

CABINET

Monday, 25 February 2019

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

56 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Phil Brightmore, Phil Davies, George Davies, Anita Leech, Bernie Mooney, Paul Stuart and Stuart Whittingham declared a personal interest in Item No. 5 on the agenda – Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary Schools and the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for 2020/21 (Minute No. 60 refers) by virtue of them being School Governors.

57 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

58 EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

RESOLVED:

That the following Key Decisions taken under delegated authority from the period 16 November 2018 (date of publication of last Cabinet agenda) to date be noted:

Decision Maker - Cabinet Member, Finance and Resources.

Collection Fund 2018-19

That

- (1) the declaration of an estimated £0.59 million surplus balance position for the Council Tax proportion of the Collection Fund for the year ending 31 March 2019 be notified to the precepting bodies (Wirral's share is £0.50million);**
- (2) the declaration of the 2018/19 National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) surplus/deficit position and 2018/19 initial forecast be made by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Investment (Section 151 Officer) on, or before 31 January 2019 (The forecast was still to be finalised);**
- (3) any Council share of the 'one-off' distribution from the Collection Fund, currently estimated as surplus regarding Council Tax be added to the General Fund balances for use in supporting the General Fund budget; and**
- (4) any surplus of deficit position arising from the estimated NNDR position as at 31 January 2019 be reflected in the 2019/20 budget and General Fund balances.**

Published 7 February 2019. Call-In expired 14 February 2019.

59

DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2019/20 MUNICIPAL YEAR



Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council - (Overall strategic direction of Council; Lead the Wirral Partnership; Lead Wirral across Liverpool City Region), said:

“This report sets out a programme of meetings for the coming Municipal Year, allowing the Council to plan its business effectively and enable effective governance and scrutiny of all decisions.”

Councillor Phil Davies introduced a report which recommended draft dates for Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings (“Council meetings”) for the Municipal Year 2019/2020.

Appendix 1 to the report described various issues that had been taken into account in compiling the draft calendar.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed other meetings that did not constitute a meeting of the Council and, therefore, did not require inclusion in the Calendar of Meetings. Notification of these other meetings was provided to help Members to manage their diaries.

The Cabinet was reminded that the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision set out a shared partnership vision to improve outcomes for Wirral residents. Delivery of the priorities and outcomes described in the Plan was dependent on the efficient operation of the democratic process to scrutinise and make the decisions required and the requirement for the scheduling of Council meetings which make these decisions.

The decision required was not a key decision and no other options were considered beyond those outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Council:

That

- (1) the relevant draft Calendar of Meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year set out at Appendix 1 to the report for approval, and unless amended at the meeting of Council on 18 March 2019, be confirmed as the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2019/20;**
- (2) the other meetings set out at Appendix 2 to the report be noted and Members be requested to diarise those meetings as appropriate; and**
- (3) any proposed amendments to the Calendar of Meetings and Appendix 2 to the report be submitted to the Director of Governance and Assurance by no later than 10am on Friday, 8 March 2019.**

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2020-2021



Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member – Children & Families, said:

“Making sure your child gets into the right school is incredibly important for every family in the borough. It is important we have a fair, equitable policy to determine school admission arrangements. This report provides that policy for Wirral parents”.

Councillor Bernie Mooney introduced a report which invited the Cabinet to determine the Authority’s Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary Schools and the Co-ordinated Schemes for 2020-2021, a statutory requirement.

Appended to the report was the Primary Co-ordinated Scheme of Admissions 2020 – 2021(Appendix 1) and the Secondary Co-ordinated Scheme for Admissions 2020 – 2021.

Consultation on the Co-ordinated Scheme had taken place with all Wirral Schools, other relevant Admission Authorities and all statutory consultees. The consultation period had taken place between 17 October and 28 November 2018 which complied with requirements set out in the School Admissions Code 2014.

The Cabinet noted that the date by which the School Admission Arrangements must be determined was 28 February 2019, that they must then be published on the Council’s website by 15 March 2019 and that the deadline for objections against the Admission Arrangements to the School Adjudicator was 15 May 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and the Wirral Co-ordinated Schemes for 2020-2021 be agreed.

61 **CALLED IN ITEM - LOCAL PLAN - RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Cabinet received its Minute of a called-in decision that it had previously made on the Local Plan at its meeting held on 17 December 2018 (Minute No. 47 refers) and had regard to the Cabinet report it had considered at that meeting. It also considered Minute No. 43 of the Special meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 February 2019 to consider the called-in decision.

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had held a special meeting on 7 February 2019 to give the called-in decision its consideration and had made (Minute No. 43 refers). The Cabinet noted that the Committee had resolved as follows:

'That

The Cabinet Member to set out a timetable and programme for publication of all studies;

To set out costs of consultants proposed to be employed and identify all budget headings;

Report to Cabinet on a structure for Member led consultation after discussions with all Parties to ensure details of all studies are available;

The Cabinet Member takes further action towards a cross-party working Group on the Local Plan and provides continued further information to answer questions from all back bench elected Members.'

Councillor George Davies reported that an appropriate, robust Local Plan which met the housing needs of Wirral's residents was a must. It was a vital duty which the Council would deliver. He informed that he had made it clear from the outset that the Local Plan would be underpinned by the views and needs of Wirral residents and would include the highest levels of democratic oversight and scrutiny by his fellow Councillors. That was why he was pleased to respond to the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and set out the avenues for Elected Members of all parties to play a fundamental role in shaping Wirral's Local Plan.

In response to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation which Councillor George Davies welcomed, he would present the Cabinet with a table that identified all the technical studies commissioned from third parties required to support the current Local Plan work, their publication dates and costs (were known). Paragraph 31 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stated that the preparation and review of all Local Plan policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. All local planning authorities relied on these technical studies to gather the evidence required for the Examination and to ensure that the Local Plan was ultimately found 'sound' by the Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

Councillor George Davies informed that he had written to the Political Group Leaders seeking a meeting with them to discuss the formation of a cross-party Advisory Group on the Local Plan. He also informed that he would report back to the Cabinet with the terms of reference for this once the meeting had taken place with them.

Councillor George Davies went on to say that he had asked officers to arrange a series of briefings for all Members of the Council on the Local Plan process and future timetable. He would Chair these meetings and was happy as the Cabinet Member with support from officers, to answer all questions from backbench Elected Members.

Councillor George Davies reported that, within the Council's budget there was a specific cost centre where all of the Local Plan costs could be identified and monitored as the Local Plan work progressed. There was an allocated one off additional budget of £1.2m, funded from reserves and other resources for expenditure to March 2020.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that Cabinet Members accepted the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations. There was in absolute agreement that all Members should be involved in the Local Plan process and have the opportunity to scrutinise it and ask questions.

Councillor Phil Davies also reminded the Cabinet of the tight timeline that must be adhered to in the delivery of the Local Plan. It would be worked on at pace in order to meet the deadlines that had been laid down. Providing these deadlines were kept to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's requests should be agreed and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning had set out exactly how this would be done and had detailed what the Cabinet would receive a further report on.

Councillor Phil Brightmore informed that he considered it to be an utter disgrace that the Government was forcing such housing targets on the Council and if through the recommendations arising out of the call-in, the Council can come together to express its disgust, then hopefully, the Government will change its mind and allow the Council to set its own targets.

Councillor Phil Davies made the point that the Cabinet was committed to supporting the ONS figures for housing projections (488) and, as Leader, he had written to the Secretary of State to make this clear. This remained the position. He considered it to be an accurate reflection of the needs of Wirral than the much higher figure (803) that the Government initially had set out. Cabinet Members would continue to make that case to Government at every opportunity in the coming weeks and months.

Councillor George Davies recommended and it was

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet

- (1) receives and considers the recommendations of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny meeting of 7 February 2019;**
- (2) notes and endorses the actions of the Cabinet Member with portfolio for Housing and Planning in:**
 - (a) setting out a table identifying all the technical studies, their publication dates and their costs;**
 - (b) writing to the Political Group Leaders seeking a meeting with them to discuss the formation of a cross-party Advisory Group on the Local Plan; and**
 - (c) arranging a series of briefings for all Members of the Council on the Local Plan process and future timetable.**
- (3) requests the Cabinet Member to report back to the Cabinet for approval of the terms of reference of a cross-party Local Plan Advisory Group; and**
- (4) authorises the Corporate Director for Business Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the portfolio for Housing and**

Planning, to undertake decisions relating to the approval and publication of the evidence base and associated technical reports, relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan.