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CABINET

Thursday, 15 October 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Foulkes (Chair)	
	Councillors	S Holbrook G Davies P Davies G Gardiner	S Kelly M McLaughlin R Moon J Quinn
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillors	JE Green	L Rennie
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	J Stapleton	

146 MINUTES

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that the minutes of the meetings held on 24 September and 1 October 2009 had been printed and published and that the following minutes had been called in –

- Minute 129 (24 September 2009) The Sail Project
- Minute 143 (1 October 2009) Review of Secondary School Places Phase 1

Those minutes had been referred to overview and scrutiny committees in accordance with standing order 35.

Resolved – That, with the exception of those minutes called-in, the minutes of the meetings held on 24 September and 1 October 2009 be approved and adopted.

147 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any of the items on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

Councillor Moon declared his personal interest in agenda item 21 (Rating of Former Dock Properties) (see minute 167 post), by virtue of his membership of the Mersey Maritime Board.

Councillor Kelly declared his personal interest in agenda items 8 (Annual Governance Report Merseyside Pension Fund), 9 (Merseyside Pension Fund – Funding Strategy Statement) and 10 (Merseyside Pension Fund – Audited Accounts for Year Ended 31 March 2009) (see minutes 154, 155 and 156 post), by virtue of his wife being a contributor to the Fund.

Councillor P Davies declared his personal interest in agenda items 13 (A Proposal for the Future of Neighbourhood Management in Tranmere and Rock Ferry) (see minute

159 post), by virtue of his membership of the Tranmere and Rock Ferry Neighbourhood Management Board; 15 (Strategy for Services for Older People with Mental Health Needs 2009 and Beyond) (see minute 161 post), by virtue of him being a non-executive Director of NHS Wirral; and 21 (Rating of Former Dock Properties) (see minute 167 post), by virtue of his membership of the Mersey Maritime Board).

The Chief Executive, Mr S Maddox declared his personal interest in agenda items 14 (Integrated Youth Support) (see minute 160 post) and 27 (Connexions Services Contract) (see minute 173 post), by virtue of him being the Council's representative on the Board of the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership.

148 **NATIONAL TRAINING AWARD**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning was pleased to report that the Council had recently received a National Training Award, from UK Skills for training in Courtroom Skills provided by the Children and Young Peoples Department. He presented the award to the Director of Children's Services and commented particularly upon the work undertaken by Norma Gordon, Staff Development Officer.

149 **HALF YEAR PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL PRESENTATION**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services and the Director of Finance gave a presentation on the 2009/2010 Quarter 2 Performance and Financial Review. The presentation set out the key achievements and commented that 64.4% of the performance indicators which were priorities for improvement were achieving or exceeding targets. He set out the continuing impact of the recession and set out the key risks and performance issues associated with each of the Council's Strategic Objectives.

The Director of Finance set out the financial headlines in relation to 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 and outlined the key issues, which affected the revenue budget and capital programme in 2009/2010. In response to a question from a member in relation to the reduced projected overspend, he indicated that it was attributable to measures put in place by Directors to contain overspend or identify compensatory savings.

In response to further questions, the Director of Regeneration provided information in relation to the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and action taken to reduce the number of repossessions.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted, and it be made available in the meetings and minutes page of the Council's intranet and website.

150 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2008/09**

The Director of Finance reported that the Statement of Accounts for 2008/2009 had been approved by the Audit and Risk Management Committee held on 29 June 2009 (minute 5 refers) and was then subject to audit. The District Auditor had reported his findings within the Annual Governance Report, which members were requested to consider together with the Letter of Representation. In accordance with the Accounts

and Audit Regulations 2003 the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 23 September 2009 (minute 27 refers) considered the adjusted amendments to, and the unadjusted misstatements in, the Statement of Accounts for 2008/2009. The Director highlighted the amendments following audit and he commented that the Audit and Risk Management Committee had approved the revised accounts.

He set out the amendments to the financial statements that had been requested by the District Auditor, who had again issued an unqualified opinion and stated that the accounts presented fairly the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2009.

He reported that the Statement of Accounts included the Merseyside Pension Fund accounts, as Wirral Council was the Administering Authority. The Pension Fund also received a separate Annual Governance Report (see minute 154 post)

Resolved –

(1) That the revised Statement of Accounts for 2008/2009 be noted.

(2) That the action plan within the Annual Governance Report be agreed.

151 **CHANGE PROGRAMME**

Further to minute 472 (23 April 2009), the Director of Finance presented an update on the Strategic Change Programme (SCP) agreed by the Cabinet on 10 December 2008 (minute 294 refers) with the purpose of improving services within available resources and within approved timescales. He outlined the six areas which comprised the programme and commented that it was currently being reviewed by the Strategic Change Programme Board (SCPB) to maximise net savings to the Council within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Resolved –

(1) That the revised Strategic Change Programme be approved.

(2) That an enhanced Strategic Change Programme detailing timescales and potential savings be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

152 **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Finance presented the Annual Report for 2008/2009 'Delivering for Wirral', which combined information contained in the previously produced Best Value Performance Plan and the Statement of Accounts summary leaflet to provide an overview of performance. Within the report were contributions from the Council Leader on reviewing the past year and looking forward; the Chief Executive on the delivery of the Council objectives; and the Director of Finance on the financial position.

He reported that the aim was to make the document widely available via the various customer access channels including the Council's web-site, One Stop Shops, libraries/information points and distributed to partner organisations. He commented that the Council Tax leaflet set out the plans for the financial year and the Annual Report then presented a review of what had been achieved, thereby providing an

overview for local people from whom any ideas and suggestions for improvement to the documents were being encouraged.

Resolved – That the Annual Report 2008/2009 be approved.

153 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Director of Finance presented the Audit Commission Annual Governance Report, which was presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 23 September 2009 (minute 28 refers). In addition to an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts, the District Auditor had issued an unqualified value for money conclusion stating that the Council had adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources in 2008-2009.

He had also completed his work on the new Use of Resources assessment for 2008/2009. The Director reported that the new approach key lines of enquiry reflected higher expectations than the previous assessment and included some areas not previously reviewed, including commissioning and procurement and use of natural resources. There was also a changed emphasis this year in that the focus was on being able to evidence the outcomes achieved as a result of the actions taken during the year. Evidence nationally indicated that most local authorities had received a lower assessment than the previous year and he reported that Wirral had been assessed as two, with regard to Managing Finances, Governing the Business and Managing Resources. However, the Audit Commission had recognised the improved performance in those areas. The Director commented that his formal Letter of Representation was included in the Annual Governance Report, which also contained an action plan to ensure compliance with the recommendations contained within the Report.

Resolved – That the action plan contained within the Annual Governance Report be approved.

154 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND

The Director of Finance presented the Audit Commission Annual Governance Report for the Merseyside Pension Fund, which had been considered by the Pensions Committee (minute 38 (22 September 2009) refers) and the Audit and Risk Management Committee (minute 26 (23 September 2009) refers). The District Auditor had given an unqualified audit opinion and the report contained an action plan to ensure compliance with the recommendations contained therein.

Resolved – That the action plan be approved.

155 MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND - FUNDING STRATEGY STATEMENT

The Director of Finance reported upon an amendment to the Merseyside Pension Fund Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) to reflect updated advice on dealing with termination assessments on the cessation of an employer's participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). He commented that the Pensions Committee on 22 September 2009 (minute 43 refers) approved the amended Funding Strategy Statement and the Department for Communities and Local Government had

recommended that the FSS should also be agreed by the Cabinet of the Administering Authority.

Resolved – That the revised Funding Strategy Statement be approved.

156 **MERSEYSIDE PENSION FUND - AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009**

Further to minute 36 (Pensions Committee (22 September 2009), the Director of Finance presented the final audited accounts for the Merseyside Pension Fund for the year ended 31 March 2009. It was the first year in which the Pension Fund accounts had been prepared in accordance with the new Pensions Statement of Recommended Practice (the Pensions SORP), and also with regard to the Local Authority SORP and the Director provided an analysis of changes, which affected the value of the Fund; and amendments that had no impact on the overall value.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

157 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES STUDY**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services provided a detailed summary of the Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study (ELPS), which provided a detailed analysis of all sites currently identified for potential employment use and an assessment of all of the key employment areas within the Borough. He indicated that it was the key element of the evidence required to provide a strategic framework for determining the Borough's employment land requirements for the life of the Local Development Framework (LDF) to 2030.

On a motion by Councillor Holbrook and seconded by Councillor Foulkes, it was –

Resolved –

(1) That Cabinet approves the Employment Land and Premises Study as a material consideration for use by the Planning Committee in the determination of planning applications with the proviso that flexibility in terms of green belt policy shall not go beyond that set out in the quote from the Council's Investment Strategy at paragraph 3.42 of the report now submitted.

(2) That the findings of the Study be used to inform the content of the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

(3) That the findings of the Study be used to inform the delivery of Investment Strategy priorities.

158 **SUPPORTING WIRRAL'S TOURISM BUSINESSES DURING THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services reported upon the development, with The Mersey Partnership (TMP) and the other Merseyside boroughs, of a joint three-year 'Partners for Tourism Growth' bid for European

Funding, which had now been secured from the Northwest Development Agency's (NWDA) operational programme.

The Wirral element of the project was £600,000, of which £300,000 was a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) grant, matched against £300,000 from the Council's existing budget and it would directly help local tourism businesses market their products and services more efficiently and effectively. He provided details of the three strategic components of the three-year project and he commented that the Mersey Partnership, which had co-ordinated the bid would act as the accountable body and be responsible for any claw back as a result of under performance on any of the projected outcomes on the part of any of the partners.

Resolved – That the underwriting of £300,000 of Regional Development Funding from the Council's matched funding budget and reserve, be approved.

159 **A PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN TRANMERE AND ROCK FERRY**

The Director of Regeneration outlined a proposal for the future of Neighbourhood Management in Tranmere and Rock Ferry, which had been agreed by the Neighbourhood Management and Lairdsides Communities Boards, by recommending the merging of the Neighbourhood Management Project (known as Tranmere Together) into the existing Lairdsides Communities Trust (LCT) and then naming the new company Lairdsides Communities Together. He provided details of the merger proposal and referred also to the proposed transfer to the new company of property at 136-138 Bedford Road, Rock Ferry.

He reported also that the Council had been invited by the two merging organisations to become a member of the new company and two places on the Board had been offered, preferably to elected members with knowledge of the local area.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Area Based Grant approved to fund Neighbourhood Management in Rock Ferry and Tranmere until March 2011, which is currently paid to Riverside Housing Association, be paid to Lairdsides Communities Together from 2 November 2009.**
- (2) That the Area Based Grant be only used by Lairdsides Communities Together to fund activities which implement Neighbourhood Management in Tranmere and Rock Ferry.**
- (3) That advance payments of grant, using the Council's existing arrangements, be made as the new organisation has evidenced that this is required for cash flow purposes.**
- (4) That the property at 136-138 Bedford Road be formally transferred to Lairdsides Communities Together.**
- (5) That Councillors P Davies and C Meaden be appointed as the Councils representatives on the Board of Lairdsides Communities Together, for the remainder of the municipal year.**

The Director of Children's Services presented an overview of services to support young people outside the school setting. Integrated Youth Support comprised universal youth support, which covered those services available to all young people, regardless of need; and targeted youth support, which covered services designed to support vulnerable young people and the communities in which they lived, by targeted interventions.

