

# **CABINET**

Monday, 4 June 2018

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council
	Councillors	P Brightmore A Davies G Davies C Jones B Mooney M Patrick P Stuart J Williamson S Whittingham	Leisure & Recreation Jobs & Growth Housing & Planning Adult Care & Health Children & Families Environment Law & Order Finance & Resources Highways & Transport

## **1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

## **2 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.**

## **3 EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS**

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the following Key Decision taken under delegated authority from the period 16 March 2018 to date be noted:**

- **Leader of the Council**

**Assisted Travel (Specialist Transport) Services Re-Commissioning from September 2018 – Full Business Case and Award of Contract Routes**

**Effective from 28 April 2018.**



**Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council, said:**

*“Wirral residents expect good services; they expect their streets to be clean, their communities to be safe and their roads to be in good condition. They expect the vulnerable to be safe and protected, and for the economy to grow – creating the opportunities they need to secure good, well-paid jobs.*

*We will deliver on all of those expectations. Committing to delivering these priorities is about setting out our stall, it is about being clear with Wirral residents about what we will deliver and what they can expect from us.*

*We will also make sure we keep people informed on our progress, encourage residents to get involved in their local communities and shaping local services, and work with all of our partners to make sure we continue to deliver on our 20 Pledges.”*

Councillor Phil Davies introduced his report which set out the strategic priorities for the Council in 2018/19. Progress against these priorities would be monitored and reported back on a regular basis throughout the year. The aim was to deliver outcomes against the 20 Pledges in the Wirral Plan.

Councillor Davies reported that following last month’s local elections, the people of Wirral once again had chosen a Labour administration to run the Council, but they had also told Members what mattered most to them and what they wanted them to deliver. Members had listened and were taking action. This report reaffirmed the importance of delivering the 20 Pledges in the Wirral Plan, agreed unanimously by the Council in 2015. It also focussed on the following five strategic priorities to which particular emphasis would be given during 2018/19:

- Getting the Basics Right
- Jobs and Growth
- Children’s Services
- Local Plan and Housing
- Leisure and Culture Review

Against a continued back drop of austerity, the Cabinet knew it would be facing savings in excess of £45 million in 2019/20. In addition, the following year would see the removal of the Revenue Support Grant in its entirety. This would require the Council to make substantial changes to the way in which services were delivered and to continue to identify opportunities to generate additional income. For the immediate twelve months, and to begin to prepare for the huge change to local government financing in 2020/21, a number of changes had been made to Cabinet Portfolios. These had been announced at Annual Council Part 2 on

Tuesday, 15 May 2018, and had included a new Cabinet role focused on tackling law and order issues, a major concern for many residents.

Councillor Phil Davies then invited Cabinet Members to comment on what was proposed in the report. They did so in turn by making reference to the Government's continuing austerity measures, the challenging financial circumstances the Council found itself in, the need to bring in funding and by endorsing the five priorities that had been developed following conversations with communities, market research and the financial imperatives the Council was working within. They focused on issues that were most important to local people, sought to find imaginative and efficient new ways of providing and commissioning services and expressed their ambitions for the people of Wirral.

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet:**

**(1) re-affirms its support for The Wirral Plan and endorses the following Strategic Priorities for 2018/19:**

- **Getting the Basics Right**
- **Jobs and Growth**
- **Children's Services**
- **Local Plan and Housing**
- **Leisure and Culture Review**

and

**(2) instructs relevant senior officers to work with their Cabinet leads to develop the detailed plans required to deliver on the Strategic Priorities, with a further report provided for the Cabinet's consideration as soon as possible.**

**5 CONSENT TO LEGISLATION TO ENABLE DEVOLUTION OF THE ADULT EDUCATION BUDGET**



**Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, said:**

*"We are determined to ensure people in Wirral have the skills which businesses need – the skills which will help our residents build good, well-paid careers which allow them to support their families and achieve their aspirations.*

*Working with our colleagues in the Liverpool City Region to develop local programmes to meet local need, is vital if we are going to be successful".*

Councillor Bernie Mooney introduced a report by the 14-19 Adult Learning Strategy Manager that outlined a process for agreeing the Devolution Order required to enable full devolution of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) from the start of the 2019/20 academic year along with the timescale for doing so. Currently the AEB was administrated nationally by the Education Skills Funding Agency and

primarily funded the Council's Lifelong Learning Service and adult further education at Wirral Metropolitan College.

The Cabinet noted that at this stage, the Combined Authority did not have the legal powers to be able to administer the AEB. The Government did not include the required powers in the Order which created the role of the Metro Mayor and enabled the implementation of the majority of the Devolution Agreement. The delay in providing these powers had meant that the original plan for devolution in time for the 2018/19 academic year had been delayed and it was now expected to commence with effect from 2019/20.

In order to enable the legal powers to be conferred on the Combined Authority, an Order needed to be laid and agreed in Parliament: this was in line with previous processes which included the creation of the Combined Authority and the enabling of the Devolution Agreement. The final draft of the Order was then expected to be circulated in late May 2018, at which point the Government would require the constituent local authorities and the Combined Authority each to provide formal consent by mid-June 2018.

There was a tight legislative window to allow for the Order to be laid in Parliament and thereby enable the duties to be conferred onto the Combined Authority in time for the 2019/20 academic year. The Combined Authority and the constituent local authorities would be required to provide consent to the final draft Order by mid-June 2018, with the text having been received in late May 2018.

This matter affected all Wards within the Borough and was a key decision.

No other options could be considered as the Council had signed up to be part of the Liverpool City Region devolution deal in November 2015.

Councillor Bernie Mooney reported that the principal purpose of the Adult Education Budget was to engage adults in learning which supported wider economic and social priorities. This included the community learning provided by constituent local authorities and "second chance provision" within colleges and Wirral Metropolitan College had been instrumental in going out and supporting these people. The Combined Authority would also need to continue to secure provision of free study for learners who meet certain conditions for study for specified qualifications provided as a result of Statutory Entitlements.

Members noted that the funding value for 2019/20 had yet to be confirmed, but the illustrative budget value for the Liverpool City Region for the 2018/19 academic year was £52m. Locally, the Council's Lifelong Learning Service and Wirral Metropolitan College received largest share of this budget in 2017/18 with allocations of, £839,478 and £3,131,305 respectively.

Having the powers to commission this funding would allow the Combined Authority to set out priorities for delivery through its local skills plan, rather than resorting to influence. The Combined Authority called for this aspect of devolution because it would represent a significant change from the current situation, and would provide the Combined Authority with more ability to meet the needs of local employers.

Councillor Phil Davies considered that the Government should have made this power available to the Council last year. Concern had been expressed as it involved a key budget to enable learners to contribute to social and economic goals.

The Council had entered into the devolution agreement as it took the view that decisions were better made locally. The Merseyside Local Authorities all wanted further powers and funding and they would continue to lobby Government Ministers for this as would Steve Rotheram, the Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- (1) the requirement for each Liverpool City Region local authority to provide consent for the draft legislative Order to enable the transfer of Adult Education Budget powers to the Combined Authority from the start of the 2019/20 academic year by June 2018 be noted ; and**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to provide consent to the Final Order, on behalf of the Council.**