

COUNCIL

Monday, 5 March 2018

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

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

111 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reported on the recent death of former Councillor Gordon Lindsay, Mayor of the Borough in 1985-86.

The Council observed a minutes silence in his memory.

112 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Hale, A Leech and T Pilgrim.

113 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / RESTRICTIONS ON VOTING

In accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members, the following declarations of interest were made:-

- (1) Declarations of personal interest in agenda item 8 'Council Budget' insofar as it related to schools budget by virtue of holding positions as school governors were declared on behalf of all members of the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and by Councillors B Berry, E Boulton, P Cleary, W Clements, J Green, C Jones, L Rennie, A Sykes, GCJ Watt, S Williams.
- (2) Declarations of personal interest in agenda item, 8 'Council Budget' insofar as it related to the schools budget by virtue of close family members working in the either in schools and in the Council's education and Children and Young people's department were declared by Councillors RL Abbey, G Davies, J Green, A Jones, C Meaden and L Rowlands.

114 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Council and of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 11 December 2017 be approved and signed as correct records.

115 **PETITIONS (PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 5(2)(G) COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES)**

In accordance with Standing Orders 5(2)(g) and 21, the Mayor received petitions submitted by:

- (i) Councillor L Rennie on behalf of 569 signatories (online copy) regarding proposed promenade parking charges.
- (ii) Councillor G Ellis on behalf of 1300 signatories regarding proposal to introduce charges for parking on promenades.
- (iii) Councillor G Ellis on behalf of 691 visitors / residents objecting to parking charges on West Kirby, Hoylake, Meols Promenades.
- (iv) Councillor G Ellis on behalf of 116 residents objecting to planning application OUT/17/01085.
- (v) Councillor W Clements on behalf of 333 signatories (online copy) regarding proposal to introduce charges for parking on promenades.
- (vi) Councillor J Green on behalf of 262 visitors / residents (online copy) regarding proposal to introduce charges for parking on promenades.

(vii) Councillor B Berry on behalf of 500 visitors / residents signatories regarding proposal to introduce charges for parking on promenades.

(viii) Councillor B Berry on behalf of 1169 visitors / residents, regarding proposed parking charges on the seafront in New Brighton.

116 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK PROCEDURE RULES (STANDING ORDERS)

Further to Minute 73(3) of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 March 2018, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Davies moved, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor George Davies seconded the recommendation to the Council for adoption of changes to the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules at Part 4C of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules be approved and adopted.

117 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

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

RESOLVED:

That, for the purposes of the Budget Debate, the following Standing Orders be suspended –

(a) Standing Order 12(1) insofar as it related to amendments;

(b) Standing Order 12(9); and

(c) Standing Order 12(10).

118 COUNCIL BUDGET

In accordance with the agreed Budget Council Procedure, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Davies moved and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor George Davies seconded the Cabinet's recommended Budget to Council set out in Minute 83 from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19 February 2018 –

MINUTE EXTRACT - BUDGET CABINET

19 February 2018

83 COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19



Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council), said:

“We have a responsibility to set a fair, sustainable and balanced budget. This is a challenge which gets more difficult every year, as austerity policies continue to bite.

We have committed to 20 Pledges in our Wirral Plan and, despite the continued reductions in our budget, we are determined we will deliver on what we promised”.

Councillors Phil Davies, Janette Williamson and Bernie Mooney introduced reports on the following budgetary matters:

- (A) Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels 2018/19 (Councillor Davies) – that provided an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Budget 2018/19 reported to Cabinet on 18 December 2017. It set out the background and the key elements contributing to the preparation of the Budget for 2018/19.
- (B) Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Councillor Williamson) – that provided the Authority’s treasury management activity as 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 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Investment Guidance.
- (C) Capital Programme and Financing (Councillor Davies) – the report provided Cabinet with the draft Capital Programme 2018/21 for consideration and referral to Council for approval. It also included information regarding the revenue implications of the Programme and

an update on the latest forecast for capital receipts. The 2018/21 Capital Programme represented a combination of schemes originally approved as part of the 2017/20 Programme, updated through the Capital Monitoring reports in 2017/18 and new bids for inclusion as detailed in the report.