He set out the range of services that provided youth support and in response to the Youth Outreach Scrutiny Review, wider changes in National Youth Policy and the process for the commissioning of Connexions Services, recommended structural changes to the Children and Young Peoples Department (CYPD) and the Department for Regeneration. Specifically, he proposed to bring together in the Participation and Inclusion Branch of the Children and Young People's Department, the Youth Offending Service, the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team and responsibility for management of the new contract for the provision of Connexions Services.

Those services would then be under the same management as the Youth Service, Young Peoples' Engagement and Wirral Alternative Schools Programme (WASP). He proposed the establishment of a post of Strategic Service Manager to lead and co-ordinate the growing and important area of work, which would be funded from the part of the Area Based Grant ear-marked for Connexions Service Management (see minute 173 post).

Members expressed their thanks to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for undertaking the Scrutiny Review and commented also upon the sterling work undertaken to date by the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team, which they were confident would continue. The Chair commented also upon views that had been expressed at the Youth Parliament, which could involve young people in administering sanctions against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

Resolved –

- (1) That the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team and relevant Sports Development Unit staff associated with the delivery of out of hours diversionary activity be transferred from the Regeneration Department to the Children and Young People's Department and co-located at the Solar Campus.**
- (2) That in order to ensure compliance of the Connexions Contract and to manage the integrated Youth Support Service, a Strategic Manager (Integrated Youth Support) be appointed.**
- (3) That the Youth Offending Service (YOS), currently free standing, be moved to the Participation and Inclusion Branch.**

161 **STRATEGY FOR SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS 2009 AND BEYOND**

The Director of Adult Social Services submitted and provided a brief overview of the 'Wirral Older Peoples Mental Health Strategy 2009 and Beyond', which was a joint document across NHS Wirral and Wirral Department of Adult Social Services. It was the culmination of a number of strands of work undertaken over the past year, which included the development of a local 'gold standard' pathway for dementia; participation in the Care Services Efficiency Delivery Unit (DH) pilot project on Dementia' which built on the local work previously undertaken; and benchmarking of the local strategy against the National Dementia Strategy.

He set out the key issues that had arisen from the completion of the Strategy and commented that whilst the overall strategy encompassed older people with a range of mental health needs, the inevitable focus was on those with dementia and their carers. The Dementia UK Report (2007) indicated that the numbers of people in Wirral over 65 with dementia was 4,924 and was estimated to increase by 28% by 2020. The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion commented that there was a real imperative to develop a range of services for that particular group.

In response to a comment from the Leader of the Conservative Group with regard to there being little reference in the Strategy to depression, the Director accepted it being a serious mental health issue. However, there was a specific and identified need to develop services specifically in relation to dementia. He outlined a number of key recommendations that had emerged in relation to meeting needs within the context of an overall pathway of care and he indicated that the Strategy had been fully supported and approved by the Local Implementation Team, the Older Peoples Joint Commissioning Group, the Professional Executive Committee, NHS Wirral and Department of Adult Social Services Strategic Leadership Team.

Resolved – That the Strategy for Services for Older People with Mental Health Needs 2009 and Beyond, be approved.

162 **PERSONAL BUDGETS**

Further to minute 54 (23 July 2009), the Director of Adult Social Services reported upon progress of the application of the social care reform grant, to support the Council in the transformation of adult social services to meet the personalisation agenda. He commented that personal budgets were just one way of approaching the bigger personalisation agenda and he reported upon progress in relation to Wirral's personal budget pilot (Phase 1), which was due to reach completion at the end of October 2009.

He proposed that phase 2 of Wirral's personal budget pilot would commence in November 2009 and that it would be tested on a minimum of 10% of people receiving community based services, in order to give a more realistic and statistically valid assessment of the impact of the resource allocation system on the budget and test if processes and systems were workable on a wider cohort of individuals. The intention for phase 3 would be to roll out the new system and processes from August 2010. The Director commented that the numbers of people on personal budgets across the country varied dramatically and he reported that the national performance indicator (NI 130) for measuring the success of self directed support and take up of direct

