



Council

Town Hall
Wallasey

Date 9 April 2010

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.15 pm on Monday, 19 April 2010** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

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AGENDA

1. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive the Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Council are invited to consider whether they have a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

3. PETITIONS

To receive petitions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 21.

4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 48)

To receive as a correct record the minutes of the meeting(s) of the Council held on 1 March 2010.

5. MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL (Pages 49 - 52)

To consider matters referred to the Council for determination. The relevant minutes are attached; copies of the related reports can be provided for Council members on request.

(i) Minute 350 (Cabinet – 18/3/10) Departmental Service Plans and Updated Corporate Plan for 2010/11

(ii) Minute 352 (Cabinet – 18/3/10) *Nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Municipal Year 2010/11

*Note: this minute requires approval by the Annual Meeting of the Council

(iii) Minute 353 (Cabinet (18/3/10) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

(iv) Minute 359 (Cabinet – 18/3/10) Scrutiny Programme Board Referral – Draft Protocol Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

(v) Minute 360 (Cabinet – 18/3/10) Committee Calendar for Municipal Year 2010/11

(vi) Minute 367 (Cabinet – 18/3/10) Contract Procedure Rules

The following items will be referred to Council from Cabinet on 15 April, 2010:

(i) Committee Referral – Audit and Risk Management Committee – Petitions Scheme

(ii) Governance Arrangements

(iii) Committee Referral - Scrutiny Programme Board – Scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

6. QUESTIONS

To deal with questions from councillors and from members of the public, in accordance with Standing Order 11.

Note: Questions from members of the public must be submitted in writing or by email by no later than 5.00pm on 12 April, 2010.

7. NOTICES OF MOTION (Pages 53 - 60)

Notice has been given, in accordance with Standing Order 8(1), of motions on the following subjects. They are listed in the order received, and the full text of each motion is attached.

1. UNITED UTILITIES
2. ACADEMIES
3. TACKLING THE RECESSION
4. DEATH OF CHLOE FLETCHER
5. CHARTERIS REPORT
6. CUTS AT WIRRAL UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL
(ARROWE PARK)
7. BACKING YOUNG BRITAIN
8. PAVEMENT HAZARDS
9. UNACCEPTABLE HOMOPHOBIA IN POLITICS
10. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEMES

8. MATTERS FOR DEBATE

Pursuant to Standing Order 5(1)(m), and in accordance with Standing Order 5(3), to consider written comments, objections or amendments to minutes submitted under Standing Order 7(2), together with those motions, submitted under item 9 above, that the Council agrees to debate at this meeting and any minority reports submitted in accordance with Standing Order 35(4).

9. VACANCIES (Pages 61 - 62)

To receive nominations, in accordance with Standing Order 25(5), in respect of any proposed changes in the membership of the Cabinet and committees, and to approve nominations for appointments to outside organisations.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To consider any other items of business that the Mayor accepts as being urgent.



Director of Law, HR and Asset Management

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

Monday, 1 March 2010

Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Andrew Hodson) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Alan Jennings)

Councillors	RL Abbey	T Harney	S Quinn
	T Anderson	P Hayes	P Reisdorf
	C Blakeley	S Holbrook	L Rennie
	A Bridson	P Johnson	D Roberts
	S Clarke	AER Jones	L Rowlands
	IO Coates	J Keeley	J Salter
	J Crabtree	S Kelly	H Smith
	G Davies	B Kenny	T Smith
	P Davies	D Kirwan	W Smith
	WJ Davies	D Knowles	P Southwood
	F Doyle	I Lewis	J Stapleton
	W Duffey	AR McLachlan	A Taylor
	D Elderton	M McLaughlin	S Taylor
	G Ellis	C Meaden	C Teggins
	S Foulkes	D Mitchell	G Watt
	L Fraser	R Moon	R Wilkins
	G Gardiner	S Mountney	KJ Williams
	J George	S Niblock	P Williams
	P Gilchrist	C Povall	S Williams
	JE Green	A Pritchard	K Wood
	J Hale	J Quinn	

Apologies

Councillors K Hayes M Redfern

113 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor welcomed Jessica Yung, Wirral's Young Poet Laureate, and invited her to give a poetry reading before the start of the meeting. Jade Chen read a poem in Mandarin Chinese.

114 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at the meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest. The following declarations were made:

Councillor A Jones declared a personal interest in the Budget (Cabinet minute 232) by virtue of his former Chairmanship of the Allandale Youth Club.

Councillor K Wood (Budget Proposals) by virtue of her being a pensioner householder.

Councillors J Green, A Jennings, A McLachlan, B Kenny, S Williams and L Rowlands, each declared a personal interest in the Schools Budget element of the Budget by virtue of a family member's employment with the authority.

115 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing order 21, the Mayor received a petition submitted by Councillor J George on behalf of 300 signatories objecting to a proposed parking restriction in Commonfield Road, Woodchurch.

116 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2010 had been circulated to members and it was:-

Resolved – That the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.

117 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 13 (Budget Council Procedure), Councillor S Foulkes, Leader of the Council, moved the Cabinet's Budget recommendations duly seconded by Councillor S Holbrook, Deputy Leader, with any additional paragraphs (those relating to precepts), and any other minutes from the Cabinet meeting on 22 February, 2010 that required approval by the Council. The following minutes were deemed to be approved, subject to consideration of the Conservative Group Budget Proposal which was received in accordance with Standing Order 7(2) (see minute 118 post).

(1) Minute 332 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) BUDGET 2010-11

The Director of Finance presented the draft revenue estimates for 2010/11. A decision was required to enable recommendations to be made to the Council concerning the budget and Council Tax for 2010/11. This involved a key decision on the matter forming part of the budget and policy framework and it had been included in the Forward Plan.

The Leader of the Council submitted and commented on a motion which set out the budget proposals of the joint administration. He informed that the Council Tax rise in Wirral resulting from these proposals would be 1.29%, which would give an overall Tax of 1.67% when the precepts were included, and therefore a below-inflation increase, with the January RPI figures running at 3.7%. He went on to pay tribute to Cabinet Members and officers for their hard work in supporting the budgetary process.

The Leader reported that under the proposed budget there would be no Council Tax increase for pensioner households over 75 years of age and that for the Financial Year 2010/11 the Council would ensure that no pensioner household over 75 would have any increase in Council Tax liability, including the consequences of any police and fire increases. This applied where:

- the Council Tax payer paid Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that were counted as resident for Council Tax

purposes were aged 75 or over on 1 April 2010 (but where the qualifying age criterion was met after 1 April 2010 eligibility would be effective from the date of birth only);

- this reduction would be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs;
- application must be made for the reduction where it was not currently in payment of the potential claimant was not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit; and
- no pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Benefit would qualify for the reduction.

In seconding the motion and endorsing the Leader's remarks, the Deputy Leader of the Council informed that this was a positive budget, focussed on the future.

Resolved – That

(1) Investing In Wirral's Future

A Budget for Jobs, the Environment and Safer, Stronger Communities

As we emerge from the worst recession since the Second World War, the economic recovery is fragile and expected to be long and slow. The country also faces unprecedented levels of debt in the public finances.

This is a time when many people are being forced to make sacrifices and when those in public service need to be sure that everything they do stands up to public scrutiny, which is why no councillor is accepting any increase in their allowances and rail travel will be strictly scrutinised to ensure only the most appropriate and economic fares are used.

However, against this background, the Council's finances are in good shape, as the effect of previous budget measures in the three-year efficiency plan finally work through. There exists a window of opportunity for the Council to invest in the long term future economic prosperity and environmental sustainability of the Borough, before the National Government brings to bear the expected squeeze on the public finances.

So this budget contains key investments at its heart to support the economy and the environment with measures to invest in next generation communications technology for business to make it more competitive and create more jobs, doubling the original target of 100 apprentices to 200, better equipping our youth for future employment and a scheme to provide free insulation for every home in the Borough, saving people money on their energy bills, attacking fuel poverty as well as reducing carbon emissions and our impact on global warming.

Also, for the first time, this budget includes a carbon budget, set out in a report to Budget Cabinet, which will be the mechanism whereby the Council sets targets to reduce its own spending on energy and carbon emissions year on year.

The budget also provides support for vulnerable people and safer communities. The proposed investment in assistive technology will enable more elderly and vulnerable people to stay in their homes longer, delaying their need for residential or nursing care. This not only improves the freedom and quality of life of our elderly and vulnerable, but is a more cost effective means of delivering care. The popular discount scheme for pensioner households over 75 is further extended so that there is no increase in the level of Council Tax paid in these homes.

Speed is the key factor in reducing both the number and severity of road traffic accidents. Following the success of the Accidents Down 2 Zero campaign, which has reduced average traffic speeds in the trial areas, the budget provides for a comprehensive new policy to introduce a statutory speed limit of 20 mph on non major routes in all residential areas and for variable speed signs for schools on major routes.

Finally, this budget invests in the future of our young people through additional capacity to prepare a multi-million pound bid for further enhancing the physical fabric of our schools. Narrowing the gap in literacy levels between neighbourhoods, and reducing social exclusion, is also a key theme, with funding being provided to continue the successful 'Get into Reading' initiative in the Borough's most deprived wards. Community cohesion will also be promoted by providing extra resources to more effectively address the needs of our ethnic minority communities.

All the above measures seek in these difficult times to advance the aims of the Council's corporate plan, to create a more prosperous and equal Wirral.

(2) Council Tax Levels

The proposed Council Tax increase for Wirral is 1.29%, which will give an overall Council Tax of 1.67% when the precepts are included. This is less than half the current rate of inflation, with the January RPI figures running at 3.7%.

(3) Revenue Estimates

The Revenue Estimates for 2010-11, as set out in the Estimates Book now submitted, be approved subject to the amendments set out below.

**(4) Zero Council Tax Increase for Pensioner Households over 75 £
465,000**

The sum of £465,000 to be allocated to maintaining the Council Tax discount for pensioner households over 75 and meeting the increased cost of a growing number of eligible households claiming the discount, which in 2009/10 amounted to £260,000, to be met from balances in the current year. The sum allocated will also equalise the system so that everyone who is eligible will receive exactly the same percentage discount. This means that no pensioner household over 75 will pay any increase in Council Tax this year, including the

consequences of any increases in Police and Fire precepts. This honours the target set, (which is dependent on the Council's finances), to keep Council Tax increases for pensioner households over 75 at or beneath the level of the published inflation rate in the January Retail Price Index, which this year is 3.7% This is the equivalent of more than 8% discount on their Council Tax Bill.

(5) Creating New Jobs

Investing in Digital Infrastructure with the next generation super-fast fibre optic broadband network for Wirral businesses. **1,075,000**

The sum of £1,075,000 be added to the revenue base for a period of four years, complementing the initial sum of £7.7m from Wirral's Working Neighbourhoods Fund, to create a provision which will allow the phased installation of a brand new, next generation, fast fibre optic communications network in Wirral. Current facilities on Wirral are poor, and this £12m investment in a new, next generation access network will allow current Wirral businesses to compete more effectively in the international market, and will also act as a major incentive to attract to Wirral international companies dependent on fast data transmission who want to locate in the UK or Europe.

This will create jobs in the short term, during the period of installation, and in the longer term as new businesses are attracted in and current businesses develop the capacity to expand.

The Director of Regeneration is asked to bring a full report to Cabinet on March 18th

New Apprenticeships **500,000**

The sum of £500,000 be allocated from balances to bring the total number of apprenticeships under the successful Wirral Apprentices Scheme to a minimum of 200, which is double the original target of 100 apprentices. Officers are asked to investigate all relevant sources of finance to ensure this programme continues to grow, working in partnership with Wirral Businesses, giving new opportunities to Wirral's young people and maximising any opportunities provided by the two major schemes for digital infrastructure and for extensive home insulation (outlined below).

Freezing Car Parking Charges **75,000**

To help support local businesses through the fragile economic recovery the sum of £75,000 is allocated to allow car parking charges in the borough to be frozen at 2009/10 levels in Council managed car parks and on street parking areas. No charges will be introduced in areas where there are currently none.

(6) Investing in Young People and Life Long Education

Additional Money for Schools**6,400,000**

Cabinet welcomes the fact, as outlined in the Schools Budget Resolution, that an additional £5.9m has been allocated by the government for Wirral Schools in 2010/11 and notes that this equates to an increase of 4.4% per pupil, which is significantly above the rate of inflation.