(D) Schools Budget and Formula Funding Changes 2018/19 (Councillor Mooney) – the report set out the Schools Budget for 2018/19 having been previously considered by the Schools Forum at their meeting on 17 January 2018. The Schools Budget covered education provision for all Wirral Pupils aged up to 18 in Early Years, Primary, Secondary and academy schools and for some pupils up to the age of 25 in Special Schools and High Needs providers. The report informed that most budgets were delegated to schools with some central provision for support services including school admissions and High Needs. The report proposed a number of changes to the local funding formula for Schools to allow a transitional transfer to the National Funding Formula.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that the Council continued to face another year of challenge to its budget setting year arising from further cuts in funding imposed by the Government. This year's budget included huge pressures on the Council to generate additional revenue that meant that in addition to raising income through a variety of projects, the Council would be raising additional monies via the permitted Social Care precept and utilising the maximum permitted rise in Council Tax. Councillor Davies added that these decisions had been as a direct result of the huge pressures placed on Local Authorities by Government and that a radical overhaul was required. He informed that the Council would continue to provide input in relation to business rate retention that currently disadvantaged areas such as Wirral through the LGA 'fair funding review' consultation.

Councillor Davies thanked Cabinet Members and Officers of the Council for their hard work in dealing with the financial challenges faced over the past year and the 'perfect storm' that faced Social Care Services (Children's Services in particular) and added that the Council's commitment to this area was demonstrated by its investment of £20million into this area in particular.

Councillor Davies informed that the Council would remain committed to delivery of its 20 Wirral Plan Pledges and would continue in its aim to help grow the Wirral economy through the development of more investment, jobs, businesses and improved income for Wirral residents and workers. He further informed of those areas where the Council would continue to support and focus e.g. housing, improvements to the environment and street scene, the tackling of domestic abuse, improving income generation and supporting its staff - meeting his party values of fairness and social justice.

Cabinet Members each raised their own concerns about the continued financial pressures faced by Wirral from Government and the sustained attack since 2010 and significant reduction of funds since that time. Members commented that they were proud to have managed to retain front line services against the background of austerity and that careful planning would still be required in the future.

Councillor Bernie Mooney informed that the performance of Wirral schools continued to go from strength to strength and gave a commitment to the Wirral Plan to do all to continue to support Wirral schools and ensure that every child in the borough had the opportunity of a good education, and good career. She added the importance of ensuring schools had the resources in place to continue to improve and to provide young people with an excellent education was vital to the future of the borough.

Councillor Janette Williamson commented on the reduced levels of funding received from Government and informed of the vital importance of making sure the Council's finances were well managed, and ensuring commercial opportunities were maximised to support Council services over the longer term. In respect of the Treasury Management Report she added that the report provided the Council with a well thought through, appropriate strategy for managing public resources in the borough.

Councillor Phillip Brightmore endorsed the Leader's earlier statement that environmental matters remained a priority for the Council and informed the Cabinet of the Council's recent success in gaining an award that recognised the borough staff's performance with regard to waste collection.

Councillor George Davies commented on the difficult circumstances faced by the Council to maintaining services and his commitment to helping protect the vulnerable and how the greater than average number of properties (83%) fell into Council Tax Bands A, B and C impacting on the income generated to the borough. He added that this was not a problem for some local authorities in England whose historical housing stock valuations allowed lower Council Tax increases to generate significantly more income.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham stated that he was pleased that the Council was currently still in a position to invest in its infrastructure but was upset that Wirral, as a result of the economic circumstance placed upon it by Government, had to consider the expansion of areas of charged parking. He informed that he had done what he could to keep the fees at modest levels.

Councillor Matthew Patrick reaffirmed the need to protect the most vulnerable and investment in social care. He thanked residents for their response to the budget consultation and for their input and comments that demonstrated people's interest and positive support for the area.

Councillor Angela Davies stated her outrage at the level of cuts to local government funding, but stated that responsible use of capital receipts and the development of the transformation programme had, despite the cuts, made significant inroads to regeneration and the reformation of programmes in areas such as Health and Social Care.

Councillor Chris Jones echoed Councillor Davies' comments, adding that she wished to thank all those staff who worked in Adult Social Care who were managing to deal with unprecedented levels of demand on their service.

RESOLVED: (unanimously)

That the following Budget Resolution be agreed and recommended to the Budget Council:

BUDGET RESOLUTION 2018/19

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Each year, the Council assembles to agree its budget to provide the services it will offer to meet the needs of residents. Each year, the amount of money available in real terms to meet real needs gets smaller.

Since the Government chose the path of austerity in 2010, Wirral Council has been forced to implement more than a quarter of a billion pounds in reductions and cuts to its budget. The impact of austerity bites on the quality of life enjoyed by residents – pay freezes for public sector workers, changes to benefits and the clumsy roll out of Universal Credit, rising prices for energy and utilities and threats and fears about the future of the NHS, the needs of Wirral residents become more complex, more intense and more pronounced.

And each year, as we debate the budget, the members on the Conservative benches roll their eyes and shrug their shoulders, unmoved - and untouched - by the hardships of their national policies. They ignore the hard decisions this Council faces, braying and bellowing for the benefit of the crowd.

Elsewhere, more considered Tory voices are joining the rising tide of national concern.

Last year, bankrupt Tory controlled Surrey Council set a 15% Council Tax rise before being bailed out by the Government at the last moment to prevent the embarrassing scene of a Conservative Council setting illegal budgets to meet unrealistic Tory Government expectations.

This year, Tory controlled Northamptonshire County Council has effectively declared itself 'bust' – cancelling all spending on non-statutory services, unable to meet anything but the most basic needs of its residents.

But still – unmoved, the Tories press on with their austerity policies, oblivious and uncaring about the consequences of their policies on the lives of ordinary people.

Tory Home Secretary Amber Rudd was in meetings in this town hall the week before last – not with Councillors working to support the police, coastguard and fire service – but meeting with local Tory Councillors behind closed doors, plotting her leadership challenge no doubt.

The Tories' obsession with Austerity is rooted in their detachment from the lives of ordinary people. This budget will once again demonstrate that only a Labour administration will protect the services local residents rely upon, invest in the issues Wirral families care about and work with public sector and volunteer group partners to deliver them.

The Tories see the budget as spreadsheet management: A cut here, a reduction there, unconcerned by the real world consequences of these actions.

The Tories know the price of everything, but the value of nothing.

Labour Councillors continue to lead the campaign for the Government to treat local authorities fairly. This campaign was encouraged late last year when Secretary of State, Sajid Javid MP, appeared to buckle under pressure and suggest he was willing to revisit his flagship policy of removing the Revenue Support Grant, a policy in the opinion of this Cabinet, which would hit the young, the elderly and the most vulnerable the hardest. Whether this was political posturing, or an awakening to the reality of their failed policies, local authorities across the country await more details.

With the Government's long term plans or the impact of its Brexit policies unclear, uncertainty and worry surrounding the funding future of the police, fire service, the NHS and other public services, this Budget must again be prepared against a backdrop of difficult financial circumstances.

THE WIRRAL CHALLENGE

Wirral is forced to reduce its spending, or generate more income, by more than £100 million by 2021. Our immediate challenge is to meet a £61 million funding shortfall for 2018/19.

As we have repeatedly warned, this is happening at a time of increased need - an ageing population, deprived communities with complex needs - and rising costs of the services and support which people rely on.

Cabinet believes these reductions to be unfair and unsustainable.

However, as residents know, we refuse to allow this Government to break the services our residents rely on. We will make these difficult decisions but will deliver the 20 Pledges we committed to in our Wirral Plan.

Our overall budget strategy of focussing on attracting additional revenue, transforming services and improving efficiency, will continue. This will be underpinned by our commitment to key Labour principles of fairness and social justice.

INVESTING IN SOCIAL CARE

The challenges facing families and young people in Wirral are well known. The scale of this and our response has been at the very heart of the Council's policy and budget agenda this year. Already great progress is being made, a new leadership team, a complete review of our services and processes and an improvement plan that works with national experts and local care providers to ensure we meet the expectations we set ourselves when looking after our most vulnerable young residents.

We have to prioritise making these changes and improvements and are committing £20m investment in Children's and Families' services in 2018/19.

Locally, social care providers, charities and the NHS have united to call for more investment. The Government's response was to pass the problem on to council taxpayers. We have little choice other than to implement the Government's Care Tax levy, even while knowing this places the burden at the feet of those people least able to pay.

A COLLABORATIVE BUDGET

Again, we remind residents we are here to work for them. We will never set a budget in isolation. Consultation, engagement, and conversations with residents will always underpin every decision we take. Almost 6,000 residents took the time to give us their views on our budget, our priorities and our plans and we pledge to use this valuable feedback as decisions are made.

Cabinet thanks Elected Members – of all parties – who took part in the comprehensive scrutiny process to look in detail at the budget proposals. The feedback from that process has been provided to Cabinet and has proved extremely helpful in making these decisions.

DELIVERING OUR PLEDGES

Regardless of the scale of Conservative Government cuts to this Council's budget, as a Labour Administration our budget will be legal and sustainable, with social justice and fairness at its heart.

Our ethos as an Administration is underpinned by three core principles. These principles help inform our budget and makes sure we can deliver the savings imposed on us while still meeting our promises to Wirral residents.

- The vulnerable are safe and protected and we tackle inequality.
- Wirral is a place where employers want to invest and businesses thrive.
- We have an attractive and sustainable environment, where good health and an excellent quality of life is enjoyed by everyone who lives here.

GROWING OUR ECONOMY

We are relentless in our drive to grow Wirral's economy. In the coming days we will announce our proposal for Wirral Growth Company, the UK's largest public-sector led regeneration programme. Attracting new investment to drive our £1bn growth deal, this joint venture ensures this Council retains control over our assets and benefits from the development of new homes, offices, leisure and retail schemes and accompanying job opportunities.

As part of our work on growing the economy, we will consider innovative approaches to ensuring that as many of the benefits of growth as possible are retained within Wirral. To this end, we are keen to look at models such as community wealth building.

INVESTING IN WIRRAL'S ENVIRONMENT, ROADS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

We will continue to invest in our local infrastructure and the communities we live in. In 2018/19 we are investing more than £7million in improvements. We are leveraging interest free loans and grants to invest £1.5million in LED street lighting – not only making our roads and neighbourhoods safer, but using technology to reduce the long term running costs. Our programme will see more than £2million invested to replace and repair street lamps across the borough and other improvements to traffic, cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure.

The Council's commitment to protecting our environment and tackling climate change will continue through adopting a zero-tolerance approach to environmental crime, such as littering and dog-fouling; growing the subscriber base of the garden waste scheme; and increasing energy efficiency. Cabinet is committed to Wirral Council remaining at the green cutting edge of environmental issues and will lead the City Region in efforts to phase out single use plastics, reduction of waste and encouraging recycling.

Wirral is also playing a major role in supporting the Metro Mayor in bringing forward transformational projects such as a tidal barrage on the River Mersey.

We will continue our policy of tackling rogue private sector landlords through extending the Selective Licensing Scheme. The Council will shortly also be making a number of announcements about investing in building significant numbers of new housing units on brownfield sites.

TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse is on the increase across the UK and government cuts and loss of funding means that previously accessible support is no longer available. Adopting a zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse is one of our key pledges. In order to support this pledge, we will invest £5,000 in supporting the Friends of the Freedom Programme in their work in supporting people whose lives have been affected by domestic abuse.

CAR PARKING

We also will introduce new car parking charges at certain coastal visitor locations. In New Brighton, while this does not include Marine Point and Fort Perch Rock, it does include the Derby Pool and Kings Parade. It would also include Leasowe Lighthouse and 'the Gunsite', North Parade between Hoylake and Meols and South Parade in West Kirby. The proposed charges would be £1 for an hour, £2 for all day and £20 for those who leave their vehicles parked overnight. Officers advise us that these tariffs are reasonable and acceptable for visitors to Wirral's coastal attractions, in many cases cheaper and more favourable than charges in Liverpool, Chester and at other local attractions.

REWARDING AND PROTECTING OUR STAFF

Our staff are our most important resource. As national austerity policies continue to hit the most vulnerable hardest, it is important we recognise the role council staff play in keeping our front line services operating and supporting people every day. These services have seen their workforce reduced, demand increase and have also seen pay frozen.

It is important that we do all we can to put this right, and that is why I am proud to announce that – alongside and in addition to the national pay award of 2% which we have already included in the budget, we will include a further 1% rise for our employees, which will bring us back in line with the national pay scale. This will be funded from more efficient ways of working that will include release of vacancies and headcount reduction, which will be met by voluntary redundancy wherever possible.

This Administration is committed strongly to good working practices. To that end, we will continue to work constructively with our trade unions.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFFING CUTS

As we make tough decisions on how to balance the budget, we must also look at efficiencies we can make in how we deliver services. As the Council continues to invest in technology and to make transformational changes to how it operates, it is right that we look to make savings amongst our most senior staff and management.

The budget this year sees us reduce the cost of management by £750,000 as we make changes to how the Council works.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this is a balanced budget built around our shared values. It supports the important work being done to deliver services our residents rely on. It invests in our economy, makes improvements to our environment and shares the burden fairly between all those who can afford to contribute and those who enjoy the services Wirral offers.

This is a budget, against a harsh Conservative Austerity agenda, our Labour Council can be proud of.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Cabinet, having had regard to the responses to the proposals announced at the 18 December 2017 meeting recommends to Budget Council for approval:

Revenue Budget (Agenda Item 6)

- a) The Proposals for 2018/19 as set out at Appendix 2.
- b) The Growth for 2018/19 as set out in sections 3.21 to 3.34 of this report.
- c) The payment of an additional 1% pay award to staff as included within my resolution that will be fully funded by more efficient ways of working. This will result in a total pay increase of 3% in 2018/19.
- d) Approve a one-off revenue contribution to be repaid of £1.3m to the Liverpool City Region Mayoral Combined Authority to support the Single Investment Fund in 2018/19.
- e) The fees and charges, as in Appendix 3, with delegated authority being:

- i) given to the Section 151 Officer to update the Council's Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2018.
- ii) given to the relevant Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and Section 151 Officer to vary existing fees and charges.
- iii) Approval of the Pricing and Charging Policy as set out in Annex 1.
- f) The level of General Fund Balances being recommended, as set out in Appendix 4, continuing to be based on a locally determined approach based on an assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future and that the Council maintains balances at, or above, this level.
- g) The release of reserves, as set out in Appendix 5, to General Fund Balances to support the Revenue Budget.
- h) The Chief Financial Officer Statement regarding the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Budget and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves at Appendix 6.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/21 (**Agenda Item 6B**)

The Treasury Management Strategy 2018/21 including:

- a) The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2018/2021.
- b) The adoption of the Prudential Indicators.
- c) The approval of the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy.
- a) That the Council Officers listed in Annex G to approve payments from the Council's bank account for all treasury management activities.

Capital Programme and Financing (**Agenda Item 6C**)

1. That Cabinet agree and recommend to Full Council the Capital Strategy 2018/21 (Appendix1) including the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2018/19 (Annex 2).

2. That the new bids as detailed in the first section of Appendix 3 totalling £19.7 million be approved for inclusion in the Capital Programme. This includes a sum of £0.7 million relating to additional project risk contingency in relation to the Dock bridges replacement scheme as detailed in paragraph 3.15 b.
3. That the bids totalling £3.7 million relating to the Leisure and Cultural Services Review (Appendix 3) are included in the programme for 2018/19 but are deferred to a later commencement date, on an individual basis, in recognition of an ongoing review.
4. That the bids totalling £4.6 million referred to the Council's Technical Design Authority (TDA) (Appendix 3) be included in the programme if they are approved by the TDA.
5. That any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority.
6. That Cabinet recommend to Council for approval the Capital Programme 2018/21 (as detailed in Appendix 4).
7. That progress on delivering the Capital Programme is presented in accordance with the agreed Capital Monitoring arrangements.

Schools Budget (**Agenda Item 6D**)

The Schools Budget of £259,158,600 having taken account of the views and formula proposals from the Schools Forum:

- i) That a Minimum Funding Guarantee of 0% for Wirral schools in 2018-19 is approved to provide additional protection and stability in funding, and to ensure that no school can lose pupil funding unless there is a reduction in pupil numbers.
- ii) That the continuing Contributions to Combined Budgets should be £875,600 in 2018-19.
- iii) That any remaining uncommitted Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves remaining at the end of 2017-18 are used as a contingency to support High Needs pressures in future years.
- iv) There should be a 0.5% top slice from the Schools Budget to support the outcome of the High Needs review.
- v) That the schools funding formula should be a transition formula introducing some elements of the National Funding Formula.

- vi) Headroom should be allocated evenly over all formula elements.
- vii) PFI within the schools funding formula should be increased in line with the contract inflation provision.
- viii) The unit value of the Looked After Children (LAC) element within the funding formula is reduced to take account of the increase in LAC Pupil Premium.
- ix) The following place changes are agreed from September 2018:
 - Birkenhead 6th Form College reduce by 8 places to 57
 - Wirral Met College to increase by 2 places to 119
- x) The base rate element of the Early Years funding formula is increased to pass an extra 2% of grant funding on to providers.
- xi) The SEN Support is redesigned including a traded service for some Hearing and Vision support in schools.
- xii) The Early Years funding formula is retained in its current format.

The Cabinet in making these recommendations has had regard to the Chief Financial Officer Statement regarding the robustness of the estimates made for the purpose of the Budget and the adequacy of the General Fund balances and reserves.

- 2 Cabinet recommends to Budget Council that a separate vote be taken in respect of Council Tax levels for 2018/19 and that :
- a) For Wirral Council Services the Council Tax be increased by 5.99% for 2018/19 which includes the Adult Social Care Precept of 3%.
 - b) The Wirral Council Tax will include the precepts from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and from the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 18 December 2017 calculated the Council Tax Base 2018/19 for the whole of the properties in its area as 92,255.9 for 2018/19 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”);

- a) £136,464,000 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2018/19 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:
- i) £844,568,000 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and
- ii) £708,104,000 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.
- b) £1,479.19 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2018/19. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as above).
- c) That in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band

2018/19

A	B	C	D
£986.13	£1,150.48	£1,314.84	£1,479.19
E	F	G	H
£1,807.89	£2,136.60	£2,465.32	£2,958.38

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the Basic Amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2018/19 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 6% or above for those authorities with Adult Social Care responsibilities.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax Comparison for Referendum

2018/19

	2017/18	2018/19	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Band D	1,395.59	1,479.19	83.60	5.99

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area. These are indicated in the tables below.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

A	B	C	D
£118.65	£138.42	£158.20	£177.97
E	F	G	H
£217.52	£257.07	£296.62	£355.94

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

A	B	C	D
£51.04	£59.55	£68.05	£76.56
E	F	G	H
£93.57	£110.59	£127.60	£153.12

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police and Fire the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral

A	B	C	D
£1,155.82	£1,348.45	£1,541.09	£1,733.72
E	F	G	H
£2,118.98	£2,504.26	£2,889.54	£3,467.44

WIRRAL COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19

Forecast Income	Budget 2018/19
Council Tax	127.43
- Housing	1.10
- Increase 2.99%	4.00
- Adult Social Care Precept of 3%	3.90
Business Rates	126.24
- Loss of Business Rates Top Up (Due to RSG rolled in)	-7.00
- Improved Better Care Fund Rolled in	12.00
- Business Rates Base increase	4.20
- Business Rates Inflation	1.00
New Homes Bonus	1.56
Capital Receipts to fund another year of transformation	10.00
One-off use of Balances, Reserves & Collection Fund	16.08
Total Funding	300.52

Forecast Operating Structure Expenditure	Budget 2018/19
Business Services	77.01
Corporate Resources & Reform	1.52
Strategy and Partnerships	58.60
Children's Services	84.63
Adult Social Care	78.76
Total Forecast Expenditure	300.52

Forecast Theme/Portfolio Expenditure	Budget 2018/19	
People	Adult Social Care and Health	89.76
	Children & Families	92.80
Environment	Environment	46.20
	Housing and Community Safety	22.12

	Localism and Engagement	1.20
Business	Finance and Income Generation	8.06
	Highways and Transport	33.01
	Leadership	2.18
	Transformation	5.19
Total Forecast Expenditure		300.52

CONSERVATIVE BUDGET OBJECTION 2018/19

Councillor Ian Lewis moved and Councillor Lesley Rennie seconded the following objection to the proposed budget 2018/19 –

“Under Reg 3(1) of The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), the Conservative Group submits the following objections to the Cabinet’s Budget Recommendations. We believe the proposed increase in Council Tax (5.99%) is a burden that is excessive, especially for those on low and fixed incomes and, specifically:

- the Conservative Group does not believe that a Chief Officer team costing £1.497 million in 2017/18 should require the additional support of professional management consultants (£2.686 million) and therefore seeks a planned reduction in the costs of consultancy
- the Conservative Group seeks deletion of the proposed charges in coastal areas (£250,000) and the removal of charges in country parks (£150,000)
- the Conservative Group believes that Wirral View has failed to meet its objectives and that spending to date (£254,000) and further spending (£140,000) on this publication and distribution to be unnecessary
- the Conservative Group believes school crossing patrols previously deleted should be reinstated (£90,000)

We therefore seek to have the Cabinet’s Budget Recommendations rejected and request Cabinet to submit fresh proposals to Council, within at least five working days, that reflects these views.”

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT BUDGET AMENDMENT 2018/19

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Alan Brighthouse seconded the following amendment to the proposed budget 2018/19 –

“(a) “The proposals for 2018/19 as set out at Appendix 2 be approved”, subject to these Amendments:

1. Council recognises that Wirral needs to respond to the serious financial position as a result of lost national revenues (RSG) and the shift of the burden from the national taxpayer to the Council taxpayer. It is unlikely that the local economy can grow quickly enough to fill the budget gap.
2. Council notes that the proposed budget makes extensive use of the reserves, insurance fund, transformation fund and minimum revenue provision to maintain services. Council is not convinced that the best use of these existing and additional resources is yet being made. Council believes that the budget should be referred back to the Cabinet for consideration of the following issues.

3 THE NEED TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE CHILDREN'S SERVICE

Council is clear that investment in Children's Services is necessary. It will not be effective unless it turns the culture and working practices of the teams around after the critical OFSTED report. Wirral's families need this process to be successful for the benefit of children at risk. The investment will fail unless it is backed up with rapid action to improve the management and supervisory structure. There is a need to replace agency workers with permanent staff.

4 THE NEED FOR PROJECTS THAT BRING RESULTS

Past projects have led to speculative schemes, such as the International Trade Centre, that failed to find backers with real funds to invest. The Council has yet to see real results from the visit undertaken to China at Council taxpayers' expense. Council has concerns about the democratic accountability of the Growth Company and its associated schemes which will take time to come to fruition. The Cabinet needs to be open about the reason and cost of acquisition of the Europa building. The public needs to know the hidden purposes behind these acquisitions.

5 THE NEED TO CHALLENGE INEFFECTIVE AND WASTEFUL SPENDING ON PUBLICITY

In 2017, £30,000 was spent on a MORI survey aimed at informing Council of residents' priorities. There is no evidence that this has informed the current budget. Where the Council has embarked on introducing car parking charges it has done so in the face of overwhelming public opposition.

The delivery of Wirralview, seeking a response to the extension of car parking charges, after the closure of the consultation was a waste of resources and insulting to residents. Council remains of the opinion that Wirralview does not represent an effective use of resources.

6 THE NEED TO CHALLENGE INEFFECTIVE AND WASTEFUL SPENDING ON CONSULTANTS

Council also questions whether the extensive use of Interims and Consultants which reached over £12,000 a day at its peak in January 2018 provides value for money. Even if their effective short term use can be demonstrated, Council calls for their employment to finish as soon as practicable. Over £300,000 was spent on consultants considering the various options for Leisure, Library and Cultural Services. Council therefore seeks confirmation that the budget enables these services to be maintained.

7 THE NEED TO ENSURE CONTINUITY OF SENSORY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Council believes there is a need to involve organisations who have raised concerns about the redesign of SEN support services to include traded services for sensory services (Schools Budget proposal xi). The lack of consultation with sensory service users and advocacy groups has led to criticism and potential challenge from the National Deaf Children's Society. The proposal should be put on hold and become the subject of a formal consultation with service users and advocacy groups such as NDCS as required by the Children and Families Act 2014 when an authority intends to change its 'local offer'.

8 THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL REPORTING

Council considers that Cabinet Members must provide more meaningful reports to each Council meeting on their activities and decisions. The practice of filling portfolio reports with press release material needs to end.

9 THE NEED FOR CLEAR BUSINESS CASES AROUND CHANGE

Council believes that ending outsourcing of day to day highway and footway repair works presents an opportunity to make savings out of the time consuming and wasteful exchanges between the Council and the contractors. Council calls for streamlined processes that will provide a more timely response to the potholes that frustrate drivers, users of motorcycles, cyclists and pedestrians. Investment is undoubtedly needed in Wirral's roads, pavements and street lighting.

10 THE NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Council believes that Cabinet should ensure that additional resources are provided:

- (a) to enable the planning team to process applications more quickly and secure an updated Local Plan. This is especially relevant in view of the Secretary of State's intervention.

- (b) to consult upon and prepare for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Developers should contribute to the impact of new housing on local communities and the extra infrastructure needed. Other councils have done this - Wirral should too.
- (c) to support people struggling to cope with all the pressures around the change to Universal Credit. It is already apparent that the need for advice and support is requiring our staff to go the extra mile to meet recipients' needs. This was clearly highlighted at the recent scrutiny workshop. Cabinet needs to review the resources available as this pressure develops.
- (d) to ensure that a robust response is provided to the Government's consultation around 'fair funding'.

11 Council requires that Cabinet, in implementing the Budget, ensures that the investment in Children's Services secures the required changes in management and culture in a timely manner.

- (i) that the Budget Proposals are amended such that provision is made for:
 1. abandoning the extension of car parking charges to coastal areas which continue to face strong public opposition (-£250,000), along with those recently introduced to the country parks (-£150,000);
 2. freeing up capital that might be spent on car parking machinery(-£350,000) and using it as capital to fund minor road improvements (+£350,000);
 3. limiting the expenditure on consultants and interims (£260,000);
 4. realising savings from the cessation of WirralView (£140,000);

The Statutory Calculations and Resolution

It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Cabinet on 18 December 2017 calculated the Council Tax Base 2018/19 for the whole of the properties in its area as 92,255.9 for 2018/19 (Item T in the statutory formula).

That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) ("the Act");

£136,464,000 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2018/19 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:

i) £844,168,000 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and

ii) £707,704,000 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.

£1,479.19 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2018/19. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as above).

That in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band

2018/19

A	B	C	D
£986.13	£1,150.48	£1,314.84	£1,479.19
E	F	G	H
£1,807.89	£2,136.60	£2,465.32	£2,958.38

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the Basic Amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2018/19 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 6% or above for those authorities with Adult Social Care responsibilities.

Wirral – Basic Amount of Council Tax Comparison for Referendum

2018/19

	2017/18	2018/19	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Band D	1,395.59	1,479.19	83.60	5.99

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area. These are indicated in the tables below.

Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

A	B	C	D
£118.65	£138.42	£158.20	£177.97
E	F	G	H
£217.52	£257.07	£296.62	£355.94

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

A	B	C	D
£51.04	£59.55	£68.05	£76.56
E	F	G	H
£93.57	£110.59	£127.60	£153.12

That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police and Fire the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings.

Total Council Tax for Wirral

A	B	C	D
£1,155.82	£1,348.45	£1,541.09	£1,733.72
E	F	G	H
£2,118.98	£2,504.26	£2,889.54	£3,467.44

WIRRAL COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19

Forecast Income	Budget 2018/19
Council Tax	127.43
- Housing	1.10
- Increase 2.99%	4.00
- Adult Social Care Precept of 3%	3.90
Business Rates	126.24
- Loss of Business Rates Top Up (Due to RSG rolled in)	-7.00
- Improved Better Care Fund Rolled in	12.00
- Business Rates Base increase	4.20
- Business Rates Inflation	1.00
New Homes Bonus	1.56
Capital Receipts to fund another year of transformation	10.00
One-off use of Balances, Reserves & Collection Fund	16.08
Total Funding	300.52

Forecast Operating Structure Expenditure	Budget 2018/19
Business Services	77.41
Corporate Resources & Reform	1.52
Strategy and Partnerships	58.20
Children's Services	84.63
Adult Social Care	78.76
Total Forecast Expenditure	300.52

Forecast Theme/Portfolio Expenditure	Budget 2018/19	
People	Adult Social Care and Health	89.76
	Children & Families	92.80
Environment	Environment	46.20
	Housing and Community Safety	22.12
	Localism and Engagement	1.06
Business	Finance and Income Generation	8.06
	Highways and Transport	33.41
	Leadership	2.18
	Transformation	4.93
Total Forecast Expenditure		300.52

Budget Debate

Following a debate and Councillors Phil Gilchrist, Ian Lewis and Phil Davies having replied, the Civic Mayor indicated that card votes would be taken in accordance with the Budget Council Procedure.

In respect of the **Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment**, the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (4) - Councillors C Carubia, P Gilchrist, S Kelly and D Mitchell

Against the motion (55) - Councillors R Abbey, T. Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighouse, 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, J Green, P Hackett, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, T Johnson, A Jones, C Jones, T Jones, B Kenny, I Lewis, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, I Rennie, I Rowlands, A Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, A Sykes, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, G Watt, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan.

The amendment was therefore lost (55:4) (One abstention).

In respect of the **Conservative Budget Objection**, the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (19) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, J Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, I Lewis, L Rennie, L Rowlands, A Sykes, G Watt, S Williams.

Against the motion (40) - Councillors R Abbey, A Brighouse, P Brightmore, P Cleary, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Gilchrist, P Hackett, T Johnson, A Jones, C Jones, T Jones, S Kelly, B Kenny, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, A Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, J Williamson, G Wood.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan.

The budget objection motion was therefore lost (19:40) (One abstention).

In respect of the **Cabinet Budget Resolution**, the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (35) - Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Hackett, T Johnson, A Jones, C Jones, T Jones, B Kenny, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, A Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, J Williamson, G Wood.

Against the motion (24) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, P Cleary, W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, P Gilchrist, J Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, S Kelly, I Lewis, D Mitchell, L Rennie, L Rowlands, A Sykes, G Watt, S Williams.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan.

The motion was therefore carried (35:24) (One abstention).

In respect of the **Council Tax Levels 2017/18**, the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (36) - Councillors R Abbey, P Brightmore, P Cleary, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, W Davies, P Doughty, S Foulkes, P Hackett, T Johnson, A Jones, C Jones, T Jones, B Kenny, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, M Patrick, D Realey, A Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, M Sullivan, T Usher, J Walsh, W Ward, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, J Williamson, G Wood.

Against the motion (23) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, C Blakeley, E Boulton, A Brighthouse, D Burgess-Joyce, C Carubia, , W Clements, D Elderton, G Ellis, P Gilchrist, J Green, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, S Kelly, I Lewis, D Mitchell, L Rennie, L Rowlands, A Sykes, G Watt, S Williams.

One abstention – Councillor A McLachlan.

The motion was therefore carried (36:23) (One abstention).

119 **APPOINTMENTS**

The Civic Mayor advised that there were no matters to consider under this item.

120 **VACANCIES**

Further to the notification of proposed changes to appointments to Committees and to outside bodies as detailed on the agenda, on the motion of Councillor Phil Davies and seconded by Councillor Bernie Mooney, it was –

RESOLVED: –

That the following changes to appointments to Committees and to outside bodies be approved:-

Committees

**Licensing, Health and Safety and General Purposes Committee:
Councillor Steve Foulkes to replace Councillor Tony Norbury as a deputy.**

Outside Bodies

Liverpool City Region - Employment and Skills Board: Councillor Pat Hackett to replace Councillor Phil Davies.

Merseyside Society for the Deaf: Councillor Irene Williams to replace Councillor Louise Reecejones