payments, personal budgets or individuals budgets was also included within Wirral's Local Area Agreement.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion stressed the importance of ensuring that vulnerable people were not adversely affected by the implementation of personal budgets and self directed support and she highlighted the importance of a seminar that had been arranged for all elected members on 29 October 2009, to provide information on personalisation, in particular, details of self directed support, personal budgets and their impact on future demand for support services.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents of the report and the current progress of the personal budgets pilot be noted.**
- (2) That the proposal set out in paragraph 4.12 of the report now submitted, that Phase 2 of Wirral's personal budget pilot is tested on a minimum 10% of people receiving community based services, be endorsed.**
- (3) That all members be asked to attend the personalisation seminar on 29 October 2009 for further information.**

163 **SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that at its meeting held on 14 September 2009 (minute 14 refers), the Scrutiny Programme Board referred the following proposed amendment to paragraph (iv) of its terms of reference (Call-in Notices) to the Cabinet for consideration –

“(iv) the chair and party spokespersons of the scrutiny programme board shall consider call-in notices in relation to executive functions which fall within the terms of reference of more than one overview and scrutiny committee and allocate such notices to those committees affected by the decision.”

On a motion by Councillor Holbrook and seconded by Councillor Foulkes, it was –

RECOMMENDED –

That Cabinet notes the request of the Scrutiny Programme Board to change its terms of reference and further notes that this is a constitutional change, which needs to be referred to the Council.

However, Cabinet recognises also that the original terms of reference were specifically agreed by the Council in order to reduce the need for multiple hearings on the same item and to allow the Scrutiny Programme Board itself to hear call-ins which affect more than one Committee.

As the original terms of reference do not preclude hearings by more than one Committee, where the Scrutiny Programme Board believes this is appropriate and the revised terms of reference specifically remove the right of the Scrutiny Programme to hear call-ins affecting more than one Committee, Cabinet

believes this is contrary to the Council's intent and so recommends that the terms of reference remain unchanged.

164 **HEALTH AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported that at its meeting on 8 September 2009 (minute 16 refers), the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee referred the following proposed amendments to its terms of reference to the Cabinet for consideration:

Social Inclusion – Paragraph 4:

Social inclusion and to promote the role of the local authority, working with the NHS community on Wirral, to improve Public Health and well-being and to address health inequalities. [*Sentence put into better English*]

All Portfolios – Paragraph 13:

To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups. [*Delete all wording at the end of this paragraph: 'including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long term unemployed, the poor and women'*]

RECOMMENDED – That the proposed amendments to the terms of reference be forwarded to the Council for determination.

165 **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF MORETON COMMUNITY CENTRE**

Further to minute 407 (19 March 2009), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management requested approval for a transfer of the Moreton Community Centre to Moreton Community Centre Limited in accordance with the Council's Asset Transfer Policy. He outlined the community benefit of the transfer and provided details of the transfer proposal. He commented also that a five year business plan produced by the Joint Management Committee had been assessed by the Director of Finance, who considered it to be sustainable following a transitional two year period. An independent property condition survey had also been undertaken and the Director reported that agreement had been reached in relation to the cost of the works that were required to enable a transfer to proceed.

Resolved –

- (1) That a transfer of the Moreton Community Centre to Moreton Community Centre Limited be agreed and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to negotiate and complete the necessary lease on the terms set out in his report.**
- (2) That a grant be made using monies allocated through the Community Fund to cover the cost of agreed works to the property and transitional costs for the first two years of the business plan.**
- (3) That a six month review of the progress of the business plan for the first two years of its operation be undertaken to ensure that it is on target to achieve a surplus position by the beginning of Year 3.**

166 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved – That, in accordance with section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

167 **RATING OF FORMER DOCK PROPERTIES**

Further to minute 430 (19 March 2009), the Director of Finance provided an update in relation to the change to the valuation for rating purposes of what were previously described as Dock Undertakings. He commented upon the national picture and reported upon the outcome of the Wirral valuation exercise, undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency, which had begun in April 2008. All occupiers had been billed for their liabilities from 2005 and he outlined the consequential local economic impact of firms being termed insolvent, if they were unable to pay a 'now due' bill. He provided details of the commercial companies involved and set out the options available to the Council in relation to recovery of debt.

Resolved –

- (1) That each occupier be informed of the position of sums due and invited to consider requesting spread or scheduled payments over an extended period but that if non payment continues then normal recovery action be taken.**
- (2) That, prior to the commencement of any recovery action, a further update report be presented to a future meeting.**

168 **UPDATE ON NEW BRIGHTON**

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services provided an update in relation to Neptune Development's Phase 2 proposals for the regeneration of the New Brighton seafront, which would provide a new supermarket, cinema, budget hotel, outdoor lido, associated leisure and restaurant offer and public realm improvements (including major improvements to the seafront promenade), which in turn would create over 700 new jobs within the local economy. He commented that the first phase, which involved the construction of the Floral Pavilion complex, had been completed in December 2008 and he provided information in relation planning matters and to the funding position for the phase 2 works, including the offer of a grant from the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) and its implications to the Council.

Resolved –

- (1) That having considered the content of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services, the offer of grant assistance from the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) be accepted.**

- (2) That the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to negotiate and conclude agreements with the NWDA as provider of grant funding.**
- (3) That the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to negotiate and conclude a funding agreement between the Council and the developer in relation to the grant awarded to implement the infrastructure and public realm improvements within the Phase 2 development.**

169 **AREA APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS - BELMONT, BIRKENHEAD**

The Director of Regeneration sought approval to conduct a preliminary area appraisal of the Belmont area in Birkenhead to determine ownership and prospects for regeneration of the site. He commented that the long term intention was to assess the feasibility of demolishing existing buildings and assembling a site of strategic interest for future redevelopment to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area. Subject to consultation with the current land and property owners, authority was also sought for the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to agree terms and complete the strategic acquisition of land and properties within the Belmont site boundary and in connection with such transactions, pay the vendors' legal and surveyors fees and where appropriate ex-gratia Home Loss, Loss and Disturbance Allowance payments. He reported that in order to authorise such payments, members needed to approve an amendment to the current Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy.

In response to comments from members in relation to the lack of car parking in the area, the Director agreed to investigate the provision of parking whilst undertaking the area appraisal, which would be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

Resolved –

- (1) That the commencement of a preliminary area appraisal of the Belmont site (including car parking provision) to determine ownership and prospects for regeneration of the site be approved, the long term intention being to assess the feasibility of demolishing existing buildings and assembling a site of strategic interest for future redevelopment.**
- (2) That subject to consultation with the current land and property owners, authority be delegated to the Director of Law, HR & Asset Management to agree terms and complete the strategic acquisition of land and properties within the Belmont site boundary and in connection with such transactions, to pay the vendors' legal and surveyors fees and where appropriate home loss, loss and disturbance payments.**
- (3) That in order to authorise payments, an amendment to the current Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy be approved.**

170 **THORNEYCROFT, PLUMER AND RUNDLE STREETS, BIRKENHEAD - NEIGHBOURHOOD OPTIONS APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS**

The Director of Regeneration reported upon the proposed implementation of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal (NOA) involving residential properties in Thorneycroft Street, Plumer Street and Rundle Street, Birkenhead and non residential properties 96-114 Laird Street, including the Baptist Church, to determine the long term future of the area as part of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative. The area was identified as 'Area 2' on a plan appended to his report and he commented that the phased demolition of properties acquired in the neighbouring 'Area 1' had commenced in August 2009.

He reported also that authority was sought for the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to agree terms for and to complete the strategic acquisition of buildings located within the Area 2 boundary, where owners approach the Council to sell in advance of the NOA findings. He commented that in connection with any such transactions, the payment of the vendor's reasonable legal and surveyor's fees would be made under the Councils Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (amended in April 2009). In addition, the full range of appropriate financial and advisory assistance was to be made available under the same policy, including the Homemovers Service.

Resolved –

- (1) That the implementation of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal (NOA) be authorised in respect of "Area 2" (shown on the plan attached to the report now submitted), involving residential properties in Thorneycroft Street, Plumer Street and Rundle Street, Birkenhead and non residential properties 96-114 Laird Street, including the Baptist Church, to determine the long term future of the area as part of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative.**
- (2) That the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be authorised to agree terms for, and to complete the strategic acquisition of buildings located within the Area 2 boundary where owners approach the Council to sell in advance of the NOA findings. In connection with any such transactions, the payment of the vendor's reasonable legal and surveyors fees be made under the Councils Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (amended in April 2009).**
- (3) That the full range of appropriate financial and advisory assistance be made available under the same policy, including the Homemovers Service.**

171 **CORPORATION ROAD/LAIRD STREET - PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The Director of Regeneration sought approval for the commencement of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal (NOA) involving 32 properties; 841-863 Corporation Road, Birkenhead inclusive and 346 to 384 Laird Street, Birkenhead inclusive. He also sought approval to make strategic acquisitions within the proposed NOA area, pending the final outcome and recommendation of the most satisfactory course of action for the properties. In connection with any such transactions, the payment of the vendor's reasonable legal and surveyors fess would be made under

the Council's Private Sector Housing and Regeneration Assistance Policy (amended in April 2009) and in addition, the full range of advisory assistance was to be made available under the same policy including the 'Homemovers' Service.

Resolved –

- (1) That the commencement of a Neighbourhood Options Appraisal (NOA), encompassing 841-863 Corporation Road, Birkenhead inclusive and 346 to 384 Laird Street, Birkenhead inclusive, as shown on the map at appendix 1 to the report now submitted, be approved.**
- (2) That Cabinet gives approval for strategic acquisitions to be made within the proposed NOA, pending the final outcome and recommendation of the most satisfactory course of action for the properties.**

172 HUMAN RESOURCES AND PAYROLL SYSTEM

Further to minute 435 (19 March 2009), the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management reported upon the outcome of the procurement exercise for the most appropriate integrated payroll and HR system. He outlined the factors considered as part of the procurement exercise and provided details of the specification that had been developed to ensure that the chosen supplier could evidence successful HR and payroll implementations in other public sector environments.

He provided details of the tender evaluation exercise and set out the anticipated savings over the period April 2010 to March 2015.

Resolved –

- (1) That the recommendation to accept the tender submitted by NorthgateArinso be approved, this being the most economically advantageous based on an assessment of cost and quality.**
- (2) That the updated anticipated savings, set out in an addendum to the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, be noted.**
- (3) That a further report detailing the savings and implementation be presented to Cabinet once the detailed implementation plan has been agreed with NorthgateArinso.**

173 CONNEXIONS SERVICES CONTRACT

The Director of Children's Services reported upon the outcome of the Competitive Dialogue Process for the commissioning of a Connexions Service for the six Merseyside Authorities for the period January 2010 to 31 March 2012. He commented that the shared approach to managing a service had involved extensive consultation across the Merseyside Authorities and a robust commissioning process managed by external contractors Mott McDonald. The outcome of this process was that all six authorities were seeking approval to award the contract to Greater Merseyside Connexions Service (GMCS).

It had been agreed that Halton Borough Council would act as the lead for work to secure the commissioning of connexions services for the participating local authorities and would be the contract holder with the supplier. Other authorities would then enter into funding agreements with Halton to provide for their share of the costs. The Director set out the financial implications for Wirral of the Connexions contract, which could be met from within the existing revenue budget and known Area Based Grant for 2010-2011. However, funding for 2011-2012 would need to be included in budget projections for 2011-2014.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contract for a Connexions Service be awarded to Greater Merseyside Connexions Service for the period July 2010 to March 2012.**
- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, on advice from the Director of Children's Services, the Director of Finance and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, to sign a funding agreement between Wirral Borough Council and Halton Borough Council for the Management of this contract.**

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