixed and Variable Interest Rate Exposure**

These allow the Council to manage the extent to which it is exposed to changes in interest rates. The upper limit for variable rate exposure allows for the use of variable rate debt to offset exposure to changes in short-term rates on the portfolio of investments.

| <b>Interest Rate Exposure</b>     | <b>Fixed Rate of Interest</b> | <b>Variable Rate of Interest</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Borrowings</b>                 | £234m                         | £0m                              | <b>£234m</b> |
| Proportion of Borrowings          | 100%                          | 0%                               | <b>100%</b>  |
| Upper Limit                       | 100%                          | 100%                             |              |
| <b>Investments</b>                | £24m                          | £26m                             | <b>£50m</b>  |
| Proportion of Investments         | 48%                           | 52%                              | <b>100%</b>  |
| Upper Limit                       | 100%                          | 100%                             |              |
| <b>Net Borrowing</b>              | <b>£210m</b>                  | <b>£-26m</b>                     | <b>£184m</b> |
| Proportion of Total Net Borrowing | 114%                          | -14%                             | <b>100%</b>  |

**(d) Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing**

This indicator is to limit large concentrations of fixed rate debt needing to be replaced at times of uncertainty over interest rates.

| <b>Maturity Structure of Fixed Rate Borrowing</b> | <b>Upper Limit</b> | <b>Lower Limit</b> | <b>Actual Fixed Rate Borrowing as at 30 Sep 17</b> | <b>% of Fixed Rate Borrowing as at 30 Sep 17</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--|--|
|   | <b>%</b>           | <b>%</b>           | <b>£m</b>  | <b>%</b>   |
| Under 12 Months                                   | 80.0               | 0.0                | 58.2   | 24.9   |
| 12 Months and within 24 Months                    | 50.0               | 0.0                | 2.7  | 1.2  |
| 24 Months and within 5 years                      | 50.0               | 0.0                | 21.1   | 9.0  |
| 5 years and within 10 years                       | 50.0               | 0.0                | 20.5   | 8.8  |
| Over 10 years                                     | 100.0              | 20.0               | 131.0  | 56.1   |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |                    |                    | <b>233.5</b>                                       | <b>100.0</b>                                     |

**(e) Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days**

This indicator allows the Council to manage the risk inherent in investments longer than 364 days and for 2017/18 the limit was set at £60 million.

As at 30 September 2017 the Council had no investments longer than 364 days.

