

CABINET

Monday, 25 March 2019

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	P Davies (Chair)	Leader of the Council
	Councillors	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
<u>Apologies:</u>	Councillors	P Brightmore	Leisure & Recreation

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phil Brightmore.

63 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Paul Stuart declared a personal interest in agenda Item No. 10 – Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy 2019 – 2022 and Market Position Statement (Minute No. 73 refers) by virtue of him and his wife being foster carers.

64 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25 February 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

65 EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

RESOLVED:

That the following Key Decision taken under delegated authority from the period 15 February, 2019 (date of publication of last Cabinet agenda) to date be noted:

- **Wirral Ways to Work - ESF Programme Application (Key Decision) Cabinet Member Jobs and Growth. 7 March 2019. Call-in waived in respect of this decision (urgency).**

66 **NOMINATION OF CIVIC MAYOR AND DEPUTY CIVIC MAYOR 2019/20**

The Cabinet was requested to make nominations for the positions of Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor for the Municipal Year 2019/2020, which would be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the following nominations be made for the Municipal Year 2019/2020 at the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 13 May 2019:

- **Councillor Tony Smith for the role of Civic Mayor.**
- **Councillor George Davies for the role of Deputy Civic Mayor.**

67 **BOROUGH OF CULTURE EVENT - ANIMATED SQUARE**

Councillor Phil Davies reported on Animated Square, a Wirral Borough of Culture event that had taken place from 5 to 9pm on Saturday, 23 March 2019 in Hamilton Square, Birkenhead. Birkenhead Town Hall had come alive with an incredible 3D projection show which told the story of Birkenhead's past, present and future. Created by award-winning Illuminos, Animated Square celebrated the town's people, places and history.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that he had been very impressed. The event provided an economic benefit for the area and was attended by 10,000 visitors, surpassing attendance at the previous Animated Square event held in May 2018. It was a great start to Wirral's year as the host Borough of Culture for the Liverpool City Region.

Councillor Phil Davies thanked Lucy Barrow, Charli McCann and the team who had organised the event and carried out a huge amount of the work. He looked forward to the other events that were being planned and informed that the Events Programme from March to July 2019 was really exciting.

Looking back at Imagine Wirral 2018, Councillor Phil Davies reported that the Council had secured over £200,000 of external funding including the largest Arts Council grant that it had ever had which was fantastic news. Holding the accolade as this year's LCR Borough of Culture will further enable us to obtain commercial income and external funding to maximise on our creative programming and generate a return on investment.

Councillor Angie Davies informed that it had been a pleasure to look at Hamilton Square as it had been packed with people, both young and old from all over the Borough. What had been going on had been phenomenal and she was of the view that the Borough of Culture year would help with the momentum around Wirral's growth and regeneration plans, particularly due to the level of investment and return that the Council would get from such events.

Councillor Angie Davies informed that last year's Imagine Wirral programme had attracted over 250,000 visitors to the Borough and that this year's programme would place the borough on an international platform like never before, bringing even more visitors to Wirral.

Councillor Angie Davies informed that the Borough of Culture was really helping to put Wirral on the map. She referred to the Wirral Borough of Culture Programme that had been circulated to Cabinet Members at the meeting which detailed forthcoming events and echoed Councillor Phil Davies' thanks to all those officers involved with the arrangements.

Councillor Davies reported that Paul Askew, an internationally renowned chef, had put on a fantastic display of food on the Saturday. Paul is the Chair of the Visitor Economy Board. It was great that someone so well-known was involved in the front and centre of the Borough of Culture. All in all it had been a brilliant event. Councillor Davies looked forward to the rest of the events scheduled during the Borough of Culture year.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received.

68 WIRRAL WATERS: HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Councillor George Davies introduced a report and informed that in November 2017, Wirral Council had submitted a bid to Central Government for £6,004,160 from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme, to support housing development in Wirral Waters. Wirral Waters was the only scheme within Wirral that met the HIF programme criteria. Cabinet Members noted that the process was highly competitive as the programme was heavily oversubscribed but in February 2018 Central Government had announced, in principle, that the bid from the Council had been successful.

Councillor George Davies reported that he was delighted that the bid had been successful and that the funding would support the delivery of over 1,000 properties at Northbank, Wirral Waters which would include the Urban Splash development, the Belong Urban Village and the Wirral Waters One project. Together with the Wirral Waters One development, this scheme represented a step change to the residential offer in the East Wirral housing market. It would fund a range of infrastructure works which would unlock further residential and commercial

development in Wirral Waters and add to the creation of a new community within the dockland area.

Following a process of due diligence by Homes England the scheme had been formally approved in February 2019. The report set out the detail of the HIF funded programme and sought authority to accept the grant from Homes England and to allocate the funding to Peel Holdings to deliver the scheme.

The Cabinet noted that the Wirral Plan had a pledge to deliver good quality housing that met the needs of residents, through creating 3,500 new homes and improving a further 3,500 homes by 2020. The three residential developments at Wirral Waters would together result in some 1,106 residential units being delivered and, as they would be constructed on brownfield vacant land, it would help to reduce the pressures on development in Wirral's Green Belt.

The Cabinet also noted that the proposals contained in the report contributed to a number of the pledges within the Wirral Plan, including:

- Increase inward investment
- Greater job opportunities in Wirral
- Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents

The appendix to the report was not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person) under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended (Minute No. 76 refers).

Cabinet Members noted that other options considered had been to do nothing but that would not have secured grant funding for the development of Wirral Waters.

Cabinet Members also noted that planning permission for the East Float had been approved in May 2012. A number of options for Northbank had been developed looking at place making, scale, height, density, unit types, parking, informed by market testing and viability. Funding support was required given the viability issues associated with the site for these to progress.

Initial options had included higher rise perimeter blocks with towers and podium parking. This had proved unviable due to the high costs of building structure and piling. Later options had included lower buildings with taller towers at key points and at grade parking. This had been unviable due to the lower densities created by extensive at grade parking areas.

The preferred option was to progress medium rise typologies with managed parking - 'at grade', covered with amenity space and in curtilage - together with a high quality public realm and public transport infrastructure. The soft market testing had confirmed that a high quality environment, public realm and distinct residential typologies are needed to build confidence, attract market interest and

raise values. This option would not be delivered without the Housing Infrastructure funding.

This was a Key Decision and affected all Wards within the Borough.

Councillor Anita Leech informed that she was delighted to receive the report. She thought that it was fantastic news that this funding would deliver 1106 homes and create the infrastructure to create further residential and commercial development on brown field sites.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the decision from Homes England, on behalf of Central Government, to award £6,004,160 to Wirral Council for delivery of Phase 1 of the regeneration of Wirral Waters, and the funding conditions as specified by Homes England in Appendix 1 to this report be noted;**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director with Portfolio in consultation with the Director of Governance and Assurance to negotiate and conclude a grant agreement with Homes England to mirror the terms in Appendix 1 to the report;**
- (3) authority be delegated to the Director with Portfolio in consultation with the Director of Governance and Assurance to negotiate and enter into a grant agreement with Peel Holdings Land and Property (UK) Limited to reflect and deliver the terms of the funding offer from Homes England; and**
- (4) the Director with Portfolio be authorised to ensure the scheme is delivered, and that monitoring and progress reports are provided, in accordance with the conditions of the grant agreement.**

69 WIRRAL WATERS INVESTMENT FUND - APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Councillor Angela Davies introduced a report which informed that Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited had requested a grant of £1,500,000 from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the delivery of Marine Energy and Automotive (MEA) Park Phase 2, which comprised twelve new industrial units for light industrial uses as part of the wider MEA Park Masterplan, which was targeted at providing a sector-focused environment to support business growth and capacity.

The Wirral Waters Investment Fund had been established for the purpose of promoting investment and economic growth within the Wirral Waters priority regeneration area seeking to maximise the value of the designation of the area as part of the wider Merseyside Waters Enterprise Zone. Wirral Waters was one of

the largest regeneration projects in the UK. With its unique water assets it was in a prime position to drive growth across various sectors including energy, maritime, automotive and the SME sector. West Float was located at the western end of the Wirral Waters area. This industrial zone was the focus for MEA Park.

Members noted that MEA stood for Marine, Energy and Automotive and that MEA Park would provide a focus in the Liverpool City Region for the development of key energy infrastructure within marine, civil nuclear and renewable growth sectors so the area in and around Birkenhead Docks which had suffered, like other dock areas around the country, from a number of interrelated market failures caused by decades of industrial decline and lack of investment. Often new development in dock areas was not viable without some sort of public sector support.

MEA Park Phase 2, itself, comprised twelve high quality, medium sized industrial units for light industrial use. Councillor Angie Davies reported that the twelve units would provide approximately 69,000 square feet and demand had already been identified amongst local and national occupiers. She also informed that the investment in MEA Park Phase 2 would support the development of the skills factory and the modular development unit, as well as other external infrastructure works. This was redevelopment of a site which was currently designated as a brown field site

The Cabinet was aware that the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision had set out the vision for the borough and had economic growth at its heart to ensure residents were able to access good, high paying jobs in a stable and thriving economy. The Plan had identified 20 key pledges that the Council, and its partner agencies, must deliver and it was noted that the application for financial assistance contained in the report, directly supported the following pledges:

- Increase inward investment
- Workforce skills match business needs
- Greater job opportunities
- Thriving small businesses

The cabinet was informed that the £5.98m project costs demonstrate a total viability gap of £1.5m.

The Cabinet was also informed that the Council had considered a number of other options which were discounted as follows:

- a) Provide a loan rather than grant: An independent appraisal of the application had concluded that the project was not currently viable and, therefore, required grant funding through WWIF to facilitate development.
- b) Adopt a 'do nothing' approach: The development would be jeopardised, as the project was reliant on securing funding from other public/private sources

to meet the identified viability gap. This WWIF grant would enable the delivery of a high-quality industrial development which would support the Wirral Plan and Growth Plan and Liverpool City Region sector priorities. Without grant funding support the project may not proceed at all.

The four appendices to the report were not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as they contained exempt information relating to the business affairs of a third party. They were attached at Agenda Item No. 13 and would be considered in the absence of the press and public. (Minute No. 77 refers.)

This was a Key Decision and affected all Wards within the Borough.

Councillor Angie Davies reported that the project was expected to create 67 new jobs during the construction phase and 150 full time equivalent jobs following completion. Of course there would also be the additional business rates the Council would receive over the years as well.

Councillor Phil Davies declared a personal interest in this item of business by virtue of him being a non-executive director of Chrysalis Fund which had been involved in the project.

Councillor Anita Leech pointed out that the £1,500,000 from the Wirral Waters Investment Fund would provide double the return and any over runs would be covered by Peel so it was good news all round.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a grant to Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited through the Wirral Waters Investment Fund to support the development of new high quality industrial floorspace be approved; and**
- (2) the Director of Governance and Assurance in consultation with the Corporate Director of Business Management be authorised to draw up and sign a legal agreement between the Council and Peel Investments (Intermediate) Limited that is within State Aid regulations and subject to the conditions contained in Appendix 1 to the report.**

70 **TRANSPORT PLAN FOR GROWTH 2019/20**

Councillor Stuart Whittingham introduced a report which informed that on 1 February 2019, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority had awarded £1,150,000 of Integrated Transport Block funding to Wirral Council, to support the delivery of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth during 2019/20. The report sought the Cabinet's approval to accept the £1,150,000 and allocate it to priorities and projects as outlined in the report.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham informed that Wirral's Transport Plan for Growth supported the Wirral Plan 2020 pledge to provide Transport and Technology Infrastructure fit for the future by ensuring that Wirral had safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, leisure facilities and commute to work.

Appended to the report at Appendix 1 was the 2019/20 Transport Plan for Growth (Integrated Transport Block) Proposed Programme.

The Cabinet was informed that no other options had been considered as the proposed programmes and projects identified within the report enabled the Council to comply with its Statutory Duties as set out in the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 and addressed the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth, and the Council's Wirral Plan pledge to ensure that Wirral had safe, affordable, well maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

This was a Key Decision and affected all Wards within the borough.

Councillor Whittingham reported that this was a good news story. It was great news for Wirral residents and would bring about a programme transport infrastructure improvements throughout the borough as part of the Council's Transport Plan for Growth. This was a major investment in the transport network which would bring about real improvements.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the acceptance of £1,150,000 of Integrated Transport Block funding allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to support the delivery of the Transport Plan for Growth Programme be approved;**
- (2) the proposed programme for this funding as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- (3) authority be delegated to the Interim Director Highways and Streetscene, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to make necessary adjustments to the priorities within the programme should the need arise due to financial or other factors.**

71 HIGHWAY STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2019/20

Councillor Stuart Whittingham introduced a report informing that on 1 February 2019, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority had awarded £2,625,000 of Highways Maintenance funding to Wirral Council to support

investment in our highways assets. This was in addition to a further £315,000 from the LCR Combined Authority especially for the Route Network and £1,465,000 extra funding from the Department for Transport Key (DfT) awarded late last year. The Cabinet was reminded that the Council had also recently allocated £500,000 from its own Capital Programme for Unclassified Roads.

Councillor Stuart Whittingham sought the Cabinet's approval to accept this funding and allocate it between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting. He also requested approval for the first phase of the Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2019/20 for Classified Roads.

The Cabinet was informed that this funding would support the delivery of the Connecting Wirral Transport Strategy and the Wirral Plan Pledge to provide transport and technology infrastructure fit for the future, and would ensure that Wirral had safe, affordable, well-maintained and efficient transport networks for residents to access community services, enjoy our leisure facilities and commute to work.

The maintenance of highways was a statutory duty for the Council under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).

The Cabinet was informed that no other options had been considered because the programme was based on meeting the highest priority needs within the funding available against the condition and assessment criteria.

This was a Key Decision and affected all Wards within the borough.

Councillor Whittingham reported that the quality of roads and highways was a big priority for Wirral residents as they expected to travel on a transport network that was safe, efficient and of high quality. This was what he was working every day towards delivering and despite ongoing austerity he was delighted to inform that the Council was now in a position to go even further by allocating nearly £5m to ensure Wirral's transport infrastructure was fit for the future by improving roads and ensuring residents benefited from a first class highways network. Councillor Whittingham considered that the investment would help bring about further growth in the Wirral economy and ensure road users across the borough continued to experience efficiencies and safer journeys.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that he supported this very welcome injection of almost £5m into improving Wirral's highways and roads network. This area was one of 'The Getting the Basics Right' priorities and he considered that the spread of schemes across the borough that were included in Appendix 1 to the report showed that the Council was listening to resident's concerns and addressing those highways issues it had been told about. This was another example of the Council working well with the Combined Authority to secure funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the acceptance of £2,625,000 of Highway Maintenance funding for 2019/20 awarded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be approved;**
- (2) the acceptance of £315,000 additional funding for the Key Route Network awarded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be approved;**
- (3) the acceptance of £1,465,000 Highway Maintenance funding from the Department for Transport be approved;**
- (4) the proposed allocation of the Highway maintenance funding between Roads/Footways, Bridges and Street Lighting be approved;**
- (5) the detailed Highway Structural Maintenance Programme for 2019/20 for Classified roads as outlined in Appendix 1 be approved; and**
- (6) the Interim Director Highways & Streetscene in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport be authorised to make necessary adjustments to the programme should the need arise due to financial, asset conditions or other factors.**

72 NEW MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor Bernie Mooney began by thanking David Robbins for all of his hard work on the safeguarding arrangements. She informed that without his input the Council would not have been able to make as much progress. Mr Robbins had worked tirelessly on this. Councillor Mooney then introduced a report which informed that under the Children Act (2004) Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's) were currently responsible for ensuring agencies effectively worked together to safeguard children. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced LSCB's with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by three safeguarding partners (Local Authorities, Chief Officers of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups). It also placed a duty on child death review partners (Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups) to review the deaths of children normally resident in the local area.

The Cabinet noted that three safeguarding partners had equal and joint responsibility for the new local safeguarding arrangements.

The Cabinet also noted that the three safeguarding partners must set out how they would work together and with any relevant agencies whose involvement they considered may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular cases. They must also set out how their arrangements would receive

independent scrutiny. Once agreed, the safeguarding partners must publish the arrangements.

Councillor Bernie Mooney reported that the purpose of the local arrangements was to support and enable local agencies to work together in a system where:

- excellent practice is the norm
- partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
- there is early identification of 'new' safeguarding issues
- learning is promoted and embedded
- information is shared effectively
- the public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the proposed multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, the proposed model for consideration and approval.

Cabinet Members noted that no other options had been considered because the three statutory safeguarding partners were required, under the Children and Social Work Act, to develop new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The model itself had gone through many iterations and refinements in its development journey before being finalised presented to the Cabinet.

Councillor Phil Davies informed that the Council was responding to changes which the Government had introduced. Councillor Davies thanked Maggie Atkinson, who had chaired the Safeguarding Children's Board. Ms Atkinson's advice and guidance had been invaluable to the Council in navigating its way through the changes that would need to be made in light of the Ofsted Report. Councillor Davies also thanked the other members of the Safeguarding Children's Board and was pleased to see the Council was ahead of schedule in terms of putting the new arrangements in place which would commence with effect from 1 September 2019.

Councillor Anita Leech reiterated the fact that the Council was ahead of schedule and was pleased that it had six months to shadow the two systems without any additional financial implications. Councillor Leech also thanked Councillor Phil Davies personally for all of the work that he had put into this as Cabinet Member for this Portfolio.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed model be approved; and**
- (2) the model be published ahead of shadow implementation on 31 March 2019, with full implementation going ahead on the 1 September 2019 (when the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board will be stood down).**

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2019 - 2022 AND MARKET POSITION STATEMENT

Councillor Bernie Mooney introduced a report which reminded Cabinet Members of the increase in numbers of children looked after in Wirral over the last 3 years and informed that this trend was replicated across the North West. It was noted that the increase had coincided with a decline in the number of recruited foster carers across the region resulting in all local authorities having difficulties in providing sufficient placements. The supply and demand issue in foster care had resulted in children's home placements being used for children who previously would have been looked after by foster carers. The overall placement market was, therefore, more challenging than at any point in recent or distant history. Councillor Mooney reported that in order to respond to the challenges outlined it was essential that the Council developed a robust approach to commissioning services, and that it worked in a transparent and collaborative manner with placement providers.

Councillor Bernie Mooney also reported that Wirral's Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019 - 2022 had set out how the local authority and its partners worked together to provide the best environments for children in care and care leavers over the next three years. Part of that would include ensuring that there were enough alternatives to care, through for example, supporting families to stay together or finding alternative permanent homes for children. It would be about ensuring, where that was not possible, children stayed locally and in family-based settings. It would also include ensuring that there was a choice of high-quality provision for all children, at whatever stage in their life, that was designed around their needs and wishes so that they could grow into independent, healthy and successful adults.

The Cabinet noted that the Strategy was aligned to Wirral's Market Position Statement (MPS) which provided an overview of current position and predicted demand for provision over the next two years. This Strategy sought to outline the Council's overall approach to managing that demand and focusing on the right solutions and choices to provide children with the best possible outcomes.

The Cabinet also noted that Children Looked After by the Council had left their birth family homes and were placed in accommodation across the borough. Therefore, the approval of the Strategy and Market Position Statement was a key decision for Cabinet.

Appended to the report was:

- Appendix 1 – The Wirral Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy 2019 – 2020; and
- Appendix 2 – Wirral's Market Position Statement (MPS) based on current and predicted need.

No other options had been considered.

Councillor Mooney reported that both the Sufficiency Strategy and the Market Position Statement recognised the significant challenge the Council faced in terms of the numbers of its looked after children (840+) and the challenge with the placement market at the current time. The key response to these challenges was to look at further developments of the in-house resources by developing the in-house fostering service to ensure that it was more responsive to the needs of the cohort of looked after children and also to develop the capacity in a residential market, locally, with a specific focus on the Local Authority recommissioning its own Children's Homes. Whilst the Strategy aimed to ensure good quality and responsive in-house services it was recognised that there was a continuing need to commission services from external providers. Indeed, the Sufficiency duty required the Local Authority to work collaboratively across all market sectors to secure locally Sufficiency.

Therefore, Councillor Mooney reported that the key part of the Strategy also involved engaging with providers in an open and transparent way to better shape external markets ensuring that its own procedures enabled rather than hindered securing local placements that better met the needs of the Council's looked after children, working collaboratively across the City Region to develop opportunities for joint commissioning, particularly, in relation to a more specialist type of provision.

Councillor Mooney informed that the market position statement outlined the main current types of placements for looked after children (fostering, residential, supported accommodation and independent living). The Strategy also set out the Council's commissioning intentions based on the predicted demands of these placements. It outlined overreach and commissioning intentions for looked after children in order to provide clear and focused aims to ensure a good quality local placement for all children in the care of the Local Authority.

Councillor Mooney reported that the Sufficiency Strategy was derived from the legal duty placed on the Local Authority to have a Strategy in place that described how the Council intended to ensure sufficient care placements for children in care. The statutory guidelines set out the requirement for local authorities to work with key partners to secure enough accommodation for children in care which met the needs of the children in the Local Authority's area. The Strategy, therefore, set out an overall approach to managing demand and focused on the right solution and choice to provide children with the best possible outcomes. The provision was set out in the Strategy with eight key objectives which Councillor Mooney detailed as follows:

- (1) Supporting children to stay with their families where it is safe to do so.
- (2) Achieving permanency in a timely manner through adoption and special guardianships.

- (3) Sourcing local placements.
- (4) Matching children with good quality placements to meet their needs.
- (5) Ensuring the existence of a range of targeted universal and specialised services that will respond to children where they need them.
- (6) Children looked after will be prepared for independence and healthy adulthood.
- (7) Strengthening the strategic approach for commissioning.
- (8) Ensuring all external commissioners placements are subject to robust and regular review.

Councillor Mooney reminded the Cabinet that the Strategy provided more details on how these objectives would be achieved.

Councillor Mooney informed that, as this was her last meeting, she wanted to thank all her Cabinet Member colleagues because they had worked together as a fantastic team. She informed that none of them could have achieved the things that they had achieved as a Cabinet without good leadership. Councillor Phil Davies had been a fabulous Leader. Councillor Mooney outlined some of the things the Cabinet had achieved which included the following:

- Community wealth building
- Social Value Policy
- The Community Bank
- The Growth Company
- An additional £20m for Children's Services
- A Budget that has protected local services

Councillor Mooney told Councillor Phil Davies that this had all taken great leadership, it had been an absolute privilege for her to be his deputy and she wished him nothing but the best for the future.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2022 attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- (2) the Market Position Statement attached at Appendix 2 to the report be approved.**

LEADER'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Phil Davies informed that it was his and Councillor Bernie Mooney's last Cabinet meeting so he wished to make some closing remarks before the press and public were excluded from the meeting. Councillor Davies thanked all of his Cabinet colleagues and told them that together they had been a fantastic team, as had other Cabinet Members before them who had served under his leadership, over the last seven years.

Councillor Phil Davies mentioned some of the recent milestones e.g. The Wirral Plan and the Twenty Pledges and confirmed that he was absolutely confident that the Cabinet would deliver on them by 2020.

Councillor Davies made reference to Councillor Janette Williamson and the work she had led on which had put the Council on a secure financial footing. He reported that in 2012 there had been an overspend of £12m so he was glad that the Council had moved forward from that situation.

Councillor Davies reported that the turnaround in Children's Services had been nothing short of stunning and paid tribute to Councillor Bernie Mooney and the Corporate Director for Children's Services, Paul Boyce for the leadership they had given to this Service and informed that he felt confident that when Ofsted had carried out their re-inspection the Service overall judgement of inadequate would change for the better.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that the Council had been left with no alternative other than to think outside of the box because of the Government's funding cuts and the Wirral Growth Company was probably the best example of this as the Council now had a new model of working. The Council could not go on as it had been doing because it had not been maximising its opportunities to regenerate the borough. The Growth Company was now in place and there was the prospect of not just bringing jobs and investment into the borough and helping local businesses and local people but returning a revenue to the Council, to replace lost funding. This was brilliant and it would leave a legacy for future generations.

Councillor Phil Davies reported on the work around Highways that Councillor Stuart Whittingham had led and informed that the Council was now in a much better place.

Councillor Phil Davies paid tribute to Councillor Chris Jones and the Director for (Adult) Care and Health, Graham Hodgkinson and made reference to the challenges in respect of Adult Social Care and the country's Social Care crisis. He informed that the Council now provided good quality services for older people, people with learning disabilities and so on. This was a success story.

Councillor Phil Davies paid tribute to Councillor Anita Leech who had joined the Cabinet half way through the year with some challenges around the Environment

Portfolio and done a fantastic job and there were some wonderful initiatives which she was leading on. He looked forward to them coming to fruition.

Councillor Phil Davies also paid tribute to Councillor Paul Stuart who had led on the Law and Order Portfolio which was a key priority for the residents of Wirral. He drew attention to the work Councillor Stuart had carried out around the Community Safety Hub which was a brand leader and was being replicated by other local authorities up and down the land. This was something that the Council could be rightly proud of.

Councillor Phil Davies wished Councillor George Davies all the best in his forthcoming year as Deputy Mayor. He also thanked him for the work that he had carried out on Housing. Councillor Phil Davies drew attention to some of the big challenges that were ahead on the Local Plan. He also drew attention to examples, in his own ward, of really good quality new housing that was being built. The Council was providing affordable housing for Wirral residents in many parts of the borough and that was down to the work that Councillor George Davies had led on and Councillor Phil Davies thanked him for this.

Councillor Phil Davies also paid tribute to Councillor Phil Brightmore who had been unable to attend this meeting due to illness. Councillor Brightmore had led on a big piece of transformational work around the Leisure Services Portfolio. Some of the initiatives had already come to fruition.

Councillor Phil Davies told the Cabinet that it had a lot to be proud of but he could not finish his comments without saying thank you to the Chief Executive, Eric Robinson and the Senior Leadership Team for helping and supporting Cabinet Members because they would not have been able to achieve what they had done without their input. Councillor Davies also thanked the staff who had, day in day out, carried out a fantastic job in leading the borough.

Councillor Phil Davies then went on to personally thank:

- the Acting Corporate Director for Strategies and Partnerships, Fiona Johnstone who was attending her last Cabinet meeting before retiring. Councillor Davies paid tribute to Fiona for the fantastic work she had undertaken on behalf of Wirral, in her previous role of Director of Public Health and latterly in leading a lot of big corporate initiatives that had been developed, including 'Wirral Together' which was a really exciting model of working with residents and partners. Fiona had made sure that everyone was signed up to this model and consequently, it was going from strength to strength. On behalf of Cabinet members, Fiona was wished a happy retirement.
- Lyndzay Roberts for her efforts and support to the Cabinet and the leadership. Councillor Davies saw her as a vital cog in the operation.
- Barbara Turner who ran the Labour Group Office. Councillor Davies informed that Barbara was an absolute star and that he would not have been able to do his job without her keeping his diary up to date and

ensuring that he was organised, had the reports he needed and was reminded of deadlines. Councillor Davies thanked Barbara for all of the support she had given him, the other Cabinet Members and Members of the Labour Group over many years. Councillor Davies informed that Barbara had worked for the Council for thirty years and deserved lots of plaudits and thanks.

Councillor Davies told Councillor Bernie Mooney that he was sorry to see her go, as she had done a fantastic job but they would have more time to catch up with each other in future. He informed that he would really miss the Council and the people he had worked with. Councillor Davies wished everyone (Members and officers) and the Council itself all the very best for the future. Councillor Davies believed that Wirral's best days were ahead of it. It had some fantastic opportunities. The Borough of Culture had put Wirral on the map and Wirral could rapidly become one of, if not the most outstanding local authority in the Liverpool City Region and possibly the country.

75 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under 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 paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

76 WIRRAL WATERS: HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

RESOLVED:

That further to Minute No. 68 above the content of the exempt appendix circulated with the agenda be noted.

77 WIRRAL WATERS INVESTMENT FUND - APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

RESOLVED:

That further to Minute No. 69 above the content of the following four exempt appendices circulated with the agenda be noted:

- **Appendix 1 – Report to Investment and Change Board – Application for Financial Assistance (29 November 2018);**
- **Appendix 2 – Wirral Waters Investment Fund Package 1 Business Plan (August 2018);**

- **Appendix 3 – Site Location Plan; and**
- **Appendix 4 – Risk Register.**