Cabinet reaffirms its commitment to Wirral Schools by allocating over £493,000 of Area Based Grant resources.

Building Schools for the Future**100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated from the Efficiency Fund to assist in the specialist preparation of a major bid under the Building Schools for the Future programme, which would produce £90m investment in new and modernised schools buildings in Phase 1 alone.

Cabinet notes that this is in addition to the building of a brand new secondary school in Woodchurch, the proposals for a new academy in Birkenhead, and the building or refurbishment in the last ten years of 8 secondary schools and one primary school under the PFI scheme, which demonstrate the total commitment of this administration to the improvement of Wirral's schools.

Get into Reading**100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated from balances for a substantial pilot Get into Reading project, aimed at tackling social exclusion and making Get Into Reading sustainable not just now but into the future. This builds on the three year previous core funding, agreed by this council, which runs out in 2011.

The project will have three key target groups. These are : older people suffering from social deprivation in Care Homes, Dementia Care and living alone; Looked After Children throughout the borough; and residents in Wirral's five most deprived areas (Birkenhead and Tranmere, Bidston and St. James, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Leasowe and Moreton East)

The project will also provide formal training for interested individuals to run Get Into Reading Groups, which are nationally recognised and have a proven therapeutic track record of raising self-confidence, tackling isolation, building a sense of community and assisting those suffering from depression.

Reduction in Alcohol Harm by Preventing Under Age Sales**40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be allocated from balances to continue funding

the scheme designed to reduce alcohol sales to under age youngsters which has previously been funded by the NHS but is now time expired. This will enable Trading Standards to continue tackling under age sales of alcohol, using a number of methods including test purchasing. This has been so successful that in 2007 the number of sales to under age youngsters was running at 38%, in 2008 that reduced to 15% and in 2009 the sale rate reduced to single figures, with no recorded sales in the last quarter. It will also be possible to match funding with Jobs for the Future funding and employ two to three trainees who will be trained in enforcement and add to the strength of the team.

(7) Help for the Elderly and Vulnerable

£8.9m Investment in Assistive Technology

1,400,000

£1.4m be allocated from the Efficiency Fund, with £400,000 being allocated from the current 2009/10 Efficiency Fund budget in order to allow a rapid start to the programme, and £1m being allocated from the 2010/11 Efficiency Fund budget as the start of a major £8.9m three year investment in Assistive Technology.

This substantial investment in Assistive Technology for Health and Social Care will dramatically increase the number of people who can be supported in their own homes, using the latest sophisticated telecare monitoring and alarm systems, (examples of which can be seen on the Department's website) with the aim of increasing the numbers supported by this technology from just over 1,500 now to over 14,000 people, by March 2013, enabling many people of all ages and abilities to live safely without fear in their own homes.

This builds on the success of Wirral's current Assistive Technology Service which has been nationally recognised as good practice and which received the North West award in April 2008 for Innovative Health and Social Care Technology, Health and Social Care Awards.

The Director of Adult Social Services is asked to bring a full report to Cabinet on 18 March

(8) £18m 4 Year Investment in Free Home Insulation Initiative

Tackling Fuel Poverty, Improving Wirral's Housing Stock and Reducing our Carbon Footprint.

1,049,000

The sum of £1,049,000 be allocated to revenue as the first year requirement of an ambitious £18m four year investment in extending a free insulation offer to the whole of the borough's private sector households, working in partnership with the energy companies under the auspices of the government's Carbon Emissions Reduction Target scheme. This assumes that government funding will continue after March 2011.(The scheme does not apply to HMRI areas, where

free insulation schemes are already available, or to Social Housing where schemes are also already in place.) By the end of year four, the scheme will have been promoted across the whole borough with resources available for widespread free insulation, with the potential for nearly all of Wirral's homes to have been properly insulated.

Cabinet notes that the scheme will work with the Warmer Wirral initiative and will, in the first instance be promoted and resources concentrated, in areas of high fuel poverty. Householders will, where appropriate, also be referred to the, wider, energy efficiency schemes, improving overall levels of carbon reduction, along with other fuel poverty prevention measures such as the Government's Warm Front Scheme. These measures should contribute substantially to lifting households out of fuel poverty.

The Director of Regeneration is asked to bring a detailed report to Cabinet on 18 March.

(9) Improving the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction.

Energy Efficiency 188,000

The sum of £188,000 be allocated from the Efficiency Fund for a number of measures to improve the Council's energy efficiency, including the installation of Automatic Meter Reading, the use of Automatic PC Power down programmes to ensure non essential computers and monitors are not left switched on when they are not needed, Voltage optimisation and the use of Variable Speed Drives. Together these measures will yield an annual saving of £130,000 as well as contributing to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

Eco Schools Officer and Support for Initiatives 80,000

The sum of £80,000 be invested in the creation of a full time post for an Eco Schools Officer with resources to engage with and educate children and community groups to reduce waste and to increase the amount and quality of waste recycled in schools and in children's homes.

Energy Efficiency Grants for Community Buildings 66,000

To support the long term sustainability of community groups running community buildings, the sum of £66,000 be made available from balances as individual grants to enable those communities to access the appropriate energy efficiency technologies to help reduce their fuel bills and their carbon emissions. The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management is asked to report to Cabinet with the details of an appropriate scheme.

Promotion and Development of CRed Scheme 30,000

The sum of £30,000 be invested from balances to extend and develop use of CRed, the web-based carbon reduction tools, with residents, school children, communities and our partners, in support of the corporate priority to reduce carbon emissions across the Borough.

Don't Give a Dog a Bad Name **40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be used to build on the current successful scheme with funding being used in conjunction with Jobs for the Future funding in order to employ two or three trainees who will be trained in patrolling and enforcement and add to the strength of the team, giving greater coverage over longer periods of time than is possible at the moment.

Additional Investment in Waste Collection Round **114,000**

The sum of £114,000 be allocated to provide weekly residual waste collections from those multi occupancy households with insufficient storage space for inclusion in alternate weekly collection rounds

Investment In Bulk Recycling **171,000**

The sum of £171,000 be invested to secure development of the bulk recycling service for multi occupancy properties.

Make the Staffing within the Waste Reduction Team Permanent **100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated in order to place on permanent staff those existing members of staff working to improve environmental quality standards and encourage recycling and waste reduction. Currently these posts are funded on a temporary basis from the recycling credits.

AN INCREASE IN RECYCLING CREDITS OF £230,000 BE USED TO PARTIALLY OFFSET THE COST OF THESE ITEMS

(10) Improving Road Safety

Comprehensive 20mph zones in Residential Areas **275,000**

The revenue sum of £275,000 be allocated to a rolling four year £1.1m programme to reduce traffic speeds both in residential areas and outside schools, where there are higher numbers of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists. Cabinet notes that reducing traffic speeds helps reduce the number of accidents, and their severity.

This four year programme will phase in statutory 20mph speed restrictions in non major routes in residential areas across the

borough. It will also implement (following the introduction of regulations from the Department of Transport) variable time specific 20mph speed signs to be used outside schools on through routes where casualties have occurred, with the signs in use at key times in the school day.

Dealing with Extreme Winter Conditions

Cabinet notes that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been charged with a formal review of winter maintenance arrangements, following this year's severe weather and that one of the options under consideration will be the practicality of building a new salt barn to store additional salt as a hedge against future extreme conditions. Should this be deemed necessary, Cabinet accepts an addition to the future capital programme may be required.

Addition to "You Decide" Allocation for Area Forums 55,000

The additional sum of £5,000 per Area Forum be allocated for one year only to allow communities to make provision for individual winter resilience items for their areas, such as salt bins etc.

(11) Strengthening Wirral's Communities and Increasing Choice

You Decide 260,000

The revenue sum of £260,000 be allocated to change the status of the You Decide programme from a pilot to mainstream activity funded from the base budget, given its continuing success. This success last year saw local communities choose to spend money, amongst other things, on additional sporting and youth activities, including diversionary activity to improve community safety, on crime prevention measures and on environmental improvements.

Community Transfers 1,362,000

Cabinet welcomes the progress made in transferring a number of the Council's assets to the community, but recognises that a number of factors, including the need for community empowerment, procurement issues and the impact of the recession on the private sector, mean that the end transfer date in many cases is later than anticipated, although the pace of transfer will quicken considerably in 2010/11. The sum of £578,000 is therefore allocated from balances in 2009/10 and a provision of £1,362,000 is allocated for 2010/11 to allow for the successful completion of transfers without placing undue pressure on other budgets.

Guinea Gap Baths

In the case of Guinea Gap Baths, Cabinet notes that the original intention was to provide for Guinea Gap baths to remain open while the potential for alternative schemes as part of a longer term waterfront development was explored. The impact of the recession on private sector development now makes this a much more distant possibility. Cabinet therefore asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to bring a report to Cabinet which will allow the Cabinet to restore the funding of Guinea Gap to the base budget when the current funding runs out.

Supporting Community Groups – Finance and Governance **40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be allocated to the creation of a peripatetic post, to be held by a qualified accountant and based in the finance department, to support the development of community groups and to support the establishment of models of good governance, sound financial practice and the development of business plans.

Co-ordination of Services for Ethnic Minority Communities in Wirral **30,000**

The sum of 30,000 be allocated to a new two year post, jointly funded by the local authority, NHS Wirral and the Wirral Multi-Cultural Organisation, in order to stimulate and actively encourage, the establishment of fully representative and inclusive BME strategic leadership in Wirral.

This is one-off funding subject to subsequent negotiation and agreement about outcomes, monitoring and evaluation. The post-holder will be expected to identify and generate sufficient income to sustain this post once the Council and PCT funding has ended.

(12) Running a More Efficient Council

The following savings form part of the drive to run a more efficient Council and keep Council Tax increases to a minimum.

8 months savings from the investment in Assistive Technology of which 2 months are bridged for one year at the cost of £400,000 from balances.

SAVINGS
£1.6m

EVRs and subsequent staffing re-organisations.

Net saving
£560,000

Creation of an Integrated Passenger Transport Unit combining the current functions within the Department of Adult Social Services and the Children and Young Peoples Department, to be managed within the Department of Adult Social Services with a consequent transfer of staff and budgets, to yield a saving in 2010-11 of £600,000 with a target saving by 2014 of £1.5m.

£600,000

Restructuring of management and administrative staff within the Department of Adult Social Services £240,000 **£240,000**

Continuation of the HESPE project continues to provide ongoing staffing savings which for 2010/11 equates to £80,000. **£80,000**

Funding the DASS Reform Unit and its activities relating to the development of personalised support from the Efficiency Fund £350,000 **£350,000**

Increased income from enforcement under NRASWA **£200,000**

(13) It be noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2009 the Council calculated the figure of 104,690.0 as its council tax base for the year 2010-11 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(14) The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2010-11 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Collection Fund (Council Tax Benefit) (England) Direction 2002: -

(a) £870,622,200 being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (c) of the Act

(b) £581,564,100 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(c) £289,058,100 being the amount by which the aggregate at 14(a)above exceeds the aggregate at 14(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;

(d) £157,860,500 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant, adjusted for the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year between its Collection Fund and it's General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and any amount which the Council estimates to be transferred between its Collection Fund and its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, issued on 7 February 1994;

(e) £1,253.20 being the total amount at (14c) above less the amount at 14(d) above, divided by the amount at 13 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year

Valuation Bands

A £835.47 B £974.71 C £1,113.96 D £1,253.20

E £1,531.69 F £1,810.18 G £2,088.67 H £2,506.40

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 14(e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings in Valuation Band D, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings as listed in different valuation bands.

- (15) It is noted that this equates to a Wirral Council Tax rise of 1.29%.
- (16) It be noted that for the year 2010-11 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts of precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Fire

A	£43.18	B	£50.38	C	£57.57	D	£64.77
E	£79.16	F	£93.56	G	£107.95	H	£129.54

Police

A	£97.49	B	£113.73	C	£129.98	D	£146.23
E	£178.73	F	£211.22	G	£243.72	H	£292.46

- (17) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 14 and 16 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2010-11 for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A	£976.14	B	£1,138.82	C	£1,301.51	D	£1,464.20
E	£1,789.58	F	£2,114.96	G	£2,440.34	H	£2,928.40

- (18) It is noted that this equates to an overall increase in Council Tax of 1.67%

(2) Minute 331 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) SCHOOLS BUDGET 2010-2011

The Director of Children’s Services presented a report which recommended the approval of the Schools Budget for 2010-11. He explained that it was the third year of a national three-year funding period for schools (2008-11). In 2008 decisions had been taken about levels of funding based on the Government’s stated priorities. The budget had been presented to Wirral’s Schools Forum on 20 January 2010. The report and the resolution from the Forum were attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

On 14 January 2010, the Cabinet had received a report that had outlined that energy costs in schools would reduce in 2010-11 by £1.3m following the renewal of

contracts. This would be reflected in the budgets set by schools. The recommendation in the report included a request that the Schools Forum consider a programme of automatic remote reading meter installations in schools, funded from the Schools Budget, in order to help deliver the energy saving scheme. This had been outlined to the Schools Forum who consequently agreed to receive a more detailed report at its next meeting in June 2010.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning highlighted the fact that the Government had again stated that it expected to see Council Tax increases at a 16-year low and this had been re-affirmed in the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement. Capping action had already been initiated against three Police Authorities to limit their increases to approximately 3%.

He went on to thank the Schools Forum for its contribution and endorsed its proposals set out within the proposed Schools Budget.

Resolved – That

- (1) the Cabinet welcomes the increase in funding from Government through Dedicated Schools Grant of £5.9m for 2010/11. Over the funding period 2008-11 this amounts to over £14.4m more for Wirral Schools;**
- (2) the Cabinet recommends to Council that the Schools' Budget for 2010-11 be set at the level of the adjusted Dedicated Schools Grant which is £193,995,400. This equates to an increase of 4.4% per pupil;**
- (3) it is acknowledged that these increases are above the current CPI rate of inflation (3.5%) and that they compare favourably with the average national increases in funding per pupil of 4.3%;**
- (4) the Cabinet recognises that this budget will help the Council to achieve one of the strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan which is to raise the aspirations of young people. This funding will also contribute towards the four themes in the Children and Young People's Plan:**
 - Reducing health inequalities for children and young people**
 - Intervening and supporting children earlier and in their communities**
 - Reducing the gap in outcomes for children**
 - Improving value for money in services**
- (5) the Cabinet notes that the increase in funding per pupil of 4.4% in 2010/11 includes the following spending assessment by the Government: Minimum Funding Guarantee (2.1%) and Government priorities (1.4%);**
- (6) the Cabinet notes that the Government has set the Minimum Funding Guarantee at 2.1% for the period 2008-2011. This is 1% below the assessment of average cost pressures and assumes an efficiency gain in schools, as part of national public sector efficiency requirements;**
- (7) the projected budget of 2010-2011 includes the following items (for detail see the Appendix of the Director's report):**

Inflation:

Provision is included for teachers pay at 2.3%, other pay at 1% and income at 3%. There is no provision for price inflation.

Headroom:

Headroom is the difference between the DSG and the budget required to continue funding schools at their current level, after allowing for inflation, unavoidable cost pressures and the Minimum Funding Guarantee. Cabinet notes the decisions taken previously about Headroom. In 2010/11 this is allocated as follows:

Deprivation funding to “narrow the gap”	£3,666,000
Increase in Statement value	£170,000

Other Specific Grants

Specific grants have been included in the budget and are detailed in the table below:

	Amount 2009-10	Estimated Amount 2010-11
	£	£
LSC 6 th Form and SEN	21,226,500	TBA
School Development Grant Devolved	15,802,300	15,941,100
Central	1,189,500	1,214,500
School Standards Grant	10,526,500	10,637,700
Learnwise – LSC / ESF	1,469,300	826,900
School Lunch Grant	553,300	553,300
Ethnic Minority Achievement	188,200	199,800
Extended School Sustainability	849,500	1,225,900
Extended School Subsidy	226,300	791,600
Targeted Primary and Secondary Strategy	2,176,200	TBA
Making Good Progress	791,600	TBA
Surestart, Early Years and Childcare	9,562,200	10,404,900
Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	404,300	1,685,500
Playing for Success	80,000	80,000
Teachers Development Agency	465,500	465,500
National Challenge	405,000	TBA

Area Based Grant

The following Area Based Grants are also included in the Schools Budget::

	Estimate 2010/11 £
--	-----------------------

Secondary behaviour and attendance	68,300
School Development Grant	372,800
Choice Advisors	52,100
Total	493,200

Early Years

The number of children in Early Years settings has increased and Cabinet agrees to allocate growth of £40,000 to meet this requirement.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

There is agreed growth to increase the unit value of statements (£170,000) and to restore the previous cut to the SEN Plan (£150,000). Other pressures in this area however have been contained within the overall SEN provision.

Energy reductions

School energy savings resulting from renegotiated contracts are estimated to be £1.3m in 2010/11. Discussions will take place with the Schools Forum to develop a programme of installing Automatic Energy Readers, this will help to deliver further benefits for schools.

Other Budget Changes

The Cabinet agrees to growth in the budget for Special Staff costs £85,000, Schools Contingency £56,400, a contribution to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board £24,000 and notes the overall reduction in rates and insurances costs of £48,000.

(8) Changes in Special School Places

The Observatory School places for Secondary age pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) will increase in 2010-11 from 46 to 50 as previously agreed. This is part of the successful strategy to reduce the number of placements in out of borough schools.

Claremount places will further reduce from 197 to 189 as part of the planned change to reduce MLD places and increase ASD;

- (9) the Schools Budget reflects the advice and recommendations of the Schools Forum from its meeting on 20th January 2010; and**
- (10) the Cabinet notes the full details of the budget breakdown and recommendations contained within the report and appendices of the Director of Children's Services which have been presented to this meeting.**
- (11) the Cabinet therefore endorses the Schools Budget for 2010-11 and recommends it to the Council for approval; and**

(12) recommends that the £425,800 in unallocated DSG is held in Schools Specific Contingency and carried forward to the next funding period.

(3) Minute 335 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) CARBON BUDGET 2010-2011

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided details for setting the Council's first Carbon Budget, as requested by Members in a Resolution approved by Council on 14 December 2009, (Minute 77 refers). Members were asked to note and endorse the actions to develop a Carbon Budget across the Council.

Resolved – That

- (1) the actions and progress set out in the report be endorsed;**
- (2) the following be also agreed:**
 - (a) the establishment of the Council's carbon footprint and quantification of the tonnes of CO2 released as a direct result of Council operations for 2010 onwards, as set out in the report;**
 - (b) an appropriate evaluation model for quantifying CO2 emissions as part of the procurement process for new council contracts and other spend from April 2011 be developed by the Director of Finance; and**
 - (c) regular updates be received on progress regarding the carbon budget (the reports to include measures and projects implemented to reduce carbon emissions, including an analysis to show progress being made by department and key service areas); and**
- (3) a briefing be arranged in the next Municipal Year, as part of the Members' Training and Development Programme, on the ethos of a Carbon Budget.**

With the permission of the Council, the Leader reserved part of the time for speaking, allocated to him under Standing Order 5 (1) (h), to his right of reply to the debate on the Conservative Group amendment to the Cabinet's budget.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Director of Finance submitted a written report in respect of the budget recommended by the Cabinet, which examined the robustness of the proposed budget with particular reference to

- (a) the adequacy of General Fund balances and reserves;**
- (b) the achievability of any savings included in the budget;**
- (c) the impact of the proposed budget for 2010/11 on the setting of the budget for 2011/12**

A similar report was submitted in respect of the proposals detailed in minute 118 below.

118 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

AMENDMENT: CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET PROPOSAL 2010/11

Proposed by Councillor Green

Seconded by Councillor Rennie

(1) That the revenue estimates for 2010/11, now submitted to Council, be approved, subject to the amendments in paragraphs (3) and (4) below.

(2) It be noted that this budget proposal is based on the belief that:

As council tax payers have no choice but to pay the level of council tax imposed upon them, the Council should do all it can to keep council tax levels as low as possible. Council recognises that this is important to Wirral residents, particularly those on fixed incomes who have seen returns from a life time of savings reduced, and are also faced with increases in household bills generally and increasing national taxes.

That the public deserve to be assured that when Council Officers are making spending choices they are aware that 'every pound matters'

That the Council can and should take the lead to work with other organisations in the wider Wirral public sector to ensure that duplication is reduced, best practice shared and that the public of Wirral are well served.

Wirral deserves a Council that is aware of resident's needs, listens to the public's views and is inclusive in its decision making.

Our Council should ensure that no part of Wirral is ignored and that residents, community groups and businesses are consulted regarding the type of Wirral they want to live in, by having their comments fully considered, evaluated and responded to.

This Conservative Group budget amendment therefore proposes NO increase on the 2009 -2010 level of Wirral Council Tax and an overall increase of only 0.55% when precepts are included.

It is further noted that this approach will mean £1,680,000 stays with Wirral residents and families to save or spend strengthening our local economy, creating and protecting jobs.

This budget preserves the Zero Council Tax increase for Pensioner Households over 75. However, by setting a budget increase at this level £140,000 of the £465,000 in the growth is released. Overall this represents around a 6% discount on Council tax bills.

(3) Amendments

Increased expenditure

Resident Insight, Consultation and Direct Democracy £180,000

Enhancing Well Being pilot £20,000

This pilot programme is to support those community groups that make significant contributions to their community but may be experiencing temporary financial hardship.

For clarity the Allendale Centre to be the first 'enhancing well being' pilot

Integrating the work of public sector agencies across Wirral £50,000

This sum is being made available to support the development of ideas and initiatives in relation to collaboration and shared services between the Council and its key public service partners working principally within the Borough

Supporting Local Businesses Fund £250,000

The impending increased business rates will place additional burdens on small businesses and could put their viability in doubt. This fund will allow businesses to apply for one year Grant Support during 2010 – 2011.

Wirral Parks ASB Response Squad £150,000

This investment will provide for a parks team, initially within the Community Patrol, to ensure an immediate response to reports of anti social behaviour in Council Parks. The impact of this initiative will be reviewed at the end of 2010 – 2011.

Communal flats refuse collection £70,000

Council will provide 'bulk bins' for residents living in communal flats. This will remove the current unfairness that makes Wirral residents living in communal flats pay twice in order to have their waste removed.

School Crossing Patrols £30,000

This additional funding reinstates the cut by the Administration in their 2009 – 2010 budget.

Protecting Front Line Services Fund £2,500,000

This Council wants to ensure that the people of Wirral receive the best possible services and this fund is to be created to provide funding to retain essential services

in the event of any sudden or unplanned increases in Council costs or reductions in income.

Savings – Our approach to savings is based on the following three themes

- Putting the Front Line First
- An Every Pound Matters initiative
- Cutting the Cost of Wirral's Politics

The further carbon reductions arising from the savings contained within this budget amendment be reported to the next meeting of the Cabinet for inclusion in the Council's Carbon Budget.

Putting the Front Line First

(i) All non-front line vacancies to be evaluated (fill, keep vacant or delete) by Employment and Appointments Committee prior to recruitment to any post £300,000

(The terms of reference of the E&A Committee be amended accordingly)

(ii) Noting that the budget includes £1,300,000 for Corporate Marketing (Graphics, Public Relations and Tourism) this be reduced by £325,000

(iii) Noting that the budget includes £1,203,000 for external consultancy costs, all appointments to be approved by Cabinet, and this be reduced by £400,000

(iv) To control the use of external consultants require Cabinet approval before any future engagement (i.e. the officers' scheme of delegation be revised accordingly)

(v) Change Team It is recognised that the Change Team is currently funded from the Efficiency Investment Budget. To give Council management time to plan for the team's future and prioritise its activity it be noted that from 2011-12 the Team will only be funded from the savings/results generated by the Team.

(vi) Reduced Corporate Senior Management Team Costs £600,000

Council notes the Authorities Senior Management Team comprising of Chief Executive, Directors Deputy Directors and Heads of Service costs £3.6 million. Council believes the current structure needs to change to meet the challenges of the future.

Recognising that a new management and departmental structure should enjoy broad political and organisational support this saving to be met from the Efficiency Investment Budget and be delivered from 2011-12.

(vii) Reduce Car allowance / mileage budget by 10% £188,000

(viii) Merge administration of One Stop Shops/Libraries £65,000

(ix) Departmental Procurement Savings £2,176,000

Every Pound Matters

End first class travel and reduce subsistence spend £30,000

End provision and spend on lunch time and evening meal provision £85,000

End purchase of bottled water and provision of rented bulk water dispensers
£20,000

Increased use of telephone conferencing. End 'team building conferences' or 'away days'. Any Team meetings, must be held in Wirral Council owned or supported venues £10,000

Introduce Electronic payslips £10,000

End printed Council Newsletters and replace with electronic versions, avoid printing, do not print in colour unless absolutely necessary (colour printing costs 67% more than black and white) £10,000

Departmental purchasing to be conducted through electronic procurement system
£300,000

Reduce overtime spend of £1.7 million (it be noted that this sum exempts Technical Services Winter Maintenance Costs) by 10% £170,000

Cutting the Cost of Wirral's Politics

It be noted that Council wishes to end the Cabinet and Scrutiny Model of Council Governance and replace with a Committee structure and that this change would generate considerable savings in its own right for Council Tax payers.

Whilst waiting for such a change:

Reduce all Councillor and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5% £45,000

Reduce Councillor Support £55,000

Sandwiches or meals

Expenses

Training

Group Office costs

(1) It be noted that this proposal leaves the following growth in the Council budget for 2010 – 2011

	£
Zero council tax increase for pensioner households over 75	325,000
Investing in digital infrastructure	1,075,000
New apprenticeships	500,000
Freeze car parking charges	75,000

Additional money for schools	6,400,000
Building Schools for the Future	100,000
Get into Reading	100,000
Reduction in alcohol harm	40,000
Investment in Assistive Technology	1,400,000
Investment in home insulation	1,049,000
Energy efficiency	188,000
Eco schools officer	80,000
Energy efficiency grants	66,000
Promotion and development of CRED scheme	30,000
Don't give a dog a bad name	40,000
Additional investment in waste collection round	114,000
Investment in bulk recycling	171,000
Waste reduction team staffing	100,000
20 mph zones in residential areas	275,000
You Decide additional allocations	55,000
You Decide	260,000
Community transfers	1,362,000
Supporting community groups	40,000
Co-ordination of services for ethnic minority communities	30,000

Council instructs Officers to ensure that budgets stay within limits set for the financial year. Council further requires, in the event of any potential overspend, that Chief Officers consult the Director of Finance immediately and draw up a corrective action plan to be reported to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

(1) That for the financial year 2010-11 the Council will ensure that no pensioner household over 75 will have any increase in Council Tax liability, including the consequences of any police and fire increases. This applies where:

(i) the Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 75 or over on 1 April 2010 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2010 eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only);

(ii) this reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs;

(iii) application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit;

No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Benefit will qualify for the reduction.

(1) It be noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2009 the Council calculated the figure of 104,690.0 as its council tax base for the year 2010-11 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(2) The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2010-11 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Collection Fund (Council Tax Benefit) (England) Direction 2002:-

(a) £868,942,200 being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(b) £581,564,100 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(c) £287,378,100 being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;

(d) £157,860,500 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant, adjusted for the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year between its Collection Fund and its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and any amount which the Council estimates to be transferred between its Collection Fund and its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, issued on 7 February 1994;

(e) £1,237.15 being the total amount at 7(c) above less the amount at 7(d) above, divided by the amount at 6 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;

Valuation Bands

A	£824.77	B	£962.23	C	£1,099.69	D	£1,237.15
E	£1,512.07	F	£1,786.99	G	£2,061.92	H	£2,474.30

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 7(e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings in Valuation Band D, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings as listed in different valuation bands.

(1) It is noted that this equates to NO Wirral Council Tax rise.

(2) It be noted that for the year 2010-11 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts of precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Fire

A	£43.18	B	£50.38	C	£57.57	D	£64.77
E	£79.16	F	£93.56	G	£107.95	H	£129.54

Police

A	£97.49	B	£113.73	C	£129.98	D	£146.23
E	£178.73	F	£211.22	G	£243.72	H	£292.46

(2) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 7 and 9 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2010-11 for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A £965.44 B £1,126.34 C £1,287.24 D £1,448.15
E £1,769.96 F £2,091.77 G £2,413.59 H £2,896.30

(2) It is noted that this equates to an overall increase in Council Tax of 0.55%.

Following the debate, and Councillor Foulkes having replied to it, the amendment was put and lost with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (24) - Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, SL Clarke, WA Duffey, DM Elderton, GJ Ellis, Mrs L Fraser, JE Green, J Hale, P Hayes, AC Hodson, PSC Johnson, J Keeley, D Knowles, I Lewis, SR Mountney, C Povall, A Pritchard, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Against the amendment (39) - Councillors RL Abbey, A Bridson, I Coates, JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, F Doyle, S Foulkes, G Gardiner, J George, PN Gilchrist, T Harney, SA Holbrook, AT Jennings, A Jones, SE Kelly, B Kenny, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, GD Mitchell, RK Moon, S Niblock, J Quinn, S Quinn, PTC Reisdorf, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, PM Southwood, JV Stapleton, A Taylor, CM Teggins, R Wilkins, KJ Williams and Mrs P Williams.

Abstainer (1) - Councillor D Kirwan

Resolved - That it be noted that minute 332 is therefore confirmed.

119 **VACANCIES**

There were no nominations to vacancies submitted.

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COUNCIL

Monday, 1 March 2010

Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Andrew Hodson) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Alan Jennings)

Councillors	RL Abbey	T Harney	S Quinn
	T Anderson	P Hayes	P Reisdorf
	C Blakeley	S Holbrook	L Rennie
	A Bridson	P Johnson	D Roberts
	S Clarke	AER Jones	L Rowlands
	IO Coates	J Keeley	J Salter
	J Crabtree	S Kelly	H Smith
	G Davies	B Kenny	T Smith
	P Davies	D Kirwan	W Smith
	WJ Davies	D Knowles	P Southwood
	F Doyle	I Lewis	J Stapleton
	W Duffey	AR McLachlan	A Taylor
	D Elderton	M McLaughlin	S Taylor
	G Ellis	C Meaden	C Teggins
	S Foulkes	D Mitchell	G Watt
	L Fraser	R Moon	R Wilkins
	G Gardiner	S Mountney	KJ Williams
	J George	S Niblock	P Williams
	P Gilchrist	C Povall	S Williams
	JE Green	A Pritchard	K Wood
	J Hale	J Quinn	

Apologies

Councillors K Hayes M Redfern

113 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor welcomed Jessica Yung, Wirral's Young Poet Laureate, and invited her to give a poetry reading before the start of the meeting. Jade Chen read a poem in Mandarin Chinese.

114 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at the meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest. The following declarations were made:

Councillor A Jones declared a personal interest in the Budget (Cabinet minute 232) by virtue of his former Chairmanship of the Allandale Youth Club.

Councillor K Wood (Budget Proposals) by virtue of her being a pensioner householder.

Councillors J Green, A Jennings, A McLachlan, B Kenny, S Williams and L Rowlands, each declared a personal interest in the Schools Budget element of the Budget by virtue of a family member's employment with the authority.

115 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing order 21, the Mayor received a petition submitted by Councillor J George on behalf of 300 signatories objecting to a proposed parking restriction in Commonfield Road, Woodchurch.

116 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2010 had been circulated to members and it was:-

Resolved – That the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.

117 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 13 (Budget Council Procedure), Councillor S Foulkes, Leader of the Council, moved the Cabinet's Budget recommendations duly seconded by Councillor S Holbrook, Deputy Leader, with any additional paragraphs (those relating to precepts), and any other minutes from the Cabinet meeting on 22 February, 2010 that required approval by the Council. The following minutes were deemed to be approved, subject to consideration of the Conservative Group Budget Proposal which was received in accordance with Standing Order 7(2) (see minute 118 post).

(1) Minute 332 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) BUDGET 2010-11

The Director of Finance presented the draft revenue estimates for 2010/11. A decision was required to enable recommendations to be made to the Council concerning the budget and Council Tax for 2010/11. This involved a key decision on the matter forming part of the budget and policy framework and it had been included in the Forward Plan.

The Leader of the Council submitted and commented on a motion which set out the budget proposals of the joint administration. He informed that the Council Tax rise in Wirral resulting from these proposals would be 1.29%, which would give an overall Tax of 1.67% when the precepts were included, and therefore a below-inflation increase, with the January RPI figures running at 3.7%. He went on to pay tribute to Cabinet Members and officers for their hard work in supporting the budgetary process.

The Leader reported that under the proposed budget there would be no Council Tax increase for pensioner households over 75 years of age and that for the Financial Year 2010/11 the Council would ensure that no pensioner household over 75 would have any increase in Council Tax liability, including the consequences of any police and fire increases. This applied where:

- the Council Tax payer paid Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that were counted as resident for Council Tax

purposes were aged 75 or over on 1 April 2010 (but where the qualifying age criterion was met after 1 April 2010 eligibility would be effective from the date of birth only);

- this reduction would be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs;
- application must be made for the reduction where it was not currently in payment of the potential claimant was not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit; and
- no pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Benefit would qualify for the reduction.

In seconding the motion and endorsing the Leader's remarks, the Deputy Leader of the Council informed that this was a positive budget, focussed on the future.

Resolved – That

(1) Investing In Wirral's Future

A Budget for Jobs, the Environment and Safer, Stronger Communities

As we emerge from the worst recession since the Second World War, the economic recovery is fragile and expected to be long and slow. The country also faces unprecedented levels of debt in the public finances.

This is a time when many people are being forced to make sacrifices and when those in public service need to be sure that everything they do stands up to public scrutiny, which is why no councillor is accepting any increase in their allowances and rail travel will be strictly scrutinised to ensure only the most appropriate and economic fares are used.

However, against this background, the Council's finances are in good shape, as the effect of previous budget measures in the three-year efficiency plan finally work through. There exists a window of opportunity for the Council to invest in the long term future economic prosperity and environmental sustainability of the Borough, before the National Government brings to bear the expected squeeze on the public finances.

So this budget contains key investments at its heart to support the economy and the environment with measures to invest in next generation communications technology for business to make it more competitive and create more jobs, doubling the original target of 100 apprentices to 200, better equipping our youth for future employment and a scheme to provide free insulation for every home in the Borough, saving people money on their energy bills, attacking fuel poverty as well as reducing carbon emissions and our impact on global warming.

Also, for the first time, this budget includes a carbon budget, set out in a report to Budget Cabinet, which will be the mechanism whereby the Council sets targets to reduce its own spending on energy and carbon emissions year on year.

The budget also provides support for vulnerable people and safer communities. The proposed investment in assistive technology will enable more elderly and vulnerable people to stay in their homes longer, delaying their need for residential or nursing care. This not only improves the freedom and quality of life of our elderly and vulnerable, but is a more cost effective means of delivering care. The popular discount scheme for pensioner households over 75 is further extended so that there is no increase in the level of Council Tax paid in these homes.

Speed is the key factor in reducing both the number and severity of road traffic accidents. Following the success of the Accidents Down 2 Zero campaign, which has reduced average traffic speeds in the trial areas, the budget provides for a comprehensive new policy to introduce a statutory speed limit of 20 mph on non major routes in all residential areas and for variable speed signs for schools on major routes.

Finally, this budget invests in the future of our young people through additional capacity to prepare a multi-million pound bid for further enhancing the physical fabric of our schools. Narrowing the gap in literacy levels between neighbourhoods, and reducing social exclusion, is also a key theme, with funding being provided to continue the successful 'Get into Reading' initiative in the Borough's most deprived wards. Community cohesion will also be promoted by providing extra resources to more effectively address the needs of our ethnic minority communities.

All the above measures seek in these difficult times to advance the aims of the Council's corporate plan, to create a more prosperous and equal Wirral.

(2) Council Tax Levels

The proposed Council Tax increase for Wirral is 1.29%, which will give an overall Council Tax of 1.67% when the precepts are included. This is less than half the current rate of inflation, with the January RPI figures running at 3.7%.

(3) Revenue Estimates

The Revenue Estimates for 2010-11, as set out in the Estimates Book now submitted, be approved subject to the amendments set out below.

(4) <u>Zero Council Tax Increase for Pensioner Households over 75</u>	£ 465,000
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The sum of £465,000 to be allocated to maintaining the Council Tax discount for pensioner households over 75 and meeting the increased cost of a growing number of eligible households claiming the discount, which in 2009/10 amounted to £260,000, to be met from balances in the current year. The sum allocated will also equalise the system so that everyone who is eligible will receive exactly the same percentage discount. This means that no pensioner household over 75 will pay any increase in Council Tax this year, including the

consequences of any increases in Police and Fire precepts. This honours the target set, (which is dependent on the Council's finances), to keep Council Tax increases for pensioner households over 75 at or beneath the level of the published inflation rate in the January Retail Price Index, which this year is 3.7% This is the equivalent of more than 8% discount on their Council Tax Bill.

(5) Creating New Jobs

Investing in Digital Infrastructure with the next generation super-fast fibre optic broadband network for Wirral businesses. 1,075,000

The sum of £1,075,000 be added to the revenue base for a period of four years, complementing the initial sum of £7.7m from Wirral's Working Neighbourhoods Fund, to create a provision which will allow the phased installation of a brand new, next generation, fast fibre optic communications network in Wirral. Current facilities on Wirral are poor, and this £12m investment in a new, next generation access network will allow current Wirral businesses to compete more effectively in the international market, and will also act as a major incentive to attract to Wirral international companies dependent on fast data transmission who want to locate in the UK or Europe.

This will create jobs in the short term, during the period of installation, and in the longer term as new businesses are attracted in and current businesses develop the capacity to expand.

The Director of Regeneration is asked to bring a full report to Cabinet on March 18th

New Apprenticeships 500,000

The sum of £500,000 be allocated from balances to bring the total number of apprenticeships under the successful Wirral Apprentices Scheme to a minimum of 200, which is double the original target of 100 apprentices. Officers are asked to investigate all relevant sources of finance to ensure this programme continues to grow, working in partnership with Wirral Businesses, giving new opportunities to Wirral's young people and maximising any opportunities provided by the two major schemes for digital infrastructure and for extensive home insulation (outlined below).

Freezing Car Parking Charges 75,000

To help support local businesses through the fragile economic recovery the sum of £75,000 is allocated to allow car parking charges in the borough to be frozen at 2009/10 levels in Council managed car parks and on street parking areas. No charges will be introduced in areas where there are currently none.

(6) Investing in Young People and Life Long Education

Additional Money for Schools**6,400,000**

Cabinet welcomes the fact, as outlined in the Schools Budget Resolution, that an additional £5.9m has been allocated by the government for Wirral Schools in 2010/11 and notes that this equates to an increase of 4.4% per pupil, which is significantly above the rate of inflation.

Cabinet reaffirms its commitment to Wirral Schools by allocating over £493,000 of Area Based Grant resources.

Building Schools for the Future**100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated from the Efficiency Fund to assist in the specialist preparation of a major bid under the Building Schools for the Future programme, which would produce £90m investment in new and modernised schools buildings in Phase 1 alone.

Cabinet notes that this is in addition to the building of a brand new secondary school in Woodchurch, the proposals for a new academy in Birkenhead, and the building or refurbishment in the last ten years of 8 secondary schools and one primary school under the PFI scheme, which demonstrate the total commitment of this administration to the improvement of Wirral's schools.

Get into Reading**100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated from balances for a substantial pilot Get into Reading project, aimed at tackling social exclusion and making Get Into Reading sustainable not just now but into the future. This builds on the three year previous core funding, agreed by this council, which runs out in 2011.

The project will have three key target groups. These are : older people suffering from social deprivation in Care Homes, Dementia Care and living alone; Looked After Children throughout the borough; and residents in Wirral's five most deprived areas (Birkenhead and Tranmere, Bidston and St. James, Rock Ferry, Seacombe and Leasowe and Moreton East)

The project will also provide formal training for interested individuals to run Get Into Reading Groups, which are nationally recognised and have a proven therapeutic track record of raising self-confidence, tackling isolation, building a sense of community and assisting those suffering from depression.

Reduction in Alcohol Harm by Preventing Under Age Sales**40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be allocated from balances to continue funding

the scheme designed to reduce alcohol sales to under age youngsters which has previously been funded by the NHS but is now time expired. This will enable Trading Standards to continue tackling under age sales of alcohol, using a number of methods including test purchasing. This has been so successful that in 2007 the number of sales to under age youngsters was running at 38%, in 2008 that reduced to 15% and in 2009 the sale rate reduced to single figures, with no recorded sales in the last quarter. It will also be possible to match funding with Jobs for the Future funding and employ two to three trainees who will be trained in enforcement and add to the strength of the team.

(7) Help for the Elderly and Vulnerable

£8.9m Investment in Assistive Technology

1,400,000

£1.4m be allocated from the Efficiency Fund, with £400,000 being allocated from the current 2009/10 Efficiency Fund budget in order to allow a rapid start to the programme, and £1m being allocated from the 2010/11 Efficiency Fund budget as the start of a major £8.9m three year investment in Assistive Technology.

This substantial investment in Assistive Technology for Health and Social Care will dramatically increase the number of people who can be supported in their own homes, using the latest sophisticated telecare monitoring and alarm systems, (examples of which can be seen on the Department's website) with the aim of increasing the numbers supported by this technology from just over 1,500 now to over 14,000 people, by March 2013, enabling many people of all ages and abilities to live safely without fear in their own homes.

This builds on the success of Wirral's current Assistive Technology Service which has been nationally recognised as good practice and which received the North West award in April 2008 for Innovative Health and Social Care Technology, Health and Social Care Awards.

The Director of Adult Social Services is asked to bring a full report to Cabinet on 18 March

(8) £18m 4 Year Investment in Free Home Insulation Initiative

Tackling Fuel Poverty, Improving Wirral's Housing Stock and Reducing our Carbon Footprint.

1,049,000

The sum of £1,049,000 be allocated to revenue as the first year requirement of an ambitious £18m four year investment in extending a free insulation offer to the whole of the borough's private sector households, working in partnership with the energy companies under the auspices of the government's Carbon Emissions Reduction Target scheme. This assumes that government funding will continue after March 2011.(The scheme does not apply to HMRI areas, where

free insulation schemes are already available, or to Social Housing where schemes are also already in place.) By the end of year four, the scheme will have been promoted across the whole borough with resources available for widespread free insulation, with the potential for nearly all of Wirral's homes to have been properly insulated.

Cabinet notes that the scheme will work with the Warmer Wirral initiative and will, in the first instance be promoted and resources concentrated, in areas of high fuel poverty. Householders will, where appropriate, also be referred to other, wider, energy efficiency schemes, improving overall levels of carbon reduction, along with other fuel poverty prevention measures such as the Government's Warm Front Scheme. These measures should contribute substantially to lifting households out of fuel poverty.

The Director of Regeneration is asked to bring a detailed report to Cabinet on 18 March.

(9) Improving the Environment, Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction.

Energy Efficiency 188,000

The sum of £188,000 be allocated from the Efficiency Fund for a number of measures to improve the Council's energy efficiency, including the installation of Automatic Meter Reading, the use of Automatic PC Power down programmes to ensure non essential computers and monitors are not left switched on when they are not needed, Voltage optimisation and the use of Variable Speed Drives. Together these measures will yield an annual saving of £130,000 as well as contributing to a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

Eco Schools Officer and Support for Initiatives 80,000

The sum of £80,000 be invested in the creation of a full time post for an Eco Schools Officer with resources to engage with and educate children and community groups to reduce waste and to increase the amount and quality of waste recycled in schools and in children's homes.

Energy Efficiency Grants for Community Buildings 66,000

To support the long term sustainability of community groups running community buildings, the sum of £66,000 be made available from balances as individual grants to enable those communities to access the appropriate energy efficiency technologies to help reduce their fuel bills and their carbon emissions. The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management is asked to report to Cabinet with the details of an appropriate scheme.

Promotion and Development of CRed Scheme 30,000

The sum of £30,000 be invested from balances to extend and develop use of CRed, the web-based carbon reduction tools, with residents, school children, communities and our partners, in support of the corporate priority to reduce carbon emissions across the Borough.

Don't Give a Dog a Bad Name **40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be used to build on the current successful scheme with funding being used in conjunction with Jobs for the Future funding in order to employ two or three trainees who will be trained in patrolling and enforcement and add to the strength of the team, giving greater coverage over longer periods of time than is possible at the moment.

Additional Investment in Waste Collection Round **114,000**

The sum of £114,000 be allocated to provide weekly residual waste collections from those multi occupancy households with insufficient storage space for inclusion in alternate weekly collection rounds

Investment In Bulk Recycling **171,000**

The sum of £171,000 be invested to secure development of the bulk recycling service for multi occupancy properties.

Make the Staffing within the Waste Reduction Team Permanent **100,000**

The sum of £100,000 be allocated in order to place on permanent staff those existing members of staff working to improve environmental quality standards and encourage recycling and waste reduction. Currently these posts are funded on a temporary basis from the recycling credits.

AN INCREASE IN RECYCLING CREDITS OF £230,000 BE USED TO PARTIALLY OFFSET THE COST OF THESE ITEMS

(10) Improving Road Safety

Comprehensive 20mph zones in Residential Areas **275,000**

The revenue sum of £275,000 be allocated to a rolling four year £1.1m programme to reduce traffic speeds both in residential areas and outside schools, where there are higher numbers of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists. Cabinet notes that reducing traffic speeds helps reduce the number of accidents, and their severity.

This four year programme will phase in statutory 20mph speed restrictions in non major routes in residential areas across the

borough. It will also implement (following the introduction of regulations from the Department of Transport) variable time specific 20mph speed signs to be used outside schools on through routes where casualties have occurred, with the signs in use at key times in the school day.

Dealing with Extreme Winter Conditions

Cabinet notes that the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been charged with a formal review of winter maintenance arrangements, following this year's severe weather and that one of the options under consideration will be the practicality of building a new salt barn to store additional salt as a hedge against future extreme conditions. Should this be deemed necessary, Cabinet accepts an addition to the future capital programme may be required.

Addition to "You Decide" Allocation for Area Forums 55,000

The additional sum of £5,000 per Area Forum be allocated for one year only to allow communities to make provision for individual winter resilience items for their areas, such as salt bins etc.

(11) Strengthening Wirral's Communities and Increasing Choice

You Decide 260,000

The revenue sum of £260,000 be allocated to change the status of the You Decide programme from a pilot to mainstream activity funded from the base budget, given its continuing success. This success last year saw local communities choose to spend money, amongst other things, on additional sporting and youth activities, including diversionary activity to improve community safety, on crime prevention measures and on environmental improvements.

Community Transfers 1,362,000

Cabinet welcomes the progress made in transferring a number of the Council's assets to the community, but recognises that a number of factors, including the need for community empowerment, procurement issues and the impact of the recession on the private sector, mean that the end transfer date in many cases is later than anticipated, although the pace of transfer will quicken considerably in 2010/11. The sum of £578,000 is therefore allocated from balances in 2009/10 and a provision of £1,362,000 is allocated for 2010/11 to allow for the successful completion of transfers without placing undue pressure on other budgets.

Guinea Gap Baths

In the case of Guinea Gap Baths, Cabinet notes that the original intention was to provide for Guinea Gap baths to remain open while the potential for alternative schemes as part of a longer term waterfront development was explored. The impact of the recession on private sector development now makes this a much more distant possibility. Cabinet therefore asks the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management to bring a report to Cabinet which will allow the Cabinet to restore the funding of Guinea Gap to the base budget when the current funding runs out.

Supporting Community Groups – Finance and Governance **40,000**

The sum of £40,000 be allocated to the creation of a peripatetic post, to be held by a qualified accountant and based in the finance department, to support the development of community groups and to support the establishment of models of good governance, sound financial practice and the development of business plans.

Co-ordination of Services for Ethnic Minority Communities in Wirral **30,000**

The sum of 30,000 be allocated to a new two year post, jointly funded by the local authority, NHS Wirral and the Wirral Multi-Cultural Organisation, in order to stimulate and actively encourage, the establishment of fully representative and inclusive BME strategic leadership in Wirral.

This is one-off funding subject to subsequent negotiation and agreement about outcomes, monitoring and evaluation. The post-holder will be expected to identify and generate sufficient income to sustain this post once the Council and PCT funding has ended.

(12) Running a More Efficient Council

The following savings form part of the drive to run a more efficient Council and keep Council Tax increases to a minimum.

8 months savings from the investment in Assistive Technology of which 2 months are bridged for one year at the cost of £400,000 from balances.

SAVINGS
£1.6m

EVRs and subsequent staffing re-organisations.

Net saving
£560,000

Creation of an Integrated Passenger Transport Unit combining the current functions within the Department of Adult Social Services and the Children and Young Peoples Department, to be managed within the Department of Adult Social Services with a consequent transfer of staff and budgets, to yield a saving in 2010-11 of £600,000 with a target saving by 2014 of £1.5m.

£600,000

Restructuring of management and administrative staff within the Department of Adult Social Services £240,000 **£240,000**

Continuation of the HESPE project continues to provide ongoing staffing savings which for 2010/11 equates to £80,000. **£80,000**

Funding the DASS Reform Unit and its activities relating to the development of personalised support from the Efficiency Fund £350,000 **£350,000**

Increased income from enforcement under NRASWA **£200,000**

(13) It be noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2009 the Council calculated the figure of 104,690.0 as its council tax base for the year 2010-11 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(14) The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2010-11 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Collection Fund (Council Tax Benefit) (England) Direction 2002: -

(a) £870,622,200 being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (c) of the Act

(b) £581,564,100 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(c) £289,058,100 being the amount by which the aggregate at 14(a)above exceeds the aggregate at 14(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;

(d) £157,860,500 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant, adjusted for the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year between its Collection Fund and it's General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and any amount which the Council estimates to be transferred between its Collection Fund and its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, issued on 7 February 1994;

(e) £1,253.20 being the total amount at (14c) above less the amount at 14(d) above, divided by the amount at 13 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year

Valuation Bands

A £835.47 B £974.71 C £1,113.96 D £1,253.20

E £1,531.69 F £1,810.18 G £2,088.67 H £2,506.40

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 14(e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings in Valuation Band D, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings as listed in different valuation bands.

(15) It is noted that this equates to a Wirral Council Tax rise of 1.29%.

(16) It be noted that for the year 2010-11 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts of precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Fire

A	£43.18	B	£50.38	C	£57.57	D	£64.77
E	£79.16	F	£93.56	G	£107.95	H	£129.54

Police

A	£97.49	B	£113.73	C	£129.98	D	£146.23
E	£178.73	F	£211.22	G	£243.72	H	£292.46

(17) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 14 and 16 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2010-11 for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A	£976.14	B	£1,138.82	C	£1,301.51	D	£1,464.20
E	£1,789.58	F	£2,114.96	G	£2,440.34	H	£2,928.40

(18) It is noted that this equates to an overall increase in Council Tax of 1.67%

(2) Minute 331 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) SCHOOLS BUDGET 2010-2011

The Director of Children’s Services presented a report which recommended the approval of the Schools Budget for 2010-11. He explained that it was the third year of a national three-year funding period for schools (2008-11). In 2008 decisions had been taken about levels of funding based on the Government’s stated priorities. The budget had been presented to Wirral’s Schools Forum on 20 January 2010. The report and the resolution from the Forum were attached as Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

On 14 January 2010, the Cabinet had received a report that had outlined that energy costs in schools would reduce in 2010-11 by £1.3m following the renewal of

contracts. This would be reflected in the budgets set by schools. The recommendation in the report included a request that the Schools Forum consider a programme of automatic remote reading meter installations in schools, funded from the Schools Budget, in order to help deliver the energy saving scheme. This had been outlined to the Schools Forum who consequently agreed to receive a more detailed report at its next meeting in June 2010.

The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning highlighted the fact that the Government had again stated that it expected to see Council Tax increases at a 16-year low and this had been re-affirmed in the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement. Capping action had already been initiated against three Police Authorities to limit their increases to approximately 3%.

He went on to thank the Schools Forum for its contribution and endorsed its proposals set out within the proposed Schools Budget.

Resolved – That

- (1) the Cabinet welcomes the increase in funding from Government through Dedicated Schools Grant of £5.9m for 2010/11. Over the funding period 2008-11 this amounts to over £14.4m more for Wirral Schools;**
- (2) the Cabinet recommends to Council that the Schools' Budget for 2010-11 be set at the level of the adjusted Dedicated Schools Grant which is £193,995,400. This equates to an increase of 4.4% per pupil;**
- (3) it is acknowledged that these increases are above the current CPI rate of inflation (3.5%) and that they compare favourably with the average national increases in funding per pupil of 4.3%;**
- (4) the Cabinet recognises that this budget will help the Council to achieve one of the strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan which is to raise the aspirations of young people. This funding will also contribute towards the four themes in the Children and Young People's Plan:**
 - Reducing health inequalities for children and young people**
 - Intervening and supporting children earlier and in their communities**
 - Reducing the gap in outcomes for children**
 - Improving value for money in services**
- (5) the Cabinet notes that the increase in funding per pupil of 4.4% in 2010/11 includes the following spending assessment by the Government: Minimum Funding Guarantee (2.1%) and Government priorities (1.4%);**
- (6) the Cabinet notes that the Government has set the Minimum Funding Guarantee at 2.1% for the period 2008-2011. This is 1% below the assessment of average cost pressures and assumes an efficiency gain in schools, as part of national public sector efficiency requirements;**
- (7) the projected budget of 2010-2011 includes the following items (for detail see the Appendix of the Director's report):**

Inflation:

Provision is included for teachers pay at 2.3%, other pay at 1% and income at 3%. There is no provision for price inflation.

Headroom:

Headroom is the difference between the DSG and the budget required to continue funding schools at their current level, after allowing for inflation, unavoidable cost pressures and the Minimum Funding Guarantee. Cabinet notes the decisions taken previously about Headroom. In 2010/11 this is allocated as follows:

Deprivation funding to “narrow the gap”	£3,666,000
Increase in Statement value	£170,000

Other Specific Grants

Specific grants have been included in the budget and are detailed in the table below:

	Amount 2009-10	Estimated Amount 2010-11
	£	£
LSC 6 th Form and SEN	21,226,500	TBA
School Development Grant Devolved	15,802,300	15,941,100
Central	1,189,500	1,214,500
School Standards Grant	10,526,500	10,637,700
Learnwise – LSC / ESF	1,469,300	826,900
School Lunch Grant	553,300	553,300
Ethnic Minority Achievement	188,200	199,800
Extended School Sustainability	849,500	1,225,900
Extended School Subsidy	226,300	791,600
Targeted Primary and Secondary Strategy	2,176,200	TBA
Making Good Progress	791,600	TBA
Surestart, Early Years and Childcare	9,562,200	10,404,900
Free Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	404,300	1,685,500
Playing for Success	80,000	80,000
Teachers Development Agency	465,500	465,500
National Challenge	405,000	TBA

Area Based Grant

The following Area Based Grants are also included in the Schools Budget::

	Estimate 2010/11 £
--	-----------------------

Secondary behaviour and attendance	68,300
School Development Grant	372,800
Choice Advisors	52,100
Total	493,200

Early Years

The number of children in Early Years settings has increased and Cabinet agrees to allocate growth of £40,000 to meet this requirement.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

There is agreed growth to increase the unit value of statements (£170,000) and to restore the previous cut to the SEN Plan (£150,000). Other pressures in this area however have been contained within the overall SEN provision.

Energy reductions

School energy savings resulting from renegotiated contracts are estimated to be £1.3m in 2010/11. Discussions will take place with the Schools Forum to develop a programme of installing Automatic Energy Readers, this will help to deliver further benefits for schools.

Other Budget Changes

The Cabinet agrees to growth in the budget for Special Staff costs £85,000, Schools Contingency £56,400, a contribution to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board £24,000 and notes the overall reduction in rates and insurances costs of £48,000.

(8) Changes in Special School Places

The Observatory School places for Secondary age pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) will increase in 2010-11 from 46 to 50 as previously agreed. This is part of the successful strategy to reduce the number of placements in out of borough schools.

Claremount places will further reduce from 197 to 189 as part of the planned change to reduce MLD places and increase ASD;

- (9) the Schools Budget reflects the advice and recommendations of the Schools Forum from its meeting on 20th January 2010; and**
- (10) the Cabinet notes the full details of the budget breakdown and recommendations contained within the report and appendices of the Director of Children's Services which have been presented to this meeting.**
- (11) the Cabinet therefore endorses the Schools Budget for 2010-11 and recommends it to the Council for approval; and**

(12) recommends that the £425,800 in unallocated DSG is held in Schools Specific Contingency and carried forward to the next funding period.

(3) Minute 335 (Cabinet – 22.02.2010) CARBON BUDGET 2010-2011

A report by the Director of Technical Services provided details for setting the Council's first Carbon Budget, as requested by Members in a Resolution approved by Council on 14 December 2009, (Minute 77 refers). Members were asked to note and endorse the actions to develop a Carbon Budget across the Council.

Resolved – That

- (1) the actions and progress set out in the report be endorsed;**
- (2) the following be also agreed:**
 - (a) the establishment of the Council's carbon footprint and quantification of the tonnes of CO2 released as a direct result of Council operations for 2010 onwards, as set out in the report;**
 - (b) an appropriate evaluation model for quantifying CO2 emissions as part of the procurement process for new council contracts and other spend from April 2011 be developed by the Director of Finance; and**
 - (c) regular updates be received on progress regarding the carbon budget (the reports to include measures and projects implemented to reduce carbon emissions, including an analysis to show progress being made by department and key service areas); and**
- (3) a briefing be arranged in the next Municipal Year, as part of the Members' Training and Development Programme, on the ethos of a Carbon Budget.**

With the permission of the Council, the Leader reserved part of the time for speaking, allocated to him under Standing Order 5 (1) (h), to his right of reply to the debate on the Conservative Group amendment to the Cabinet's budget.

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Director of Finance submitted a written report in respect of the budget recommended by the Cabinet, which examined the robustness of the proposed budget with particular reference to

- (a) the adequacy of General Fund balances and reserves;**
- (b) the achievability of any savings included in the budget;**
- (c) the impact of the proposed budget for 2010/11 on the setting of the budget for 2011/12**

A similar report was submitted in respect of the proposals detailed in minute 118 below.

118 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

AMENDMENT: CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET PROPOSAL 2010/11

Proposed by Councillor Green

Seconded by Councillor Rennie

(1) That the revenue estimates for 2010/11, now submitted to Council, be approved, subject to the amendments in paragraphs (3) and (4) below.

(2) It be noted that this budget proposal is based on the belief that:

As council tax payers have no choice but to pay the level of council tax imposed upon them, the Council should do all it can to keep council tax levels as low as possible. Council recognises that this is important to Wirral residents, particularly those on fixed incomes who have seen returns from a life time of savings reduced, and are also faced with increases in household bills generally and increasing national taxes.

That the public deserve to be assured that when Council Officers are making spending choices they are aware that 'every pound matters'

That the Council can and should take the lead to work with other organisations in the wider Wirral public sector to ensure that duplication is reduced, best practice shared and that the public of Wirral are well served.

Wirral deserves a Council that is aware of resident's needs, listens to the public's views and is inclusive in its decision making.

Our Council should ensure that no part of Wirral is ignored and that residents, community groups and businesses are consulted regarding the type of Wirral they want to live in, by having their comments fully considered, evaluated and responded to.

This Conservative Group budget amendment therefore proposes NO increase on the 2009 -2010 level of Wirral Council Tax and an overall increase of only 0.55% when precepts are included.

It is further noted that this approach will mean £1,680,000 stays with Wirral residents and families to save or spend strengthening our local economy, creating and protecting jobs.

This budget preserves the Zero Council Tax increase for Pensioner Households over 75. However, by setting a budget increase at this level £140,000 of the £465,000 in the growth is released. Overall this represents around a 6% discount on Council tax bills.

(3) Amendments

Increased expenditure

Resident Insight, Consultation and Direct Democracy £180,000

Enhancing Well Being pilot £20,000

This pilot programme is to support those community groups that make significant contributions to their community but may be experiencing temporary financial hardship.

For clarity the Allendale Centre to be the first 'enhancing well being' pilot

Integrating the work of public sector agencies across Wirral £50,000

This sum is being made available to support the development of ideas and initiatives in relation to collaboration and shared services between the Council and its key public service partners working principally within the Borough

Supporting Local Businesses Fund £250,000

The impending increased business rates will place additional burdens on small businesses and could put their viability in doubt. This fund will allow businesses to apply for one year Grant Support during 2010 – 2011.

Wirral Parks ASB Response Squad £150,000

This investment will provide for a parks team, initially within the Community Patrol, to ensure an immediate response to reports of anti social behaviour in Council Parks. The impact of this initiative will be reviewed at the end of 2010 – 2011.

Communal flats refuse collection £70,000

Council will provide 'bulk bins' for residents living in communal flats. This will remove the current unfairness that makes Wirral residents living in communal flats pay twice in order to have their waste removed.

School Crossing Patrols £30,000

This additional funding reinstates the cut by the Administration in their 2009 – 2010 budget.

Protecting Front Line Services Fund £2,500,000

This Council wants to ensure that the people of Wirral receive the best possible services and this fund is to be created to provide funding to retain essential services

in the event of any sudden or unplanned increases in Council costs or reductions in income.

Savings – Our approach to savings is based on the following three themes

- Putting the Front Line First
- An Every Pound Matters initiative
- Cutting the Cost of Wirral's Politics

The further carbon reductions arising from the savings contained within this budget amendment be reported to the next meeting of the Cabinet for inclusion in the Council's Carbon Budget.

Putting the Front Line First

(i) All non-front line vacancies to be evaluated (fill, keep vacant or delete) by Employment and Appointments Committee prior to recruitment to any post £300,000

(The terms of reference of the E&A Committee be amended accordingly)

(ii) Noting that the budget includes £1,300,000 for Corporate Marketing (Graphics, Public Relations and Tourism) this be reduced by £325,000

(iii) Noting that the budget includes £1,203,000 for external consultancy costs, all appointments to be approved by Cabinet, and this be reduced by £400,000

(iv) To control the use of external consultants require Cabinet approval before any future engagement (i.e. the officers' scheme of delegation be revised accordingly)

(v) Change Team It is recognised that the Change Team is currently funded from the Efficiency Investment Budget. To give Council management time to plan for the team's future and prioritise its activity it be noted that from 2011-12 the Team will only be funded from the savings/results generated by the Team.

(vi) Reduced Corporate Senior Management Team Costs £600,000

Council notes the Authorities Senior Management Team comprising of Chief Executive, Directors Deputy Directors and Heads of Service costs £3.6 million. Council believes the current structure needs to change to meet the challenges of the future.

Recognising that a new management and departmental structure should enjoy broad political and organisational support this saving to be met from the Efficiency Investment Budget and be delivered from 2011-12.

(vii) Reduce Car allowance / mileage budget by 10% £188,000

(viii) Merge administration of One Stop Shops/Libraries £65,000

(ix) Departmental Procurement Savings £2,176,000

Every Pound Matters

End first class travel and reduce subsistence spend £30,000

End provision and spend on lunch time and evening meal provision £85,000

End purchase of bottled water and provision of rented bulk water dispensers
£20,000

Increased use of telephone conferencing. End 'team building conferences' or 'away days'. Any Team meetings, must be held in Wirral Council owned or supported venues £10,000

Introduce Electronic payslips £10,000

End printed Council Newsletters and replace with electronic versions, avoid printing, do not print in colour unless absolutely necessary (colour printing costs 67% more than black and white) £10,000

Departmental purchasing to be conducted through electronic procurement system
£300,000

Reduce overtime spend of £1.7 million (it be noted that this sum exempts Technical Services Winter Maintenance Costs) by 10% £170,000

Cutting the Cost of Wirral's Politics

It be noted that Council wishes to end the Cabinet and Scrutiny Model of Council Governance and replace with a Committee structure and that this change would generate considerable savings in its own right for Council Tax payers.

Whilst waiting for such a change:

Reduce all Councillor and Special Responsibility Allowances by 5% £45,000

Reduce Councillor Support £55,000

Sandwiches or meals

Expenses

Training

Group Office costs

(1) It be noted that this proposal leaves the following growth in the Council budget for 2010 – 2011

	£
Zero council tax increase for pensioner households over 75	325,000
Investing in digital infrastructure	1,075,000
New apprenticeships	500,000
Freeze car parking charges	75,000

Additional money for schools	6,400,000
Building Schools for the Future	100,000
Get into Reading	100,000
Reduction in alcohol harm	40,000
Investment in Assistive Technology	1,400,000
Investment in home insulation	1,049,000
Energy efficiency	188,000
Eco schools officer	80,000
Energy efficiency grants	66,000
Promotion and development of CRED scheme	30,000
Don't give a dog a bad name	40,000
Additional investment in waste collection round	114,000
Investment in bulk recycling	171,000
Waste reduction team staffing	100,000
20 mph zones in residential areas	275,000
You Decide additional allocations	55,000
You Decide	260,000
Community transfers	1,362,000
Supporting community groups	40,000
Co-ordination of services for ethnic minority communities	30,000

Council instructs Officers to ensure that budgets stay within limits set for the financial year. Council further requires, in the event of any potential overspend, that Chief Officers consult the Director of Finance immediately and draw up a corrective action plan to be reported to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.

(1) That for the financial year 2010-11 the Council will ensure that no pensioner household over 75 will have any increase in Council Tax liability, including the consequences of any police and fire increases. This applies where:

(i) the Council Tax payer pays Council Tax in Wirral as their main home and all individuals in the household that are counted as resident for Council Tax purposes are aged 75 or over on 1 April 2010 (but where the qualifying age criterion is met after 1 April 2010 eligibility will be effective from the relevant birth date only);

(ii) this reduction will be calculated after deduction of all other Council Tax discounts and reliefs;

(iii) application must be made for the reduction where it is not currently in payment or the potential claimant is not in receipt of Council Tax Benefit;

No pensioner household in receipt of full Council Tax Benefit will qualify for the reduction.

(1) It be noted that, at its meeting on 9 December 2009 the Council calculated the figure of 104,690.0 as its council tax base for the year 2010-11 in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(2) The following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2010-11 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Collection Fund (Council Tax Benefit) (England) Direction 2002:-

(a) £868,942,200 being the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(b) £581,564,100 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;

(c) £287,378,100 being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;

(d) £157,860,500 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant, adjusted for the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year between its Collection Fund and its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and any amount which the Council estimates to be transferred between its Collection Fund and its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) Directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, issued on 7 February 1994;

(e) £1,237.15 being the total amount at 7(c) above less the amount at 7(d) above, divided by the amount at 6 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;

Valuation Bands

A	£824.77	B	£962.23	C	£1,099.69	D	£1,237.15
E	£1,512.07	F	£1,786.99	G	£2,061.92	H	£2,474.30

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 7(e) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings in Valuation Band D, calculated in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings as listed in different valuation bands.

(1) It is noted that this equates to NO Wirral Council Tax rise.

(2) It be noted that for the year 2010-11 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts of precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Fire

A	£43.18	B	£50.38	C	£57.57	D	£64.77
E	£79.16	F	£93.56	G	£107.95	H	£129.54

Police

A	£97.49	B	£113.73	C	£129.98	D	£146.23
E	£178.73	F	£211.22	G	£243.72	H	£292.46

(2) Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 7 and 9 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2010-11 for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Valuation Bands

A £965.44 B £1,126.34 C £1,287.24 D £1,448.15
E £1,769.96 F £2,091.77 G £2,413.59 H £2,896.30

(2) It is noted that this equates to an overall increase in Council Tax of 0.55%.

Following the debate, and Councillor Foulkes having replied to it, the amendment was put and lost with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (24) - Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, SL Clarke, WA Duffey, DM Elderton, GJ Ellis, Mrs L Fraser, JE Green, J Hale, P Hayes, AC Hodson, PSC Johnson, J Keeley, D Knowles, I Lewis, SR Mountney, C Povall, A Pritchard, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt, S Williams and Mrs K Wood.

Against the amendment (39) - Councillors RL Abbey, A Bridson, I Coates, JA Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, F Doyle, S Foulkes, G Gardiner, J George, PN Gilchrist, T Harney, SA Holbrook, AT Jennings, A Jones, SE Kelly, B Kenny, A McLachlan, M McLaughlin, CM Meaden, GD Mitchell, RK Moon, S Niblock, J Quinn, S Quinn, PTC Reisdorf, DE Roberts, J Salter, H Smith, PA Smith, WW Smith, PM Southwood, JV Stapleton, A Taylor, CM Teggins, R Wilkins, KJ Williams and Mrs P Williams.

Abstainer (1) - Councillor D Kirwan

Resolved - That it be noted that minute 332 is therefore confirmed.

119 **VACANCIES**

There were no nominations to vacancies submitted.

MATTERS REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DETERMINATION

Minute 350 Departmental Service Plans and Updated Corporate Plan for 2010/11

The Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Services presented a report that detailed the final drafts of departmental service plans for 2010/11 alongside an updated Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the departmental service plans and updated Corporate Plan for 2010/11 be agreed and recommended to the Council for adoption;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to make final minor amendments to the Corporate Plan before it is submitted to the Council; and
- (3) Members be requested to take responsibility for the delivery of departmental service plans according to their portfolios, in consultation with the appropriate Chief Officer(s).

Minute 352 Nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Municipal Year 2010/11

RESOLVED:

That the following nominations be made for the Municipal Year 2010/11 at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 17 May 2010:

- (1) Councillor A Jennings for the role of Mayor; and
- (2) Councillor M McLaughlin for the role of Deputy Mayor.

Minute 353 Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

A report by the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management advised Members that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 had received Royal Assent on 12 November 2009. On 16 December 2009, the Government had published a commencement order for sections of the Act coming into effect at various dates between December 2009 and April 2010. The commencement of the duty on councils to promote local democracy, the requirement to publish a petitions scheme, and the changes to the operation of construction contracts, had all been delayed until an unspecified date.

It was clear that plans must be put in place to implement the requirements within the Act. Therefore, a summary of what must happen across the Council and what plans must be put in place to implement the relevant sections of the Act were detailed in the report for Members' information.

The role of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer was detailed in Appendix A to the report also for Members' information

RESOLVED: That

- (1) comments be received on the proposed approach for implementing the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, as outlined above;
- (2) the commencement of the duty on Councils to promote local democracy, the requirement to publish a petitions scheme, and changes to the operation of construction contracts had been delayed until an unspecified date be noted; and
- (3) Council be recommended to appoint the Head of Legal and Member Services as the Council's statutory scrutiny officer.

Minute 359 Scrutiny Programme Board Referral

It was reported that, at its meeting on 4 March, 2010, the Scrutiny Programme Board had considered a report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management on the Draft Protocol – Scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, and resolved:

- “(1) That the draft Scrutiny Protocol for the scrutiny of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) be endorsed and referred to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the CDRP, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet for consideration.
- (2) That subject to the Protocol being revised in the light of any comments received, it be presented to the Council for adoption as a clarification of Scrutiny's relationship with the CDRP.”

RESOLVED:

That in the content of the Draft Protocol Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be noted along with its referral to the Council for adoption

Minute 360 Committee Calendar for Municipal Year 2010/11

The Director of Law, HR & Asset Management presented a report recommending dates for Council, Cabinet and committee meetings for the Municipal year 2010/11. The revised proposed calendar had been circulated, along with a second supplementary agenda. The report also described various issues that had been taken into account in compiling it. Four further amendments were also circulated at the meeting for Members' approval.

RESOLVED:

That the revised calendar of meetings for the Municipal year 2010/11, (attached as Appendix A to the Minutes), be approved.

[Subsequent to the meeting, the Director of Finance requested that the September meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee be brought forward, as due consideration of the Authority's financial accounts needed to be given before the end of September, the meeting has therefore been moved from 30 to 28 September]

Minute 367 Contract Procedure Rules

The Director of Finance advised Members that as the Authority had now completed the implementation of the Due North Contract Management System which was accepted as the regional standard portal for electronic tendering and sourcing by North West Local Authorities, it was therefore necessary to amend the relevant Contract Procedure Rules to enable electronic tendering to be fully integrated into the Council processes.

RESOLVED:

That Council approval of the amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules be recommended.

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Council – 19 April 2010

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 8(1) and are listed in the order received. The actual order in which they are debated will be determined by the party groups in accordance with Standing Order 5(3).

(1) UNITED UTILITIES

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

(1) This Council appreciates that officers from this and other local authorities in the North West have been meeting with United Utilities to seek prompt maintenance of manhole covers, frames and surrounding surfaces. Council further recognises that agreement has been reached on a recognised procedure or protocol for timely repair works to be done, but that further work needs to be carried out to ensure that this is always followed.

(2) This Council is determined that the gas, electricity and water supply companies must play their part in ensuring a high standard of temporary and permanent reinstatements to the vast number of openings they make in Wirral's roads.

(3) In particular, Council believes that United Utilities should take action to tackle the backlog of sunken manhole covers in our roads, which cause nuisance and inconvenience to road users and safety issues for cyclists in particular.

(4) Accordingly, officers be requested:

- (i) to continue to press the company to respond positively to public concerns, and;
- (ii) to report back on the progress of steps to secure their full co-operation to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(2) ACADEMIES

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Frank Doyle

(1) Council notes the current consultation and progress being made to create a new academy in Birkenhead.

(2) Council condemns the ill judged and unhelpful comments made by Frank Field MP and disassociates itself from his calls for the resignations of the Council's Chief Executive and the Director of Children's Services.

(3) TACKLING THE RECESSION

Proposed by Councillor Gill Gardiner

Seconded by Councillor Simon Holbrook

(1) This Council welcomes Wirral's Economic Recovery Plan as reported to Cabinet on 4th February and the LSP Executive on 17th February 2010 and the work being carried out to respond to the effects of recession, supporting businesses and preparing Wirral's economy for recovery, including:

- Advice and information cascaded to businesses about how to survive and recover from recession.
- Council invoices paid within 10 days to all creditors employing less than 250 people.
- Continued expansion of the Wirral Apprenticeship Programme to 200 places through this year's budget.
- Targeted employment support for young people aged 18-24.
- Multi agency working and strong voluntary sector support to provide increased capacity for debt advice for residents, support and signposting for older people and newcomers to benefits and personal advice.
- Tailored business start up support through Wirral Biz.
- Construction Integrator to improve engagement and recruitment of local workless residents.
- A mortgage rescue scheme.
- Funding through this year's budget to provide super fast broadband communications for business.
- Measures to attract inward investment.
- Promoting new development in the borough.

(2) Whilst recognising the positive impact of the measures taken to date, this Council believes that every effort must continue to be made to protect residents and businesses through the continuing period of economic uncertainty ahead. In particular, that the anticipated reductions in public sector budgets by the incoming government following the general election do not result in a double-dip recession which would harm Wirral's prospects for economic recovery.

(3) Therefore, Council requests that the Director of Corporate Services continues to seek best practice, including that from other areas, report back on how these can be incorporated into the Economic Recovery Plan and investigate the feasibility of providing additional support measures, such as:

- How the Council's website, along with leaflets aimed at families, businesses, the redundant and unemployed and the elderly and vulnerable community groups, can be used to provide useful tools such as a personal budget planner, finding out about benefits, reducing debt, coping with rising bills, help with getting new skills, advice on how to save money, links to useful partner websites.
- Where practicable, securing more goods and services from local companies, and encouraging others to do the same.

- Building on the success of the ‘Boost Your Business – Beat the Economic Downturn’ workshops held at the Floral Pavilion with ‘Recovery Roadshows’ to bring support services to businesses.
- Using the Area Forums as a mechanism to take information about support and advice services out into the community.

(4) In addition, in developing these initiatives, Council believes that it should itself play a strong role by setting an example, as the Borough’s largest employer, by considering how we can provide training and employment opportunities for those groups in greatest need of support, such as looked after children and disabled people.

(4) DEATH OF CHLOE FLETCHER

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

(1) Council expresses its deep sadness at the death of Chloe Fletcher’s and our sincere condolences go to her family and everyone who knew her.

(2) Council supports and endorses the comments of the Director of Children’s Services ‘that Chloe’s death affected the whole community and continues to resonate with everyone involved’

(3) Council believes that there are major lessons to be learned by the public sector across Wirral particularly those agencies directly involved with families and Child Protection.

(4) Council therefore expresses its disappointment that a suitably anonymised and reasonably redacted, copy of the Serious Case Review into Chloe’s death, including OFSTED’s comments upon it, has not been made public.

(5) Council acknowledges its own vital role regarding Child Protection in Wirral and believes that we can only hope to learn the lessons of such a tragedy and assure the public that steps are being taken to avoid repeating any shortfalls that made it possible, by a timely and as full as possible publication of the details contained in Serious Case Reviews and OFSTED’s comments upon them.

(5) CHARTERIS REPORT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

(1) Council notes:

The letter from Sue Charteris, now published on the ‘Hamilton Squared Blog’, to Wirral Borough Council in response to the Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration’s attempted rebuttal of her original Draft report.

That Ms Charteris attached an Executive Summary of her report to her letter which she described as 'Embargoed' and that this is at odds with the assertion that has been made, that, all information prior to the secret midnight meeting in the Town Hall of the leaders of Wirral Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups with Senior Officers of the Council and the Administration's retreat from its flagship Strategic Asset Review Policy via press release on 30th September and Cabinet meeting 1st October, was strictly secret and could not be made available to other members of the Council.

(2) Council expresses its shame that arguments advanced by the Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration in its name should have to be dismissed by the Chairman of a Public Inquiry ordered by a Secretary of State using the following terms:

'I find your point about predecessor authorities quite irrelevant given that the reorganization took place in 1974 and that, in any event, compliance with statutory duties are the responsibility of the incumbent administration.'

'I do not accept your view that the Inquiry dismissed your evidence; this was thoroughly tested at the Inquiry. It really is not helpful at this stage to present the Council's evidence as fact and community groups' evidence as hearsay.'

'I find your argument here disingenuous; as stated above, I have based my findings and recommendations in response to the decision that the Council actually took in March 09.'

'I fail to see how any council can judge whether or not it is providing a comprehensive and efficient service without having made an assessment of the needs it is seeking to meet in the delivery of such a service.'

'I can only repeat my concerns about the paucity of evidence on which the Council took this decision. I would like to stress, for the avoidance of doubt that I have not assumed that other financial resources are available from other services budgets.'

'You are fundamentally misjudging the points I am making to presume that this must be written down in legislation for this to apply.'

'You will see that I set out in my report what I consider that a reasonable authority would do in seeking to identify a reasonable option in order to comply with its statutory duties. I am concerned, as stated in the report, at a lack of a service plan or strategy, the lack of a needs assessment (or demonstrable evidence/knowledge of existing local needs), the lack of an implementation plan and so on, all of which would be indicators of processes which could have led to the identification of a reasonable option for compliance.'

(3) Council further notes that Ms Charteris felt compelled to point out to the Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration the following:

'I was indeed struck by the uniqueness of Wirral as a place, surrounded by water on three sides, distinctive and established communities, the location of your estates and the gap between the affluent and deprived. Comparing you to say Darlington in

terms of the pattern of library distribution from the perspective of statutory compliance, would be nonsensical'.

(4) Council believes that it is a measure of how lacking in moral courage and how out of touch the Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration is, that despite having had the uniqueness of Wirral explained to them by the Conservative Group, the residents and communities of Wirral and now the Chairman of a Public Inquiry ordered by a Secretary of State, they have still not apologised for betraying the trust of Wirral residents and its communities.

(5) Council expresses its genuine concern that following the receipt of such a letter, independently authored, that no member of the Labour/Liberal Democrat Cabinet did the 'honourable thing' and resign.

(6) Council requests that the Chief Executive writes to Sue Charteris to thank her for reminding this and future Administrations of their responsibilities and apologising on behalf of the current Labour/Liberal Democrat Administration for falling so far below the standards of information gathering, consultation and decision making that the residents and communities of Wirral have the right to expect of their elected representatives.

(6) CUTS AT WIRRAL UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL (ARROWE PARK)

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser

Seconded by Councillor Paul Hayes

(1) Council welcomes the commitment and dedication of staff employed at the Arrowe Park site of the Wirral University Teaching Hospital.

(2) Council is therefore concerned to note that as a result of the country's national debt, Wirral University Teaching Hospital has been ordered to make cuts of £38 million.

(3) Council is concerned that the proposals include:

- the loss of beds
- closure of wards
- loss of qualified staff

(4) Council does not support reducing medical provision at a time of rising expectations within the NHS and therefore calls on the Chief Executive of Wirral University Teaching Hospital to call a halt to the closures.

(7) BACKING YOUNG BRITAIN

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Jean Stapleton

(1) This Council recognises the importance of creating training or job opportunities for young people and preventing long term youth unemployment.

(2) Council notes that the successful Wirral Apprenticeship scheme was set up with precisely this in mind.

(3) Council therefore offers its support to the Backing Young Britain scheme which has been set up by the Government to help hundreds of thousands of young people to get their first step on the career ladder.

(4) This Council agrees to do what it can to help young people, either by offering an apprenticeship, or providing a young person with a job, or providing internships or work experience.

(5) Council further notes that taking this kind of action makes sound economic sense and that action taken by the Labour Government to help young people into employment has helped keep unemployment figures almost half a million lower than those predicted at the time of the budget and has saved the taxpayer around £2billion.

(8) PAVEMENT HAZARDS

Proposed by Councillor Walter Smith

Seconded by Councillor Jerry Williams

(1) Council recognises that problems can be caused by A boards and some displays outside shops where pavements are narrow and a clear obstruction is being caused that would affect those with disabilities. Council believes that in these cases it is essential that enforcement action is taken to clear the obstruction.

(2) However, Council also recognises that there are many cases where small businesses have had displays in front of their windows for as long as anyone can remember, where pavements are wide and there is no threat of any obstruction to passers by.

(3) At a time of economic recession, when small businesses may be struggling to survive, Council asks that common sense apply and that blanket restrictions are not placed on everyone.

(4) Council further recognises that the Council itself is responsible for many obstructions on pavements and that this has been clearly identified by local disability forums and focus groups as a problem. It therefore asks that the Council lead by example and deal with this issue as a priority rather than place undue pressure on small businesses who are not causing any obstruction.

(9) UNACCEPTABLE HOMOPHOBIA IN POLITICS

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Adrian Jones

(1) This Council totally condemns the homophobic comments made on Facebook by a Wirral Conservative Councillor about Labour activists campaigning for Wallasey MP Angela Eagle.

(2) Council welcomes the decision by Wirral's Conservative Party locally to suspend him and demands that David Cameron take decisive action to show that homophobia has no place in modern politics today by expelling Councillor Knowles from the Conservative Party forthwith.

(3) Council believes that Councillor Knowles has demonstrated that he is no longer fit to be a councillor and should therefore resign his seat and allow the electorate of Seacombe to vote for a candidate who is free from prejudice and bigotry.

(4) Council also notes the position taken by Conservative MP Chris Grayling when he stated that Christian bed and breakfast owners should be able to refuse admission to gay couples.

(5) Council again calls on David Cameron to condemn such comments and to take a stand against homophobia within his own party. Failing any such action, Council can only conclude that the Conservatives of today are no different from those of yesterday and that beneath the shiny PR image lies a party still riddled with xenophobia, prejudice and bigotry whose interests lie firmly with the wealthiest members of society and whose actions on the economy will protect business interests and damage the interests of ordinary families for whom they have scant regard.

(10) CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEMES

Proposed by Councillor Ron Abbey

Seconded by Councillor George Davies

(1) This Council recognises the success and popularity of the Merseyside Concessionary Travel scheme, administered by Mersey Travel.

(2) Council also recognises the success of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme that provides free travel on buses and calls on the Government to continue funding this scheme by direct grant to Integrated Transport Authorities such as Mersey Travel.

(3) Council therefore calls on the Conservative Party to commit fully to this scheme and to put provision in any budget to fully fund this scheme in the same way as the Labour Government does now.

(4) Council also asks the Government to trial a scheme which would provide free Concessionary Travel for young people of 18 years and under during term time and during school hours and recognises that Mersey Travel would be willing to pilot this scheme.

Council Vacancies

COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Employment and Appointments

Liberal Democrat Vacancy

Council Excellence O&S

Liberal Democrat Vacancy

Health and Well Being O&S

Bev Bray – Co-opted member as representative of Carers

Shanti Saagar - Co-opted member as representative of Black and Minority Ethnic Community

Audit and Risk Management

Liberal Democrat 5th Deputy Vacancy

Licensing, Health & Safety and General Purposes

Liberal Democrat 5th Deputy Vacancy

Pensions

Liberal Democrat 5th Deputy Vacancy

Planning

Liberal Democrat 4th Deputy Vacancy

Standards

Liberal Democrat 4th Deputy Vacancy

Scrutiny Programme Board

Liberal Democrat 4th Deputy Vacancy

Sustainable Communities O&S

Liberal Democrat 5th Deputy Vacancy

STATUTORY COMMITTEES AND PANELS

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

(i) Youth and Play Service Advisory Committee

Liberal Democrat Vacancy

OUTSIDE BODIES

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Kylemore Community Centre Joint Management Committee

Liberal Democrat Vacancy

REGENERATION AND PLANNING STRATEGY

Conservation Area Advisory Committee Barnston

Liberal Democrat Vacancy