### Minimum Revenue Provision – Revised Repayment Schedule

| Wirral Council                  |                        |                    |                       |             |                   |             |                         |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Supported Borrowing CFR and MRP |                        |                    |                       |             |                   |             |                         |
| Year                            | Year ending 31st March | Opening CFR        | Regulatory Method MRP | Closing CFR | Annuity based MRP | Closing CFR | Regulatory over Annuity |
|                                 |                        | Adjustment A - --> | £11,478,000           |             |                   |             |                         |
|                                 |                        |                    | 4%                    |             | 2.000%            | 45.0        |                         |
|                                 |                        | £                  | £                     | £           | £                 | £           | £                       |
| 1                               | 2018                   | 174,965,024        | 6,539,481             | 168,425,543 | 2,433,696         | 172,531,328 | 4,105,785               |
| 2                               | 2019                   | 168,425,543        | 6,277,902             | 162,147,641 | 2,482,370         | 170,048,957 | 3,795,531               |
| 3                               | 2020                   | 162,147,641        | 6,026,786             | 156,120,856 | 2,532,018         | 167,516,940 | 3,494,768               |
| 4                               | 2021                   | 156,120,856        | 5,785,714             | 150,335,141 | 2,582,658         | 164,934,282 | 3,203,056               |
| 5                               | 2022                   | 150,335,141        | 5,554,286             | 144,780,856 | 2,634,311         | 162,299,971 | 2,919,974               |
| 6                               | 2023                   | 144,780,856        | 5,332,114             | 139,448,742 | 2,686,997         | 159,612,973 | 2,645,117               |
| 7                               | 2024                   | 139,448,742        | 5,118,830             | 134,329,912 | 2,740,737         | 156,872,236 | 2,378,092               |
| 8                               | 2025                   | 134,329,912        | 4,914,076             | 129,415,835 | 2,795,552         | 154,076,684 | 2,118,524               |
| 9                               | 2026                   | 129,415,835        | 4,717,513             | 124,698,322 | 2,851,463         | 151,225,221 | 1,866,050               |
| 10                              | 2027                   | 124,698,322        | 4,528,813             | 120,169,509 | 2,908,492         | 148,316,728 | 1,620,321               |
| 11                              | 2028                   | 120,169,509        | 4,347,660             | 115,821,849 | 2,966,662         | 145,350,066 | 1,380,998               |
| 12                              | 2029                   | 115,821,849        | 4,173,754             | 111,648,095 | 3,025,995         | 142,324,071 | 1,147,758               |
| 13                              | 2030                   | 111,648,095        | 4,006,804             | 107,641,291 | 3,086,515         | 139,237,555 | 920,288                 |
| 14                              | 2031                   | 107,641,291        | 3,846,532             | 103,794,759 | 3,148,246         | 136,089,310 | 698,286                 |
| 15                              | 2032                   | 103,794,759        | 3,692,670             | 100,102,089 | 3,211,211         | 132,878,099 | 481,460                 |
| 16                              | 2033                   | 100,102,089        | 3,544,964             | 96,557,125  | 3,275,435         | 129,602,664 | 269,529                 |
| 17                              | 2034                   | 96,557,125         | 3,403,165             | 93,153,960  | 3,340,944         | 126,261,721 | 62,222                  |
| 18                              | 2035                   | 93,153,960         | 3,267,038             | 89,886,922  | 3,407,762         | 122,853,958 | -140,724                |
| 19                              | 2036                   | 89,886,922         | 3,136,357             | 86,750,565  | 3,475,918         | 119,378,041 | -339,561                |
| 20                              | 2037                   | 86,750,565         | 3,010,903             | 83,739,663  | 3,545,436         | 115,832,605 | -534,533                |
| 21                              | 2038                   | 83,739,663         | 2,890,467             | 80,849,196  | 3,616,345         | 112,216,260 | -725,878                |
| 22                              | 2039                   | 80,849,196         | 2,774,848             | 78,074,348  | 3,688,672         | 108,527,588 | -913,824                |
| 23                              | 2040                   | 78,074,348         | 2,663,854             | 75,410,494  | 3,762,445         | 104,765,143 | -1,098,591              |
| 24                              | 2041                   | 75,410,494         | 2,557,300             | 72,853,194  | 3,837,694         | 100,927,449 | -1,280,394              |
| 25                              | 2042                   | 72,853,194         | 2,455,008             | 70,398,187  | 3,914,448         | 97,013,002  | -1,459,440              |
| 26                              | 2043                   | 70,398,187         | 2,356,807             | 68,041,379  | 3,992,737         | 93,020,265  | -1,635,929              |
| 27                              | 2044                   | 68,041,379         | 2,262,535             | 65,778,844  | 4,072,591         | 88,947,673  | -1,810,056              |
| 28                              | 2045                   | 65,778,844         | 2,172,034             | 63,606,810  | 4,154,043         | 84,793,630  | -1,982,010              |
| 29                              | 2046                   | 63,606,810         | 2,085,152             | 61,521,658  | 4,237,124         | 80,556,506  | -2,151,972              |
| 30                              | 2047                   | 61,521,658         | 2,001,746             | 59,519,912  | 4,321,867         | 76,234,639  | -2,320,120              |
| 31                              | 2048                   | 59,519,912         | 1,921,676             | 57,598,235  | 4,408,304         | 71,826,335  | -2,486,628              |
| 32                              | 2049                   | 57,598,235         | 1,844,809             | 55,753,426  | 4,496,470         | 67,329,865  | -2,651,661              |
| 33                              | 2050                   | 55,753,426         | 1,771,017             | 53,982,409  | 4,586,399         | 62,743,466  | -2,815,382              |
| 34                              | 2051                   | 53,982,409         | 1,700,176             | 52,282,232  | 4,678,127         | 58,065,338  | -2,977,951              |
| 35                              | 2052                   | 52,282,232         | 1,632,169             | 50,650,063  | 4,771,690         | 53,293,648  | -3,139,521              |
| 36                              | 2053                   | 50,650,063         | 1,566,883             | 49,083,181  | 4,867,124         | 48,426,524  | -3,300,241              |
| 37                              | 2054                   | 49,083,181         | 1,504,207             | 47,578,973  | 4,964,466         | 43,462,058  | -3,460,259              |
| 38                              | 2055                   | 47,578,973         | 1,444,039             | 46,134,934  | 5,063,756         | 38,398,302  | -3,619,717              |
| 39                              | 2056                   | 46,134,934         | 1,386,277             | 44,748,657  | 5,165,031         | 33,233,272  | -3,778,753              |
| 40                              | 2057                   | 44,748,657         | 1,330,826             | 43,417,831  | 5,268,331         | 27,964,940  | -3,937,505              |
| 41                              | 2058                   | 43,417,831         | 1,277,593             | 42,140,237  | 5,373,698         | 22,591,242  | -4,096,105              |
| 42                              | 2059                   | 42,140,237         | 1,226,489             | 40,913,748  | 5,481,172         | 17,110,070  | -4,254,682              |
| 43                              | 2060                   | 40,913,748         | 1,177,430             | 39,736,318  | 5,590,795         | 11,519,275  | -4,413,365              |
| 44                              | 2061                   | 39,736,318         | 1,130,333             | 38,605,985  | 5,702,611         | 5,816,664   | -4,572,279              |
| 45                              | 2062                   | 38,605,985         | 1,085,119             | 37,520,866  | 5,816,664         | 0           | -4,731,544              |
| 46                              | 2063                   | 37,520,866         | 1,041,715             | 36,479,151  |                   |             |                         |
| 47                              | 2064                   | 36,479,151         | 1,000,046             | 35,479,105  |                   |             |                         |
| 48                              | 2065                   | 35,479,105         | 960,044               | 34,519,061  |                   |             |                         |
| 49                              | 2066                   | 34,519,061         | 921,642               | 33,597,419  |                   |             |                         |
| 50                              | 2067                   | 33,597,419         | 884,777               | 32,712,642  |                   |             |                         |
|                                 |                        |                    | 142,252,382           |             | 174,965,024       |             | -37,520,866             |



Factors to Consider:

| Positive  | Negative  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prudently repays all remaining Supported Borrowing CFR after 45 years</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a reducing saving figure in years 1 to 17, compared to the existing MRP payment profile. From Year 18 there will be an increase in the charge to revenue, again in comparison to the existing repayment profile.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calculation based on Asset Register data which has gone through audit scrutiny</li> </ul>              |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual MRP increase will partly be lessened by the effect of future inflation</li> </ul>               |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annuity Method mirrors the agreed approach taken in respect of Unsupported Borrowing.</li> </ul>       |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers substantial in year savings in early years which continues but lessens until Year 17</li> </ul> |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Annuity Rate applied matches the Bank Of England (BOE) rate of inflation target</li> </ul>         |   |

**AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

The following officers are authorised to make payments, either via the Council's online banking system or by signing cheques, and issue other instructions relating to Treasury Management transactions on behalf of Wirral Borough Council:

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Assistant Director : Finance       | Tom Sault   |
| Senior Finance Manager             | Peter J. Molyneux   |
| Senior Finance Manager             | Jenny Spick   |
| Senior Finance Manager             | Andrew Roberts  |
| Senior Finance Manager             | Peter McCann  |
| Director for Finance & Investments | Shaer Halewood<br>(On commencement of employment with Wirral) |

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION FORM

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**KEY DECISION:** YES

**PORTFOLIO AREA:** HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED:** HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL WARDS

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**SUBJECT:** *Statutory Register of Brownfield Land*

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### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1.) That the Assistant Director of Environmental Services is authorised to prepare, maintain and publish a statutory Brownfield Land Register of previously developed land suitable for housing development in accordance with the relevant national legislation.
- (2.) That the sites listed in Appendix 1 and shown in Appendix 2 to this report are published for public consultation and that any responses are taken into account by the Assistant Director of Environmental Services before formally entering the land in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register for Wirral and making the Register available for public inspection on the Council's website and at the principal office of the Local Planning Authority.
- (3.) That following the inclusion of sites in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register, Planning Committee determines which sites should be allocated for residential development, subject to the procedures set out in national legislation, before entering land in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register.
- (4.) That the Brownfield Land Register be reviewed by Planning Committee at least every 12 months, in line with the requirements set out in national legislation and that during this review, any additional sites which meet the criteria for inclusion in Part 1 and where relevant Part 2 are added and sites that have been developed or which are no longer suitable are removed.

- (5.) That this report is referred to Planning Committee for noting.
- (6.) That Council is recommended to make the necessary amendments to the delegated powers for Planning Committee and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services in the Council's Constitution to reflect the new requirements set out in recommendations 1, 3 and 4 above.

**2. REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

To comply with the legal and procedural requirements in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.

The Brownfield Land Register will also demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to support regeneration and contribute to meeting the Borough's housing needs on previously developed sites.

**3. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE**

The report has been prepared with the approval of the Assistant Director Law and Governance and the Assistant Director Finance

**4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Signed:</b> <i>George Davies</i></p> <p><b>Executive Member:</b></p> <p><b>Date:</b> <i>6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2017</i></p> <p><b>Also present:</b></p> | <p><b>Signed:</b> <i>David Ball</i></p> <p><b>Chief Officer:</b> <i>AD Environmental Services,</i></p> <p><b>Date:</b></p> <p><i>6 October 2017</i></p> |
|---|---|

**A list of background papers on this issue is held with:**

Contact Officer:

Eddie Fleming, Principal Planning Officer 0151 691 8129

Date: 3 October 2017

**Date of Publication:**

**Date of Expiry of Call-In Period:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES</b></p> <p>CABINET MEMBER FOR<br/>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY<br/>SAFETY AND DEPUTY LEADER<br/>OF THE COUNCIL</p> | <p><b>DELEGATED REPORT</b></p> <p><b>STATUTORY REGISTER OF<br/>BROWNFIELD LAND</b></p> |
|--|--|

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

The Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 require the Local Planning Authority to prepare and maintain a statutory register of previously developed land within Wirral in two parts.

Part 1 of the Register is to include land with an area of at least 0.25 hectares or capable of supporting 5 or more dwellings, which is suitable, available and achievable for new housing development.

Part 2 of the Register is to include sites taken from Part 1 where permission in principle would be granted by the Town & Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 for a range of dwellings to be specified by the Local Planning Authority, subject to the further submission and approval of technical details consent.

Details of the potential sites for inclusion in Part 1 of the Register are appended to this report for approval for public consultation. Following the approval of the list of sites to be included in Part 1, Planning Committee will need to decide whether to allocate land for residential development in Part 2 of the Register, after statutory procedures and consultation have been carried out.

The Register must, this year, be published by no later than Friday 22 December 2017 and must thereafter be subject to at least annual review.

Identification of sites on the Brownfield Land Register could help to support the delivery of good quality housing in line with the Wirral Plan, which sets the objective of building 3,500 new homes by 2020.

The decision is a key decision as it could affect all Wards within the Borough.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1. That the Assistant Director of Environmental Services is authorised to prepare, maintain and publish a statutory Brownfield Land Register of previously developed land suitable for housing development in accordance with the relevant national legislation.**
- 2. That the sites listed in Appendix 1 and shown in Appendix 2 to this report are published for public consultation and that any responses are taken into account by the Assistant Director of Environmental Services before formally entering the land in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register for Wirral and making the Register**

available for public inspection on the Council's website and at the principal office of the Local Planning Authority.

3. That following the inclusion of sites in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register, Planning Committee determines which sites should be allocated for residential development, subject to the procedures set out in national legislation, before entering land in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register.
4. That the Brownfield Land Register be reviewed by Planning Committee at least every 12 months, in line with the requirements set out in national legislation and that during this review, any additional sites which meet the criteria for inclusion in Part 1 and where relevant Part 2 are added and sites that have been developed or which are no longer suitable are removed.
5. That this report is referred to Planning Committee for noting.
6. That Council is recommended to make the necessary amendments to the delegated powers for Planning Committee and the Assistant Director of Environmental Services in the Council's Constitution to reflect the new requirements set out in recommendations 1, 3 and 4 above.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 To comply with the legal and procedural requirements in the Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.
- 1.2 The Brownfield Land Register will also demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to support regeneration and contribute to meeting the Borough's housing needs on previously developed sites.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Not preparing an up-to-date Brownfield Land Register would contravene a legal duty introduced by section 151 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and enacted through the Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 National regulations introduced under Section 151 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 now require each local planning authority to prepare, maintain and publish a statutory Brownfield Land Register by 31 December 2017, to provide information on previously developed land that would be suitable, available and achievable for new housing development as defined in national regulations.
- 3.2 The definition of 'previously developed land' is currently as set out in Annex 2: Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012).
- 3.3 'Suitable' means the land has been allocated in a development plan, has obtained planning permission or permission in principle for residential development or is "in the opinion of the local planning authority, appropriate for residential development", having regard to any adverse impact on the natural environment, the local built environment and local amenity (Regulation 4(2) refers).
- 3.4 'Available' means that the relevant owner has expressed an intention to sell or develop the land; a developer has expressed an interest to develop the land; and there is no evidence indicating a change to those intentions or "in the opinion of the local authority there are no issues relating to the ownership of the land or other legal impediments which might prevent residential development of the land taking place" (Regulation 4(2) refers).
- 3.5 'Achievable' means that "in the opinion of the local planning authority, the development is likely to take place within 15 years" of the date the site was entered on the Register (Regulation 4(2) refers).
- 3.6 Decisions must be made having regard to publicly available information and any relevant representations received (Regulation 4(2) refers).
- 3.7 The Register must have two parts (Regulation 3(4) refers). Part 1 of the Register must contain suitable, available and achievable sites with an area of at least 0.25 hectares or which are capable of supporting at least 5 dwellings (Regulation 4(1) refers). There

is no requirement for public consultation before entering land in Part 1 of the Register (Regulation 5(6) refers), but it is recommended that consultation is undertaken on the sites which are proposed for inclusion in the first publication of the Brownfield Land Register (paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2 later in this report refer).

- 3.8 Part 2 of the Register must contain the sites from Part 1 that the local planning authority has decided to allocate for residential development, where permission in principle would be granted by virtue of Article 4 in the Town & Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017, subject to a further application for technical details consent being determined within 5 years.
- 3.9 Sites can only be entered in Part 2 having followed the procedures for publicity, consultation and notification set out in Regulations 6 to 13, subject to the exemptions for certain types of land set out in Regulation 14, which include development which may be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 3.10 Planning conditions and obligations can only be applied at the technical details stage, when matters of detailed design and infrastructure requirements can be considered. The Local Planning Authority can, however, choose to provide additional information on what they expect to see as part of an application for technical details consent when deciding to enter a site in Part 2 of the Register.
- 3.11 Cabinet initially considered a proposal to establish a brownfield register on 10 September 2015 ([Minute 48 refers](#)) and resolved that the register and any related development consents should be reviewed and determined by Planning Committee. That report predated the issuing of the 2017 Regulations. It is however, still considered appropriate that following public consultation on the initial list of sites now proposed to be included in Part 1 of the new statutory Register (attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this report), that the Brownfield Land Register for Wirral becomes the formal responsibility of Planning Committee.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council received a new burdens grant payment of £14,645 in March 2017. Further grant payments are planned for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 but the amount of funding will be kept under review from 2016/17 onwards.
- 4.2 No fee is payable to the Council for entering a site in either Part of the Register. There could therefore be a consequential reduction in the income from planning fees for sites included in Part 2 of the Register, if fewer outline planning applications are submitted.
- 4.3 Additional funding may be required for the Council to resolve any unexpected environmental constraints, including statutory screening appraisals for Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment, if required, before a particular site could be entered into Part 2 of the Register.
- 4.4 The land value of sites in Part 2 of the Register could increase, as the risk to developers would be reduced through the grant of permission in principle for a fixed range in the number of dwellings.



4.5 The fee payable to the Council for an application for technical details consent for sites granted permission in principle through Part 2 of the Register is still to be defined through future legislation, which has not yet been published.

## **5.0 LEGAL**

5.1 There is a statutory requirement to prepare, maintain and publish a Brownfield Land Register by 31 December 2017 under Regulation 3 of Town & Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. In order to meet this requirement the Register must be published no later than Friday 22 December 2017, due to the closure of Council offices over Christmas

5.2 The Register must contain the information specified in Schedule 2 of the Regulations and must be kept available for public inspection at the principal office of the local planning authority.

5.3 The entries in the Register must be reviewed at least every 12 months, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 17.

5.4 Sites can be included in Part 1 if suitable, available and achievable for new housing development (within the terms of Regulation 4)

5.5 Sites can, however, only be included in Part 2 if identified in Part 1 and representations following statutory publicity and consultation have been taken into account (within the terms of Regulation 5).

5.6 The decision to enter a site in Part 2 of the Register must be made in accordance with the local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Sites where development is likely to have a significant environmental impact or significant effect on a qualifying European nature conservation site must not be included (within the terms of Regulation 14).

5.7 Any permission in principle granted by virtue of inclusion in Part 2 will remain valid for 5 years during which development will only be permitted subject to the additional submission and approval of technical details consent.

5.8 Applications for technical details consent must be determined in accordance with the permission in principle.

5.9 Proposals outside the range of development specified in Part 2 of the Register will require a planning application to be submitted, determined in the normal way.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 Entering a site in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register could require the Council to undertake work up front that would previously have been done by landowners and their agents as part of a planning application.

6.2 The preparation, maintenance and review of the Brownfield Land Register can be undertaken by existing staff resources within Forward Planning and IT, subject to the receipt of new burdens grant payments.

- 6.3 Future applications for technical details consent will need to be processed by existing Development Management staff resources, subject to a fee to be set through national regulations.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 Although permission in principle may help to reduce uncertainty for developers, the inability to access finance and generate sufficient development surpluses may still not be addressed. There is therefore a risk that development will still not be delivered, particularly on challenging sites.
- 7.2 Not consulting on the sites to be included in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register could lead to the public not being aware of the initial process that could lead to potential development proposals on sites which could affect the amenity and the character of their area.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Before including land in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register the Regulations allow for procedures, including consultation to be carried out as the Local Planning Authority sees fit and any representations received within such period as the Authority may specify must be taken into account (Regulation 5(6) refers).
- 8.2 It is therefore recommended, in line with the Council's existing requirements for emerging site-specific proposals set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement adopted in March 2014 (SCI, paragraph 3.52, page 16 refers), that the first set of sites set out in Appendix 1 and shown in Appendix 2 are published for public consultation for a period of no less than six weeks and that any representations will be taken into account before entering any of the sites in Part 1 of Brownfield Land Register.
- 8.3 Consultation will include publication on the Council's website, deposit in public libraries, notification to those on the Council's Local Plan database; public notices in the Wirral Globe and Wirral View and notification letters to neighbours immediately adjacent to the specific sites identified in Appendix 1 .
- 8.4 Before the Local Planning Authority includes land in Part 2 of the Brownfield Land Register they must follow the statutory procedures for publicity and notification set out in Regulations 6 to 12, including notification by site notice and publication on the Council's website.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The inclusion of land in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register is unlikely to have any significant equality implications as it will not grant development consent.
- 9.2 Inclusion of land in Part 2 of the Register could have equality implications depending on the nature, scale and potential impact of any future development. Potential impacts would be considered on a case by case basis and decisions must be taken in

accordance with the Council's adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise following statutory consultation.

9.3 Brownfield sites are more likely to be located in deprived areas but the Brownfield Land Register may contribute towards stimulating their development and beneficial use.

9.4 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017/delivery>

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – List of Sites Proposed to be Included in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register.

Appendix 2 – Map of Sites Proposed to be Included in Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Housing and Planning Act 2016 (Section 151) can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/section/151/enacted>

The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/403/made/data.pdf>

The Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 can be viewed at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/402/made/data.pdf>

Brownfield Land Registers Data Standards (July 2017) can be viewed at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/633593/BrownfieldLandRegisters-DataStandard.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633593/BrownfieldLandRegisters-DataStandard.pdf)

National Planning Practice Guidance (July 2017) can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/brownfield-land-registers>

Definition of Previously Developed Land (NPPF, March 2012) can be viewed at [https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory\\_record/444/previously\\_developed\\_land\\_or\\_brownfield\\_land](https://www.planningportal.co.uk/directory_record/444/previously_developed_land_or_brownfield_land)

The Council's existing adopted Statement of Community Involvement (March 2014) can be viewed at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/community-involvement-local-planning/statement>

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

| <b>Council Meeting</b>   | <b>Date</b>                   |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Cabinet: Building More Housing on Brownfield Land                                    | 10 September 2015 (Minute 48) |
| Planning Committee: Building More Housing on Brownfield Land (referral from Cabinet) | 21 October 2015 (Minute 99)   |

## EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION FORM

### DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**KEY DECISION:** YES

**PORTFOLIO AREA:** HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY;  
AND ENVIRONMENT

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED:** HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL WARDS

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**SUBJECT:** *Revised Playing Pitch Strategy for Wirral*

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### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet Member is requested to:

- (1) Approve the findings of the Assessment Report and Strategy and Action Plan attached to the report; and
- (2) Recommend to Council the adoption of the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in other decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts; and
- (3) Request officers to publish the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan on the Council's website, to further inform the Council's review of options for the Core Strategy Local Plan.

### 2. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To adopt an updated strategy for the provision and improvement of playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens, based on the latest information on use and demand, to meet the requirements of national policy and guidance

### 3. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The report has been prepared with the approval of the Assistant Director Law and Governance; Assistant Director Finance; Acting Director of Strategy and Partnerships; Strategic Commissioner for the Environment; Interim Assistant

Director Community Services; and the Senior Manager for Parks, Coast and Countryside.

#### 4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Signed:</b> <i>George James</i><br><b>Executive Member:</b><br><b>Date:</b> <i>23rd OCTOBER 2017</i><br><b>Also present:</b> | <b>Signed:</b> <i>Mark Smith</i><br><b>Chief Officer:</b> <b>MARK SMITH</b><br><b>Date:</b> <i>23rd October 2017.</i> |
|---|---|

**A list of background papers on this issue is held with:**

Contact Officer:

Andrew Fraser, Forward Planning Manager 0151 691 8218

Date: 27 September 2017

**Date of Publication:**

**Date of Expiry of Call-In Period:**

**COUNCILLOR GEORGE  
DAVIES**

CABINET MEMBER FOR  
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY  
SAFETY AND DEPUTY LEADER  
OF THE COUNCIL

**DELEGATED REPORT**

**REVISED PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY  
FOR WIRRAL**

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

National planning policy requires the Council to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy to provide background evidence on the use and demand for playing pitches; to guide decision-making; promote investment to improve their quality and quantity; and inform protection through the land-use planning system.

The Strategy must be prepared in line with a national methodology published by Sport England, the statutory consultation body for planning applications involving playing pitches.

The Council's previous Playing Pitch Strategy was approved in 2004. A revised Strategy has now been prepared based on the latest survey information for pitch sports, tennis courts and bowling greens, with the full involvement of the relevant Governing Bodies and Sport England.

The Strategy is in two parts: an Assessment Report, setting out the latest background information for each sport; and a Strategy and Action Plan, setting out a series of initial recommendations for further consideration by a Steering Group, which will be chaired by the Council's Strategic Hub.

The Strategy shows that there is still strong and increasing demand for the use of a full range of facilities. There is a particular shortage of football pitches across the Borough, as well as more localised shortfalls for cricket and rugby union and growing demand for hockey. Demand for bowls and tennis is currently being met, although qualitative improvements for tennis will be required in the future.

The Strategy goes on to conclude that there is a need to protect levels of provision; improve quality where possible, to create additional capacity; and, if viable, create access to school sites or bring some disused sites back into use, if the needs identified are to be fully met.

The revised Strategy will support Wirral Plan pledges related to leisure opportunities for all; helping residents to live healthier; and will contribute towards an attractive local environment; and delivers one of the agreed actions of the Wirral Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

The Strategy will provide essential evidence for the Council's emerging Local Plan; can be used to support bids by the Council and by individual clubs and teams for additional resources for the improvement of local facilities; and will be used to secure contributions from developers in relevant planning applications.

This report therefore recommends that the findings of the revised Strategy are approved and that Council is recommended to adopt the revised Strategy as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in other decisions taken under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

A summary of the area-based findings are attached at Appendix 1 to this report and Ward and site-specific information is set out in both the Assessment Report (provided at Appendix 2 to this report) and the Strategy and Action Plan (provided at Appendix 3 to this report).

The recommendations are a key decision because the Strategy will have Borough wide implications and will be a significant consideration when finalising the Council's Local Plan and when determining planning applications with implications for playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Cabinet Member is requested to:**

- (1) Approve the findings of the Assessment Report and Strategy and Action Plan attached to this report; and**
- (2) Recommend to Council the adoption of the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and in other decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts; and**
- (3) Request officers to publish the Assessment Report and the accompanying Strategy and Action Plan on the Council's website, to further inform the Council's review of options for the Core Strategy Local Plan.**



## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To adopt an updated strategy for the provision and improvement of playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens, based on the latest information on use and demand, to meet the requirements of national policy and guidance.

### 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There are no realistic alternative options.
- 2.2 A failure to prepare and approve an up-to-date playing pitch strategy would limit the Council's ability to protect playing fields, bowling greens and tennis courts from development; to secure external funding for improved or replacement facilities; and to meet the requirements of national planning policy.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The protection of sports facilities is a national priority.

- 3.2 National planning policy states that:

*“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required”* (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 73 refers).

- 3.3 NPPF Paragraph 74 also states that:

*“Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:*

- *an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or*
- *the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”*

- 3.4 The Council last prepared a Playing Pitch Strategy for the Borough in 2004 (Cabinet, 21 April 2004, Minute 640).

- 3.5 The revised Strategy for Wirral has been prepared in accordance with national guidance, which was last revised by Sport England in October 2013.

- 3.6 The revised Strategy, attached to this report, comprises an Assessment Report with an associated Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.7 The Assessment Report (provided at Appendix 2 to this report) presents information on the ownership, management, distribution, availability and current use of sports pitches and facilities throughout the Borough. It also sets out an analysis of trends in participation and includes a summary of club consultation and the key issues for each particular sport.
- 3.8 The Strategy and Action Plan (provided at Appendix 3 to this report) sets out a proposed framework for the provision of outdoor sports facilities between 2016 and 2022, which includes a series of site-specific recommendations in the form of a series of initial area-specific action plans, which will be kept under review by a Pitch Strategy Steering Group chaired by the Council's Strategic Hub.
- 3.9 A summary of the area-based findings of the Strategy, for each sport, is provided at Appendix 1 to this report. The general conclusion is that the provision of sports pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens should be managed to accommodate demand; and improvements to quality and capacity should, where possible, be sought and secured.
- 3.10 The formal adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy will enable facility providers, including the Council and voluntary sector, and grant funding agencies to identify and verify appropriate local priorities and will help the Council and other sports providers and users to secure additional funding to support improvements to the existing range of facilities. It will also allow the Council to secure appropriate contributions from developers in relevant planning applications.
- 3.11 Cabinet on 27 February 2017 (Minute 96), as part of the Council's review of options for the Core Strategy Local Plan, resolved that the future designation of existing open spaces is not determined until the Playing Pitch Strategy has been completed and approved. It is therefore recommended that the approved Playing Pitch Strategy is published on the Council's website, to further inform that review.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The preparation of the Pitch Strategy was authorised and funded from existing resources via the Council's Parks and Countryside Service.
- 4.2 The Strategy will be used by the Council, by Sports Governing Bodies and by individual sports clubs and teams, to support applications to secure additional external funding that would not otherwise be available in the absence of an approved up-to-date strategy.
- 4.3 The Strategy will also enable the Council to secure additional private investment through developer contributions when planning applications are being considered and legal agreements negotiated.
- 4.4 Any further financial commitments arising from the adoption of the Strategy, including projects listed in the initial Action Plan, will need to be further assessed

on a case by case basis and will be reported separately for approval as they arise.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations, including national policy, indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The formal adoption of the Playing Pitch Strategy as a material planning consideration will enable the Strategy to carry significant weight in future planning decisions under the Town and County Planning Acts and as evidence for the Council's emerging Core Strategy Local Plan.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 The Strategy has been prepared by specialist sports consultants Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP), assisted by a Steering Group of Council officers from Parks and Countryside; Asset Management; Sports Development; Physical Education; and Planning; National Governing Bodies; and Sport England; with further information provided by local league representatives and a comprehensive survey of pitch and facility users.
- 6.2 The approval of the Strategy, which has been endorsed by Sport England, should reduce the time and cost involved in the determination of planning applications involving playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts.
- 6.3 The data underlying the preparation of the Strategy will be held and analysed using the Council's ICT facilities.
- 6.4 The Strategy and Action Plan will continue to be monitored by a Steering Group comprising Council officers and representatives of sports Governing Bodies, chaired by the Council's Strategic Hub.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 A failure to adopt an up-to-date Playing Pitch Strategy could prevent both the Council and facility users from securing resources to provide and improve playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens; and would restrict the Council's ability to protect and improve these facilities or secure developer contributions through the statutory land use planning system.
- 7.2 While there is no direct risk to the Council in adopting the Strategy, the Strategy may have implications if the Council needed to dispose of surplus or disused sports facilities on the Council's own sites.
- 7.3 The Strategy will also serve to de-risk future decisions, by enabling the Council to be clear on the likely stance of statutory consultation body Sport England, when the future of sports pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens are being considered, allowing for the more efficient use of Council resources.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Strategy has been prepared with the direct involvement of National Governing Bodies, local league representatives and Sport England, including a survey of pitch and facility users.
- 8.2 The content of the Assessment Report and the Strategy and Action Plan has been approved by the relevant National Governing Bodies and by statutory consultation body Sport England.
- 8.3 The application of the findings from the Strategy will, however, need to be subject to further separate consultation, on a site by site basis, as and when required.
- 8.4 It is recommended that the approved Assessment Report and Strategy and Action Plan is published on the Council's website, to further inform the Council's review of options for the Core Strategy Local Plan.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Strategy and Action Plan should have no negative impacts for staff or service users under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 9.2 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment can be viewed at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017/delivery>

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Map of Analysis Areas & Summary of Findings  
Appendix 2 – Assessment Report (May 2016)  
Appendix 3 – Strategy and Action Plan (August 2016)

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

Sport England's Planning Policy Statement: A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England can be viewed at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-applications/playing-field-land/>

Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance can be viewed at <http://www.sportengland.org/facilities-planning/planning-for-sport/planning-tools-and-guidance/playing-pitch-strategy-guidance/>

The National Planning Policy Framework can be viewed at <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/> (paragraphs 178 to 181 refer)

National Planning Policy Guidance on open space and sports and recreation facilities can be viewed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

| <b>Council Meeting</b>  | <b>Date</b>                     |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Cabinet – Core Strategy Local Plan – Report of Further Consultation on Housing Need and Land Supply | 27 February 2017<br>(Minute 96) |

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## Council – 11 December, 2017

### Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 7(1) and are listed in accordance with Standing Order 7(2).

#### 1. NATIONAL BUDGET *(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Phil Davies

**Seconded** by Councillor Bernie Mooney

At the hands of this Tory Government, and the Coalition before, the people of Wirral have endured the longest period of falling incomes since records began. People are poorer under the Conservatives – and they feel poorer.

Chancellor Philip Hammond had the opportunity to deliver a budget offering real hope and change – and he bungled it.

This budget offered little for families in Wirral. The Chancellor offered little in the way of help to the least well-off: he failed to provide any vision for how, in the face of Brexit, we can hope to kick-start our economy out of its current doldrums. The Chancellor even denied unemployment exists, so little surprise the Tories have no message for those looking to return to work or further their careers.

For local government the story was the same. Less money available while demand rises. Our communities who need our help most are being failed by the Tories as a direct consequence of their broken austerity experiment.

One of the few measures directed at alleviating the financial stresses faced by councils up and down this country was the ability to charge an extra 100% council tax on properties which have been empty for more than two years.

While this may be impactful in central London where absentee overseas landlords sit on thousands of empty properties – this is of little consequence in Wirral. To put this in perspective – while Wirral has been forced to slash £200million from our budgets since 2010, this measure is understood to raise just £12,000 - unlikely to make much of an impact.

Mr Hammond tinkered with the economy when it needs turbo-charging. As his cabinet colleagues currently dither in their half-hearted negotiations on Britain's withdrawal from the EU the chancellor too has shirked his responsibilities. If ever we needed a grand plan and strong leadership that moment is now but instead we have a man whose best idea is to introduce a new rail card for those people who need a home.

Once again it is clear. Only Labour can be trusted to act in the best interests of the people of Wirral.

Council agrees to write to Wirral's 4 MPs and ask them to arrange a meeting with the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him to look again at the issues facing local authorities up and down the country, including Wirral, and to take immediate action to avert the national crisis in children's social care by providing adequate funding and make serious and real interventions to protect the collapsing housing markets with real assistance which will help Wirral residents find suitable housing.

## **2. PREPARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE IMPACT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT**

*(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

**Seconded** by Councillor Alan Brighouse

Council recognises that, at its meeting on 14 December 2015, Council had before it a Notice of Motion entitled 'Investing in our Communities'. This referred to the use of the Capital Receipt expected from the sale of Acre Lane as 'one of the most substantial receipts received since the Borough was created.'

The Notice of Motion referred to the limited resources available to the Constituency Committees.

It suggested that...

*'Cabinet should consider allocating £1m from this asset sale into each Constituency Committee; in line with the 2020 vision and in the spirit of devolution to Constituency Committees, they should be enabled to determine the use of these funds.'*

Council referred the Notice of Motion to the Cabinet of 22 February 2016. Cabinet decided that the Notice of Motion should be considered as part of the review of Neighbourhood Working and the future of the Council's Constituency Committees.

It is clear that limited progress has been made with this 'review' apart from a series of consultative sessions. It is also apparent that the Capital Programme considered by Cabinet (6 Nov 2017, item 10) expects that the Capital Receipt is being utilised:

<http://s03vs-intrcm.core.wcent.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50045804/Capital%20Monitoring%20Q2%202017-18%20Report.pdf>

Council believes that Cabinet should consider and set out how Wirral can deal with the pressures on local services, including school accommodation and health and social facilities should the Acre Lane development proceed. Such considerations can also apply to other major developments and set out how Section 106 and, in future, Community Infrastructure Levies, may be secured and applied.

Consideration has yet, apparently, still to be given to allocating capital and revenue to Constituency Committees so that they can fulfil their role effectively.

Council also requests that Cabinet should consider spending part of the capital receipt on the physical infrastructure of the wider Bromborough and Eastham



community. That consideration should include identifying narrow estate roads where there are limited parking facilities and where grass verges are damaged.

### **3. REDUCING SINGLE USE PLASTIC IN WIRRAL** *(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Pat Cleary

**Seconded** by Councillor Adam Sykes

Council notes that, in the UK, some 2.2 million tonnes of plastic packaging is consumed annually. Only 40% of this is recycled domestically<sup>1</sup>. According to recent research, eight million tons of plastic waste ends up in the world's oceans each year, endangering marine life and entering the food chain<sup>2</sup>. In addition, there is a growing understanding of the risks posed to human health by toxic chemicals present in plastics.

Council also notes that following the introduction of the 5p bag charge in England in 2015, the use of single-use plastic bags dropped by 83% in the first six months.

Council believes that the reduction of single-use plastic would benefit health in Wirral and reduce waste. Council therefore requests the Cabinet to:

1. Develop a robust strategy to ensure Wirral Council phases out single-use plastics (SUP) in its activities within the next two years.
2. Work with partners and other large institutions e.g. the NHS to encourage them in developing similar strategies to reduce SUP.
3. Inform the public of Wirral of the reasons for phasing out SUP and encourage them to switch to alternatives.

#### *Sources*

1. *Wrap. Plastics Market Situation Report, Spring 2016, p9*

2. *Science. Plastic Waste Inputs from Land into the Oceans. Feb 13, 2015.*

### **4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** *(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Anita Leech

**Seconded** by Councillor Janette Williamson

This meeting takes place as the White Ribbon campaign's 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence comes to a close. (December 10th).

The 16 Days campaign has taken place against a background of increased reporting of high profile cases of abuse directed against women, stretching from Hollywood to Westminster, but we must not forget the overwhelming majority of abuse takes place in a domestic environment, often against mothers and their children – and yet we see the Government again targeting the most vulnerable with its failed austerity measures.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the majority of victims of domestic homicides recorded between April 2013 and March 2016 were females (70%).

The ONS also said that the police recorded 1.1 million domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes in the year ending March 2017, while the majority of victims of 454 domestic homicides recorded between April 2013 and March 2016 were females (70%).

However, according to the latest reports many victims of domestic abuse do not see justice.

Now we have a Government which is trying to sneak out measures which will put even more women's lives at risk. It is being reported that the Tory Government is planning to remove refuges and other forms of short-term supported housing from the welfare system. At a point in their lives, when they fear for their safety – and often that of their children – many women will now face even more pressure because the Government is withdrawing key support for them.

According to the reports the Government instead plans to hand money to local councils – but as we have seen before local government is expected to make this cash go further than the Government could manage. According to recent media reports *“the government proposes handing a “ring-fenced” grant to councils for short-term supported housing. However, this does not exclusively cover refuges – it is also aimed at older people, homeless people, offenders, people with mental illnesses and drug addicts”*.

Council recognises local authorities such as Wirral have demonstrated their ability to show great prudence and planning in making ever decreasing funding go much further, but believes it is unacceptable for the Government to place further pressures on local government, placing more women at risk because they are failing to balance their own budget.

Council agrees to write to the Home Secretary to ask her to drop these proposals and take the safety of women in situations of domestic abuse more seriously by providing adequate funding for key issues such as women's refugees and on-going support for women fleeing domestic violence.

## **5. ORGREAVE TRUTH & JUSTICE CAMPAIGN** *(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Christine Spriggs

**Seconded** by Councillor Brian Kenny

This Council is concerned and disappointed by the Home Secretary's rejection on the 31st October, 2016 of an Inquiry into the policing of events at Orgreave.

This Council observes that the Independent Police Commission said in their redacted report released in June 2015 “that there was evidence of excessive violence by police officers, and a false narrative from police exaggerating violence by

miners, perjury by officers giving evidence to prosecute the arrested men, and an apparent cover-up of that perjury by senior officers”.

This Council believes in the light of such statements that the Home Secretary needs to review her decision and ensure that there is a full public inquiry into the events at the Orgreave coking plant on 18th June 1984.

This Council notes that 95 miners were arrested and charged with offences, but were all later acquitted amid claims that police at the time had fabricated evidence.

Council agrees to write to the Home Secretary and ask that she takes into account the opinion of this Council and accepts that there is widespread public concern about events at Orgreave and calls for her to order a public inquiry into them.

## **6. THE UNITED KINGDOM’S HOUSEHOLD DEBT TICKING TIME-BOMB**

*(to be debated)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Adrian Jones

**Seconded** by Councillor Paul Stuart

Council notes that in once prosperous Wirral hardship is increasing, food-banks can scarcely keep up with need, and the government’s withdrawal of central funding is set to significantly increase poverty throughout the Borough.

The Chancellor appears to think that there are no unemployed, more jobs are being created, and the economy is sound. However, in an increasingly low-wage ‘gig economy’ the continuing Tory/LibDem austerity policy continues to increase poverty through wage-depression whilst food-price inflation, housing costs, and increasing travel costs inexorably drive millions of low-income families and individuals (who may be in work or not in work) into unsustainable household debt. Many who are in paid employment earn so little that they qualify for benefits – a transfer payment of funds from the public purse to subsidise a low-wage “austerity” culture. Council notes that the present UK generation still anticipate becoming the first to receive lower life-time earnings than their parents and to be unlikely ever to earn enough to become homeowners.

The rapid expansion of private debt was recognised as early as 2015 when Ian Duncan Smith’s right wing ‘think tank’ warned that household debt had risen by more than £34 billion in less than three years and stood at £1.47 trillion – the highest ever recorded. Almost nine million people were ‘over indebted’ through credit card borrowing, bank overdrafts, and pay-day loans. The IDS findings are vindicated by the JP Morgan Chase Foundation’s research, revealing that as many as fifteen million UK people are now in serious debt just trying to pay their ordinary living bills. The extent of hardship is illustrated in Wirral’s formerly prosperous shopping centres where major retailers are closing to be replaced increasingly by charity shops and pawn-broking businesses, and by the dependency of so many people (including many who are in paid employment) on charities and food banks.

Council agrees to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and ask him to recognise the growing problem of household debt on the poorest families on Wirral and to reconsider his welfare policies.

## **7. ECONOMIC VIABILITY ASSESSMENTS FROM DEVELOPERS** *(the Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Stuart Kelly

**Seconded** by Councillor Chris Carubia

This Council recognises the pressing need to provide quality homes which are affordable to those on low and middle incomes in Wirral and for transparency with regard to planning applications to ensure that the Council's own policies on affordable housing requirements are met.

Regrettably, a recent report from the housing charity, Shelter, has revealed the widespread use and abuse of Economic Viability Assessments (EVAs), resulting in thousands of affordable homes being lost every year because of viability assessments. (Slipping through the loophole: How viability assessments are reducing affordable housing supply in England)

[http://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1434439/2017.11.01\\_Slipping\\_through\\_the\\_loophole.pdf](http://england.shelter.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1434439/2017.11.01_Slipping_through_the_loophole.pdf)

Council are dismayed that there are companies who are openly boasting in their promotion that they can help developers to avoid paying Section 106 monies and making appropriate levels of affordable housing provision. These companies produce EVAs in order to demonstrate that developers are not making sufficient profits to enable councils to insist on full 106 or affordable housing contributions.

<http://www.s106management.co.uk/how-it-works>

Whilst some of these EVAs are submitted in good faith, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the reports can be prepared in such a way as to attempt to confuse local planning committees and present a misleading picture. Some London councils, such as Lambeth LBC, now insist that EVAs are no longer able to be submitted unless they are able to be viewed by members of the public and in open session at planning committee meetings. <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-development-viability-spd.pdf>

Accordingly, this Council, which is committed to increasing the delivery of affordable housing, requests that the Cabinet commissions the development of a new Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document to:

1. require any planning application which does not meet the affordable housing requirement to submit an Economic Viability Assessment which must be fully public and will be published online alongside the other planning application documentation.

2. require such Economic Viability Assessments to be in a standard proforma to aid understanding and comparison by members of the planning committee and the public.
3. consider offering a 'fast-track' planning service to applications which deliver 40%, or more, affordable housing, as identified in the Wirral Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Housing needs Study (May 2016) to incentivise this behaviour by developers.
4. consider 'clawback' mechanisms where large applications cannot comply with the affordable housing thresholds, to ensure that any subsequent improvement in viability is accompanied by an appropriate increase in the affordable housing provision.

The Development Viability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would enable these factors to become a material consideration for the Planning Committee dependent on the circumstances of individual applications.

## **8. PLANNING AHEAD TO USE THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY** *(the Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*

**Proposed** by Councillor Phil Gilchrist  
**Seconded** by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Council recognises that the Cabinet last considered the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) at its meeting on 15 January 2015 (Minute 131 refers).

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50022901/Community%20Infrastructure%20Levy%20Update%20Report.pdf>

At that time, it was reported that...

*'The Council's Core Strategy Local Plan is now at an advanced stage in preparation. A revised Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy is expected to be presented to the Council for approval for publication and public examination in July 2015.'*

Since that study, it is worth noting that

- (a) Knowsley Council adopted a Supplementary Planning Document on developer contributions in June 2016.
- (b) Cheshire West and Chester Council adopted a full scheme in July 2017.
- (c) Sefton set out a draft charging schedule for consultation in September 2017.

Council appreciates that developer contributions can be secured by the planning system through on-site provision and design, site-specific planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy. Given the extent of the Budget Gap it is essential that these means are explored.

Council is also aware that documentation released at the time of the most recent Budget has laid out the Government's intention to set about speeding up the process of setting and revising CIL to make it easier to respond to changes to the market. Apparently, this will include...

*'allowing a more proportionate approach than the requirement for two stages of consultation and providing greater clarity on the appropriate evidence base'.*

Council believes that, whatever the outcome of the intervention by Sajid Javid (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government) on 16 November, this Council now needs to make greater progress in assessing how the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy can raise resources to assist in the provision of local facilities and services.

Accordingly, it requests that the Cabinet allocates sufficient resources to speed up the local plan making process, the use of developer contributions and examination of the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy.