



Council

Town Hall
Wallasey

6 March 2020

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.00 p.m. on Monday, 16 March 2020** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects : -

This meeting will be webcast at
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant 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.

2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

3. MINUTES

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting(s) of the Council held on 2 March 2020, to follow.

4. PETITIONS

To receive petitions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 21.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To deal with questions from members of the public, in accordance with Appendix 1 to Standing Orders – up to 30 minutes.

6. LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND CHAIRS REPORTS (Pages 1 - 34)

To receive the written reports of the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs, and to receive questions and answers on any of those reports in accordance with Standing Orders 10(2)(a) and 11.

7. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' PROGRESS REPORT TO COUNCIL (Pages 35 - 42)

To note the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs' report and consider any questions they may have for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

8. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

To consider Members' general questions to the Civic Mayor, Executive or Committee Chair in accordance with Standing Orders 10 (2)(b) and 11.

9. MATTERS REFERRED FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES OR OTHER COUNCIL COMMITTEES

To consider and determine any references from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and any other Council Committees.

A. Pay Policy 2020/21 (Pages 43 - 52)

To approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.

B. Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer

To note the appointment of Steve Fox to replace Nancy Clarkson as Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

10. VACANCIES

To receive nominations, in accordance with Standing Order 25(6), in respect of any proposed changes in the membership of committees, and to approve nominations for appointments to outside organisations.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

Notices of motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1), are attached. They are listed in accordance with Standing Order 7(2), and the full text of each motion is attached. The Mayor, having considered each motion, in accordance with Standing Order 7(4) has decided that they will be dealt with as follows:

- A. HOYLAKE BEACH RAKING, MARCH 2020 (Pages 53 - 54)
- B. WIRRAL COUNCIL ASKED TO BACK THE RSPCA'S FIREWORKS CAMPAIGN (Pages 55 - 56)
- C. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION INTO WIRRAL'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) SERVICE (Pages 57 - 58)
- D. STREETCAR (Pages 59 - 60)
- E. FAIR EMPLOYMENT CHARTER (Pages 61 - 62)
- F. BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WIRRAL (Pages 63 - 64)
- G. A FUTURE PATH FOR HOUSES IN WIRRAL (Pages 65 - 66)
- H. WIRRAL: A FAIR TAX COUNCIL (Pages 67 - 68)
- I. SOLIDARITY WITH EU27 CITIZENS (Pages 69 - 70)



Director: Governance and Assurance

Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using non-disruptive methods. For particular meetings we may identify a 'designated area' for you to record from. If you have any questions about this please contact Committee and Civic Services (members of the press please contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted.

Persons making recordings are requested not to put undue restrictions on the material produced so that it can be reused and edited by all local people and organisations on a non-commercial basis.

Report of the Cabinet Leader Councillor Pat Hackett

I have announced that I intend to retire later this year after 26 years. I was first elected in 1994, and it has been my pleasure and my privilege to serve the people of this borough, including for most of the last year as Leader of a thriving council such as Wirral which has moved forward decisively in many areas, laying the foundations for a bright future for our borough.

One area I am particularly pleased to see significant progress is in Children's Services. The 2019 Ofsted inspection reported that the quality of services for children has "improved in all areas" particularly to help those at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, significant work to drive improvement in the fostering service, which has resulted in an increase in the number of foster carers approved to provide a home for children, and staff turnover and numbers of agency workers have reduced considerably leading to an improvement in stability of the workforce and meaning that children have been experiencing greater continuity and improved care.

Last year saw Wirral declare a climate emergency. This means that now and in the future all key Council decisions will require officers to consider their impact on the environment and climate change, across all services. Climate emergency plans include a new Tree Strategy which will see far more robust protection of our existing trees and a massive programme of afforestation across the borough, a new policy for encouraging the growth of wildflowers and planting for much endangered pollinators on public and private land including along hedges and verges, a review and update of the Council's procurement policy, reflecting the climate emergency, for example a shift away from meat in catering and a ban on all SUP and proposals for electric vehicle charging points.

One of the major highlights of the last year was Wirral's role as the Liverpool City Region Borough of Culture. I was fortunate enough to be Leader of the council during the all-new Wirral Food and Drink Festival which ran over two days, as well as the evening performances by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Lightning Seeds, The Christians and China Crisis, all hosted in Birkenhead Park.

The Borough of Culture programme also saw Wirral host two major cycling events. Britain's cycling stars descending on Wirral in May when Birkenhead hosted a stage of the OVO Energy Tour Series for the first time, and an estimated 10,000 people turned out to line the streets around and watch the action around Hamilton Square. The last September we hosted both the start and finish of Stage Five of Britain's biggest professional cycle race, the OVO Energy Tour of Britain.

A major maintenance programme began in the summer of 2019 with close to £5 million being spent on maintenance and repairs to our roads – a massive undertaking: our highways form the largest, most valuable and most visible public asset within the council's control.

In addition, work started on the second phase of the LED replacement programme, this is the largest scheme that has been undertaken by the council and will dramatically improve Wirral's street lighting by improving safety and future-proofing the network. At the end of the two-year programme 26,000 streetlights will have been upgraded with LED lighting. Wirral has more than 35,000 streetlights and once complete, the streetlights will help to cut carbon emissions by 1,346.34 tCO₂ per year.

Wirral Growth Company – the 50:50 joint venture between Muse Developments and Wirral Council – has continued to make excellent progress with two major consultations seeking views on proposals for a major overhaul of Birkenhead town centre, including up to 280,000 sq ft of offices, a leisure centre, and a new home for Birkenhead Market.

In addition, the building work began on three major residential sites at Wirral Waters, which are set to breathe new life into 500 acres of former dockland and transform it into an internationally recognisable destination. Regeneration business, Peel L&P, has received £6m funding from Homes England to assist with the necessary site remediation work across all three residential projects, including Wirral Waters One, House by Urban Splash and Belong Village. The grant, which is one of the biggest ever HIF (Housing Infrastructure Fund) grants to be awarded outside London, will go towards essential remediation, infrastructure and public realm work, including cycling and pedestrian routes, to support the new homes.

Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing

Housing Vulnerable people

Councillors and officers visited the site of a new Extra Care Housing scheme at Poppyfields in Saughall Massie. Development of this site has been discussed for a long time and it was fantastic to see the new housing scheme taking shape. The scheme will provide purpose-built accommodation, comprising 78 units, for people with care and housing needs and will support people to live longer in their own homes, without the need for other types of care. The scheme has a light and airy feel, with plans for landscaping and lots of outdoor space.

Quality Improvement

Wirral has coordinated a Registered Managers forum for local care home managers. This links to the national Registered Managers forum. It is a network that supports Registered Managers through peer support across the Wirral network. Supported by the CQC and Wirral's Quality Improvement team, the aim is to improve care home quality through sharing best practice, while exploring key themes and issues affecting the care home sector. The forum is now supported by an electronic web based online forum which is operated and administrated by the Quality Improvement team,

Domestic Abuse Business champions

Under this scheme, care providers identify senior individuals in their organisation to be trained to recognise and support employees who may be suffering Domestic Abuse. They are then trained and supported by the Family Safety Unit's Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) team. It was recognised that the Domiciliary Care workforce would best benefit from this project initially with a plan to roll out across the market.

Commissioning

Commissioners have been working closely with current providers and stakeholders to develop the future service delivery model for intermediate care services. This has been an excellent collaboration between our NHS providers and the independent sector to recommend improvements for future services.

Supporting Independence

Our domiciliary and reablement providers have been actively recruiting and increasing the support they can provide to people in their own homes, helping people to be as independent as possible. We have seen a 12% growth in the volume of support packages since April, which is helping people get home from hospital quickly when needed and helping people stay at home, when their needs change.

Local Plan Health Impact Assessment

To support the development of the Local Plan an independent Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted in October 2019. The recommendations from this assessment will influence how the final plan develops to maximise opportunities for health improvement and mitigate potentially negative health impacts.

Air Quality Audit

The Public Health team recently led an audit of Wirral's air quality interventions using Public Health England's improving outdoor air quality review document. The outcome of

this work was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2019. The recommendations emerging from this audit are being used to inform an Air Quality Plan for Wirral. The audit has been commended as good practice by Public Health England for both, our approach, and for the proactive work to further improve air quality despite being within air quality standards. Wirral Council has been invited to present this work to a national conference on Air Quality in June 2020.

Connect Us service mobilisation and roll out

Following the successful bid to retain the contract to provide the Community Connector Service, Involve North West have worked with the Public Health Team to mobilise the service expansion across Wirral. The service will continue to focus its resources in communities where they are most needed, supporting individuals and communities to increase connectivity. Within these communities, the service will optimise access to information, and nurture community resilience, self-help, health and wellbeing while tackling social isolation.

Healthy Child Programme

On 8 October 2019, the contract for the 0-19s Healthy Child Programme was awarded to Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, with the service commencing on 1 February 2020. The programme includes a team of Health Visitors, School Nurses and the Family Nurse Partnership. This will allow for greater stability within the service and for the service to develop in line with wider strategic objectives. One of the priorities for the new service is to ensure that there is more integrated provision at a local level. The recommissioning of the service was informed through consultation with key local stakeholders.

Wirral Ways to Recovery

The new Wirral Ways to Recovery (WWtR) service commenced on 1 February 2020. This service has been remodelled to deliver within the available funding and to adapt to best meet the changing needs of the service users. The contract will run for the next 5 years (with an option to extend for another 2 years).

Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education

Hungry Little Minds Campaign Launch

The *Hungry Little Minds* campaign, initiated by the Department for Education, launched on 20th January 2020, with the Children and Families Minister, Michelle Donelan, in attendance. Wirral's Early Childhood Services, in partnership with the Foundation Years Trust, are one of six local authority areas involved in this pilot initiative.

New pilot programme for families affected by the 'trigger trio'

Plans to deliver a pilot programme for families affected by the trigger trio (formerly referred to as the 'Toxic Trio' which includes domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health issues) are being coordinated by a partnership group. The pilot will see the creation of an integrated, multi-agency team to enable families, who have had long-term involvement with children's services, to make significant and sustained change. Planned to run for a two-year period, the programme will operate using an evidence-based approach to families across Wirral.

Community Matters – One year on

All partners celebrated the first year of the Community Matters initiative with a reflection session to review progress, consider learning and plan for year two. Wirral's Early Help and Prevention Service commissioned the help of community organisations to deliver an early help service to families across Wirral who need it most. In its first year, Community Matters has provided support to more than 800 Wirral families.

Partners involved in the project include Home-Start Wirral, The Open Door, Women's Enterprise Breakthrough (WEB), WIRED, Caritas, and Fender Community Hub School.

Troubled Families programme extension confirmed

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed a one-year extension to the Troubled Families programme. For Wirral this will mean a continuation of services for 150 families facing multiple and complex issues. The national agenda will focus particularly on service transformation over the 12-month period, encouraging local areas to use the extension as an opportunity to further enhance their multi-agency approaches.

Developing a new model for early help

Capacity: The Public Services Lab have completed their year one insight work with more than 450 Wirral families. Their report, *Why Community Matters*, will be published in March and will inform the development of a model for early help.

Youth offer proposals

On 24th February, Cabinet agreed a set of proposals for Phase of the Youth Offer. The proposals, which were developed by multi-agency partners and young people, are complimented by the launch of the *In Our Hands* photo-journalism exhibition. The exhibition contains 22 images of young people 'going about their daily business in Wirral' and has been produced by six local young photographers. The exhibition opened on 24th February 2020 at Wallasey Town Hall

Funding bid success for domestic abuse programme

In partnership with SafeLives and Merseyside Police, Wirral has been successful in a bid to pilot the Drive programme for early intervention with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Timescales, the number of courses, capacity of the programme and other details are currently at the planning stage.

Care Leavers Awards

The Children Looked After Awards night took place on 11th December 2019 with more than 600 children being nominated by carers, friends and family to receive awards. A programme of social events for Children Looked After and Care Leavers has subsequently been developed following the huge success and attendance at this event.

#Bethedifference Awards

Children's Services' #Bethedifference awards were held during December 2019 to celebrate the efforts and achievements of colleagues from within Children's Services, including Team Support Officers, Social Workers, Team Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers, a Community Patrol Officer and Leaving Care Officers. Four similar events are planned for 2020, starting with a 'World Social Work' Day Event on 17th March.

Annual Conversation with Ofsted

The Director and Senior Managers from across Children's Services met with senior HMI Inspectors and the Regional Director for Ofsted in February 2020 as part of the annual challenge process, set by the Schools and Social Care regulator. The session focussed on progress in inspection recommendations following the ILACS inspection in June 2019 and how the local authority is supporting schools to promote and deliver an 'ambitious curriculum'.

Accountability meeting and 'Supervision and support' - six months on

The Department for Education confirmed that it remains satisfied with Wirral's progress towards recommendations from the Social Care inspection in June 2019 and the 'supervision and support' period remains light touch. An accountability meeting on 7th February 2020 reviewed progress since the ILACS inspection and members confirmed satisfactory progress had been made.

Inspection success for Short Breaks provision – Willowtree

Willowtree short breaks service maintained its 'Outstanding' rating for the 6th year. The feedback from inspectors outlined that the staff team has continued to develop from strength to strength and the service "opens up the world to children", encouraging new activities and setting goals for young people to develop independence and new skills

SEND Youth Conference and Partnership Summit

On Friday 31st January 2020 Wirral SEND Youth Voice Group hosted their third annual conference inviting key senior leaders with the autonomy and drive to make a difference. The event concluded with attendees being asked to make a pledge that they, and their service, will work to deliver on over the next 12 months.

The Youth Conference followed a series of SEND partnership events involving more than 100 practitioners and managers who deliver care and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities. An initial summit event held on 16th December 2019 focussed on preparing the local area for the forthcoming SEND inspection. The second event on 24th January 2020 explored the priorities and deliverables in the new SEND Strategy.

Consultation launched on SEND strategy 2020 – 2024

Consultation on the new SEND strategy was launched at the beginning of February 2020. A key aim of the consultation is to ensure that the views of stakeholders help shape the local area's plans for improving life chances and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The consultation seeks views on the deliverables and priorities outlined in the strategy which include:

- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes for young people with SEND.
- Ensure early identification of special education needs and high-quality intervention particularly for children and young people exhibiting social, emotional and mental health issues.
- Further develop effective transition from one education phase/setting including preparing for adulthood pathway.
- To further develop participation, engagement and coproduction with children, young people, parents and carers.

Report on special school provision

An initial summary presentation on the findings and proposed options from an independent review of SEND provision was provided to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January.

Independent Chair appointed for Partnership for Children, Young People and Families

An independent chair for the Partnership for Children, Young People and Families was appointed on 6th February 2020. The new chair, Justine Molyneux, will lead a collaborative approach to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Care Leavers Leisure Pass Scheme More than 40 Care Leavers have accessed free Gym and Swim passes for use at the Council's leisure centres as part of a wider wellbeing scheme to support Care Leavers with both their physical and emotional health.

Accommodation for Care Leavers

As part of a new pilot, in partnership with Regenda Social Landlord, two Care Leaver residential units have now been purchased. The houses will open in April and May this year offering, in total, eight young people shared living supported accommodation.

Employment Opportunities for Care Leavers

More employment opportunities for Care Leavers have been secured through apprenticeship schemes with Merseyside Police. This will add to the growing pool of employers who are willing and enthusiastic about employing and supporting Care Leavers' independence and development.

Report of Councillor Julie McManus - Cabinet member for Community Services

Leisure

A brand new 11 a side all weather artificial turf pitch, which also incorporates three smaller, 7 a-side football pitches, is now open at Leasowe Leisure Centre. There are associated external changing facilities for up to six teams including disabled changing, floodlights and access seven days a week.

Works are nearing the final stages on an impressive development of the Wirral Sailing School at West Kirby aimed at improving the facilities and offering additional opportunities to all sectors of the Wirral community to enjoy the world-renowned Marine Lake. The centre will house a new reception area, changing facilities, including accessible facilities, offices, training room and café/bistro area overlooking the scenic West Wirral coastline. It is hoped it will open in early Spring 2020.

Run in Wirral, the universal running group developed as part of the council's Invigor8 fitness product, celebrated its 10th birthday in January 2020. Created and developed by Fiona Hanik from Wirral Sports Development, RIW has grown over the last 10 years and now offers six meetings per week at various venues across Wirral and is attended by hundreds of Invigor8 customers - <https://wirralleisure.co.uk/run-in-wirral/>

A new tennis development programme launched at Wirral Tennis and Sports Centre, Bidston, in January 2020. The centre will also hosted a Tennis Festival on Saturday 15 February attended by more than 400 local children. A new coaching team and enhanced programme offering LTA accredited tennis lessons from 3 years of age to adults, is also now operating - <https://wirralleisure.co.uk/tennis-wirral/>

Parks and Countryside

On the advice of our in-house arboricultural tree specialist, Grange Cemetery was closed on Thursday 13 February due to the expected high winds and heavy rain. It will remain closed until the park has been assessed as safe. Since the initial closure, the trees that separate the cemetery and the park have been inspected again and unfortunately have been found in very poor structural condition and of significant risk to visitors and will need to be removed as soon as possible for public safety.

Eastham Country Park have installed an indoor water fountain in the visitors centre for people to use to help reduce the amount of single use plastics.

Libraries

Booktrust F2 "The Cave" visits continue across the service. "The Cave" by Rob Hodgson forms part of the Booktrust pack that is gifted to all F2 pupils via their school. Wirral libraries are currently delivering a programme of sessions that increase engagement around the gifted pack.

Harry Potter book nights took place at West Kirby and Wallasey Central libraries. This year's theme was the Triwizard tournament and is an ideal opportunity to tie into existing resources to promote reading for pleasure.

Wirral Libraries joined the Foundation Years Trust on the Hungry Little Minds campaign bus to deliver packs and read stories. Hungry Little Minds is a new three-year campaign to encourage parents to engage in activities that support their child's early learning and help set them up for school and beyond.

Ashley Dyer (Margaret Murphy) was in conversation with world renown author Ann Cleeves. The event was a sell out and proved to be extremely popular

Wirral Libraries was successful in its application for World Book Night books. A gifting and community engagement session will take place at Morrisons New Brighton on 23rd April (am) to promote Wirral Libraries and reading for pleasure

For World Book Day , author Nick Toczek will be visiting four libraries. Invited school will attend a storytelling session

As part of the Hungry Little Minds Campaign with Foundation Years Trust a pop-up story gazebo will operate at Seacombe Library (18th March tbc) and Birkenhead Central library (26th/27th March tbc)

BBC Novels that Shaped the World in partnership with Libraries Connected, Wirral Libraries have been successful in securing funding to facilitate two events and secure the loan of set of BBC Virtual Headsets.

Thursday 28 May Stute Theatre will be showing two performances of "Just Soph" at Birkenhead and Wallasey libraries. 'Just Soph' is a high-quality, professional piece of theatre for children aged 3-7 – although all ages are welcome, older and younger children may enjoy it with support, and it is designed with family audiences in mind. I have found that it works well for both school groups, nursery groups and mixed family audiences. It explores stories in a playful, imaginative way, helping children to develop literacy skills and making a complex, classic text accessible. The piece features live music, songs and puppetry, using familiar household materials and objects.

Tuesday 5 May in partnership with the Reader Organisation we will be hosting a "Robinson Crusoe/Adventure" themed tea party. Shared Reading groups from Wirral and Chester and invited public will attend a BBC Novels That Shaped Our World-Adventure themed tea party so discuss and decide on the novels that shaped their world. The party will also decide on the curated collection of books that will be purchased for Shared Reading.

In partnership with Get It Loud In Libraries Birkenhead Central Library will once again be hosting a gig- Juniore 26th April 2.30pm. Tickets sales are going extremely well and predictions are it will be a sold out gig.

Highways

29 roads in Wirral are due to receive a new surface treatment in the coming weeks, as part of a continued investment in Wirral's highways network. The roads, located mostly around Liscard, New Brighton and Seacombe, were originally scheduled to be treated as part of the council's 2019 micro-asphalt treatment programme, which involves laying a new surface on top of the existing road.

However, work was postponed following a wet summer and with colder weather settling in, and interim repairs were carried out to ensure the safety of the roads over winter.

Works on the A41 corridor between Port Sunlight and Birkenhead are completed by March 2020 after works returned to the A41 bypass on 6 January to complete the project.

The £3.4million scheme, jointly funded by Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority and Wirral Council, saw work commence in September 2019 and after a short break, 9 December 2019 to 6 January 2020, that provided full access to residents during the Christmas period, work will continue this year.

An update to residents and commuters will be given on week commencing 2 March. Looking to also do a case study around one of the apprentices that was taken on by our contractor through this project and who they plan to keep on to continue training and he will complete a degree-qualified course. Plan to issue this out at the end of March.

Streetlighting

Around 15,000 streetlights in Wirral have now been installed with new LED lamps. It will take two years to complete the LED programme and since phase 2 of the programme began in September/ October 2019 approximately 4,500 LED lanterns have been fitted and approximately 550 columns replaced across the borough up to the end of January which has resulted in an energy saving of approximately 564kWh.

As well as helping to meet carbon reduction targets by dramatically reducing energy use by 4,414,240 kWh per year, the new LED lights will also reduce running costs, these lamps are longer lasting than the original fittings, as well as requiring less maintenance.

To ensure the programme continues to be delivered successfully and residents are kept informed, a Streetlight Action Group has been established, a project plan is being utilised and a performance dashboard with a running total of figures relating to repairs is being created to be used through the councils media channels to share and update residents with information on the programme and to ensure that they can see how much work is being completed within this programme.

At the current time, streetlight repairs are consistent month on month, due to the age of the stock.

The streetlighting department currently still have two in house teams working on general and reactive repairs, one external resource on general and reactive repairs and one external support on column installations. These teams are all working on general reactive repairs that are separate to and have no impact on the LED Replacement programme (the LED lanterns that are being fitted and the columns that are being replaced).

The percentage of faulty streetlights have reduced from 5.8% in May 2018 to 4.7% in December 2019 and 4.2% in January 2020. Positive reflection is expected to continue and as the LED programme progresses further, however the full reflection of this is not expected to be seen until Autumn 2021.

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority and Veolia Community Fund 2020/21

The funding has been made available for community and voluntary groups, schools and not-for-profit organisations, who can reduce household waste, encourage recycling and resource re-use and prevent carbon emissions. The projects will also have to demonstrate wider positive impacts on the environment, health and education.

Deadline of submission is Sunday 15 March 2020.

Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Culture and Tourism

FOOD, DRINK AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Culture and Visitor Economy team has been working with colleagues to finalise plans for the 2020 Food, Drink and Music Festival, which was announced on 25 February.

Following the media announcement, promotion of ticket sales began for the evening concerts, headlined by OMD, Echo & the Bunnymen and The Coral. The event (4-6 September) is expected to attract even more people than 2019 for its combination of music with the free and family-friendly daytime offer. Sponsors and partners have been given opportunities to support, and an expression of interest has been released to food traders.

The 2019 event attracted 30,000 people across the weekend and drew hugely positive feedback from traders, residents and visitors from outside Wirral.

HMS PRINCE OF WALES VISIT

Officers have worked closely with Culture Liverpool to ensure residents and visitors to Wirral have the best possible experience during the arrival and departure of HMS Prince of Wales in Liverpool.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

Two events were organised to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, on Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January 2020.

The Mayor, Councillors and local stakeholders joined members of the public at a tree planting ceremony at Birkenhead Park. Later in the afternoon, 75 lanterns were lit around the pool in Port Sunlight at a well-attended and sensitive memorial event.

2020 CULTURE PROGRAMME

The Culture and Visitor Economy team are, as we speak, finalising plans for the 2020 Culture programme, which will be 'bookended' by the River Festival in May and November's River of Light event.

Plans will be shared with Councillors, cultural partners, supporters and stakeholders at an engagement evening on 26 March, showcasing highlights for 2020 which have developed as an extremely positive legacy of 2019's Borough of Culture year.

DESTINATION MARKETING

In January the Visitor Economy team integrated the Visit Wirral digital channels and started some much-needed work on visitwirral.com website content.

The addition of pages about Wirral's parks, walks and open spaces, plus links through from social media led to a 38% increase in page views and a 25% increase in website users in January alone.

Increased digital engagement and profile is part of Wirral's wider destination marketing activity. The Visitor Economy team is also working with Liverpool City Region colleagues to ensure Wirral benefits from city destination marketing initiatives.

VOLUNTEERING FAIR

Wirral's first Volunteering Fair – focusing on creative, cultural, heritage and leisure opportunities, was held at Birkenhead Town Hall on 27 January with representatives from 25 organisations.

It was organised by the volunteer coordinators of the Culture team, in conjunction with Community Action Wirral, with support from BBC Radio Merseyside, Voluntary Arts England and Up for Arts. 135 people attended, and organisations were positive about the number of volunteers recruited – praising the friendly atmosphere and calling for similar events.

HEARTS FOR THE ARTS

In addition to receiving various awards towards the end of 2019, Wirral's Borough of Culture was shortlisted for a Hearts for the Arts Award, organised by the National Campaign for the Arts.

While it did not win the Best Arts Initiative category, the team received extremely positive feedback including this comment from Chair Sam West:

'Wirral Borough Council should feel proud. They have made great strides in putting arts and culture at the heart of people's lives, and it is being noticed and appreciated in their communities and elsewhere. The highlights video is a marvel. [...] It's easy to see that WBC are making their citizens happier and healthier through this admirable work.'

Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment

Climate emergency

A £250,000 fund to tackle the Climate Emergency has been included in the proposed budget for 2020/21. The 'Fighting Fund' will take action to stop damaging pollution and make the borough more resilient to the impacts of Climate Change.

The budget proposal could be used to:

- Establish the Borough's tree strategy in early Spring – this will include commencing a major Wirral-wide tree planting initiative.
- Invest in internal staffing opportunities for Active Travel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), tackle local pollution and improve health and wellbeing.
- Upgrade the Borough's longstanding Eco Schools programme to 'Cool Schools', reemphasising its focus on the climate emergency at both a local and global level.
- Develop the Council's thousands-strong workforce to better understand the impacts of carbon via 'Carbon Literacy' eco-training.

COUNCILLOR WORKSHOPS

X3 climate emergency workshops for councillors have taken place.

Pollinator and wildflower strategy

Wirral Council promise to encourage pollinators and wildflowers along its hedges and verges in a Pollinators Action Plan and sites such as Plymyard Ave and Levers Causeway will be trialled for pollinator planting.

Within the plan, the main concern is to manage hedges and verges differently and make decisions which benefit pollinators such as bees, butterflies and beetles, so that we can better look after them and the borough's unique coastal and countryside landscape.

The Cabinet member decision (which is subject to the usual call-in option) will see:

- Mowing schedules reviewed yearly
- New plantings are good for pollinators
- A review on the use of herbicides and pesticides
- A programme of pollinator events and activities at Wirral Parks
- Promotion of 'Bee Friendly' information
-

So far, sites such as Lever Causeway have already seen changes to the summer verge mowing to avoid cutting when umbellifers are in flower. Sites including Victoria Park, Landican Cemetery Baby Garden, Ashton Park and Wallasey Village all saw plantings with species that are good for pollinators and this will continue for all future plantings.

Urban Tree fund

Wirral Council is set to embark on an extensive tree planting programme after learning a bid to the government's Urban Tree Challenge Fund has been successful.

It was confirmed over the weekend that Wirral will be awarded £300,000 under the fund, which the council will be required to match.

If the council approves its own investment of £300,000 when it meets to set next year's budget in March, that means the preparations for a programme worth £600k can begin in April, with more than 1,700 new trees in around 50 different urban locations in the borough being planted during the planting season, November 2020 to February 2021.

The Wirral programme was included as part of a wider Mersey Forest bid for new urban trees. This aims to improve the quality of access routes, encouraging active travel and recreation and improving wellbeing through increased physical activity. It also aims to compensate for the loss of trees due to disease and help to adapt areas to projected climate change.

Green infrastructure is also designed to help make towns more attractive for further investment

Tower Road

This decision report recommended acceptance of a tender from Cambrianway Ltd and award of a contract for the construction of a series of major public realm and highway improvements to the A554 Tower Road. With the provision of wider pavements to provide high quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and reduced carriageway widths, the objective of the scheme is to lower traffic speeds through the area and to create an improved environment for all road users.

The work supports the Wirral Council Plan 2020-25, underpinning the main drivers of sustainable regeneration and addressing the climate emergency through the promotion of green and healthy living.

The scheme, which forms a key element of the sustainable transport infrastructure to support the regeneration of the Wirral Waters area, consists of major public realm improvements to the A554 Tower Road with the provision of wider pavements to provide high quality facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and reduced carriageway widths. The objective of the scheme is to lower traffic speeds through the area and to create an improved environment for all road users.

The Tower Road Civilised Streets project was awarded £2.1 million of Department for Transport (DfT) National Productivity Fund (NPIF) for the years in October 2017. The total scheme budget is £3.2 million with the remaining budget being contributions from Wirral Council, Peel Land and Property, Wirral Waters Investment Fund and the European Structural and Investment Fund.

The project delivers significant improvements to the local streetscene and the infrastructure provided promotes sustainable transport alternatives such as walking and cycling in a key economic growth and regeneration location for Wirral Council. The successful supplier has pledged in its social value offer to reduce CO2 emissions from its activities (other than by transport) by 7 Tonnes, and to spend £1.3m in the local supply chain, which will significantly reduce the carbon footprint from construction activities that would normally be associated with a comparable contract.

Green Travel Corridors - 3.7km strategic cycle route from Leasowe to Seacombe Ferry

The Council has accepted a £1.22m funding package from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and to undertake appropriate land acquisition, consultation, procurement and appointment of a contractor to deliver a 3.7km strategic cycle route from Leasowe to Seacombe Ferry as part of Phase 1 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – the Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) Green Travel Corridors.

Road Safety

Through the Mind Your Business project, Wirral Council's Road Safety team invited Wirral businesses to a mock trial held at Wallasey Town Hall Chamber.

The mock trial, of which 75 business representatives attended, demonstrated potential consequences a company can face if they fail to fulfill their duty of care obligations if one of their drivers is involved a collision.

The aim of the event, funded by the Road Safety Trust, was to highlight the responsibility of businesses to make sure their drivers are as safe as possible on the roads.

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Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

COUNCIL BUDGET

Just a couple of weeks ago, a Full Council meeting saw a legal budget set for the coming year by 43 votes to 21.

This is a budget which has once again had to battle austerity and a Government which has reduced funding to our council which includes some of the most deprived areas in the country.

Despite the difficulties this council has again managed to set a budget that will see no major cuts to children's care, adult social care or other vital services.

Spend freeze, vacancy freeze and agency freeze are all still in operation to manage the 2019/20 financial position in line with budget allocation. Monitoring updates are provided at the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

PREPARATION FOR FINANCIAL YEAR-END

As year-end closedown planning continues, we are testing new software that is set to improve the processes. Completion is expected by 28 February and is set to bring faster and easier accounts closedown, whilst ensuring the Council remains code-compliant

PUBLIC SECTOR SOCIAL IMPACT FUND (PSSIF) INVESTMENT

The council has joined with other Local Authorities to become a founder member and investor in the Public Sector Social Impact Fund.

Social Enterprise UK defines social impact as: "The effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and wellbeing of the individuals and families."

All social impact projects/investments will aim to improve the lives of UK residents and will cover a variety of industry sectors including:

- Automotive – e.g. electric car charging point
- Education – e.g. special needs schools
- Energy – e.g. solar/wind
- Environmental – e.g. forestry
- Finance – local lending vehicles
- Industrial – e.g. energy savings and efficiency equipment
- Property – e.g. social housing

The Fund utilises the fact that the council has replenishing positive cash flows which can be invested in services ahead of use. This will allow investment in activities which meet the council's social and environmental objectives, while aiming for higher returns than shorter term investments typically achieve. £10 million has been invested in the fund.

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Community Wealth Building reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of our communities, towns and cities. It places control of this wealth into the hands of local people, communities, businesses and organisations.

The Community Wealth Building Strategy was passed at Cabinet on 24 February, and officially launched the same day.

Strategy outcomes are based around the five pillars of community wealth building:

1. Residents of Wirral have ownership of the economy and have a say in what happens to wealth generated by their communities.
2. Procurement practices of Wirral anchor institutions are used to help build the wealth of our local communities.
3. Council land and assets are used as a base to build community wealth.
4. Wealth that exists in Wirral is harnessed to increase investment in local communities.
5. Wirral residents are in secure and quality employment with progression opportunities and good terms and conditions.

Following the launch, action plans will be produced in order to deliver each outcome of the strategy.

Wirral continues to work with The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES), which has supported discussions with other anchor institutions in Wirral (such as the NHS and CCG) to create a Wirral Anchor Procurement Group. This group will help to deliver one of the key outcomes of the strategy.

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

A Council Tax Support Scheme to financially assist our most vulnerable residents will be implemented in April 2020.

As part of the government's welfare reform programme, Council Tax Benefit was abolished in 2013 and replaced by a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Nationally, funding for the new scheme was reduced by 10% in comparison to the Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

The reduction in funding meant that many councils offset the shortfall by reducing the amount of support granted to householders. In addition, central Government prescribed that non-working age claimants (i.e. pensioners) were automatically protected from the abolition of Council Tax Benefit. This meant that the cut in funding was even greater than the 10% for non-protected groups.

Following consultation, Wirral Council decided – in addition to the protection offered to pensioners – it would also protect other groups of householders in receipt of certain disability benefits.

Approximately 32,000 households benefit from the scheme. Any change to this support has the potential to be far reaching on some of the poorest households in the borough

For working age claimants in non-protected groups, Council Tax Reduction was reduced by central Government, so they had to pay a minimum of 22% towards their Council Tax bill each year. The amount they could be liable for could be greater than 22%, based on income.

In order to assist these households, it is proposed to reduce the minimum amount payable at the start of the calculation from 22% to 12%. This would help households most in need of financial assistance, and if adopted would see reductions to Council Tax bills for some of the poorest and most vulnerable households in the borough – offering them greater help and support.

ONLINE SERVICES

The launch of the My Wirral Account in 2018, and further take up of the Revenues and Benefits Portal is paving the way in a shift to online services. Currently there are 25,887 MyWirral accounts and 62,665 residents signed up the Revenues & Benefits portal.

NEW ONLINE DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT FORM

As of February, residents can now apply for Discretionary Housing Payments via the council website.

At times of financial stresses, having the ability to apply from a laptop, computer or mobile device can make the process smoother and more convenient.

MEMBER PORTAL

A new Member Portal has been developed and will go live in 2020 – giving members real-time access to cases and added ability to track progress by service areas.

NEW BLUE BADGE ONLINE APPLICATION

Supported by the Programme Office, Customer Services have worked to design, develop, test and launch a new Blue Badge online application.

The process reduces the application size and includes the roll out of a new 'hidden disability' criteria.

ROLL-OUT OF DBS IN SCHOOLS

Finance has supported HR/OD in the development and roll-out of an electronic DBS to schools - seeing a huge reduction in waiting times, much to the delight of our schools.

OSS AND CONTACT CENTRE

OSS continues to maintain service delivery.

From March 2020, the Call Centre will be generating income by completing learner surveys on behalf of the Lifelong Learning Service. This is while also maintaining performance indicators: the team is under the target of two minutes for call waiting, and call handling time is below the target of 4 minutes 30.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN – 2019/2020

This is on-course to deliver by year-end and includes the delivery of targeted assurance work across all key risks to the organisation.

INCOME GENERATION – ACADEMY SCHOOLS

Four Academy Schools are now contracted to receive Internal Audit Services, with talks ongoing with a number of other schools across the borough. External, income generating work now includes schools, Wirral Growth Company, Evolutions and Merseyside Pension Fund.

WIRRAL HEALTH AND CARE COMMISSIONING

Wirral Internal Audit Services - in conjunction with NHS auditors – developed collaborative working arrangements to support several joint audits; evaluating key risks and providing assurances for stakeholders.

This resulted in two separate reports for senior management evaluating governance, finance and performance, risk and contract management, and operational arrangements. The most recent report was published in January 2020.

We are the only council across the North West to have developed this approach, and we are currently sharing it as good practice with other local authorities.

Report for the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning

Affordable Homes

Wirral is making good progress with its affordable housing programme with the number of completions at the end of Q3 being 567 homes and an additional new 291 Help to buy homes. Within this programme, Wirral is working towards providing several specialist housing schemes including extra care housing schemes for older people and people with learning or physical difficulties which combine accommodation with care and support services.

Following successful completion on 28th February, Mersey Gardens in Tranmere will be officially opened. This development by HB Villages provides 20 one-bedroom apartments with care provision for adults with learning or physical disabilities, enabling them to live independently in the community. Officers have worked closely with the developer, housing association and care provider to ensure the scheme clearly meets the needs of local people who require this type of accommodation and all new tenants have been nominated for apartments by the council.

Two Extra Care schemes for older people are currently on site; Barncroft in Pensby, which will provide 21 apartments and is due to complete before the end of March 2020 and Poppyfield in Saughall Massie, the former Girtrell Court site which will provide 78 apartments in the autumn of this year.

A further site of the former Rock Ferry High School will also see 186 affordable housing units of which 102 will be within an extra care scheme for older people. The sale of the land to Torus was agreed by Cabinet in January and planning permission was also granted at February Planning Committee. These two major milestones will enable Torus to start on site by the end of March 2020.

There is a proposal for a further 53 units of extra care housing for older people on the Greenheys site in Liscard, on land adjacent to Victoria Central hospital. This potential scheme is scheduled to be presented to Planning Committee on 20th March and if successful in securing approval, it is anticipated that the scheme will progress to on site start soon after.

Selective Licensing

Cabinet approved a new business case this month to extend the Council's first Selective Licensing Scheme to a further two new areas for a five-year period from 1st July 2020. The first scheme has now been operating since 2015 and was due to come to an end in June 2020. This will bring the total number of small areas in Wirral subject to Selective Licensing to 10 and will increase the number of private rented properties that will require a licence to over 2500.

Wirral continues to take robust enforcement action on landlords that fail to comply with licensing conditions. Private rented properties in these areas have an extremely low level of compliance (26.78%) with licensing conditions. The Council as a result,

has prosecuted 57 offences specifically where landlords & agents refused to co-operate with licensing requirements.

Property Pool Plus Review of Housing Allocations

A Review of the LCR Local Authorities Housing Allocations Policy/Choice Based Lettings Scheme of which Wirral is a partner (Property Pool Plus) is underway with External Consultants Neil Morland & Co. There has been positive delivery against milestones with an interim report produced, wider consultation is planned for later in the year.

Homelessness

As part of the councils statutory duties, an extensive review of Homelessness and related services was completed in December 2019. The findings have formed the basis of a new draft Wirral Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-2025, which will be presented to Cabinet for approval on the 23rd March.

The strategy and concise delivery plan set a clear direction for early homeless intervention and prevention, and service delivery to meet the needs of local residents and to reduce rough sleeping levels.

The Council has been successful in securing funding from MHCLG grant programmes to enable the commissioning of a night-time outreach service, targeted at rough sleeping for 2019/20. This service, along with partners, has reported early successes in reducing rough sleeping levels from 16 individuals noted in the official Rough Sleeping Count of 2018, to 6 rough sleepers in 2019.

Officers in Housing have been successful in securing further grant resources for 2020/21, which is extremely positive in providing further co-ordinated activity across both the Council and its partners providing support to both those in hostel accommodation and those who are or at risk of sleeping rough.

There were a total of 313 homeless preventions achieved in Quarter 3, bringing the overall total to date in 2019/20 to 977. The Council continues to work collaboratively with the other LCR authorities and the Combined Authority regarding early intervention and prevention, and funding for 3 'trailblazer' posts has been secured in Wirral. These posts are enhancing and complementing existing housing services.

Home energy

The Council is working with local charity, Energy Projects Plus, AgilityEco and Affordable Warmth Solutions, to offer fully funded central heating to residents who don't currently have gas central heating.

Connected for Warmth, is a new service designed to help eligible private and private rented sector households make big savings on their fuel bills. The scheme, covering

areas across the country, will provide a free first-time gas connection and energy-efficient heating system to eligible fuel poor homes in Wirral.

It is funded by the Warm Homes Fund, a £150 million national fund provided by National Grid and administered by Affordable Warmth Solutions. Cadent are also contributing towards the cost of the heating systems.

To be eligible, residents need to be in receipt of qualifying benefits, or qualify under Wirral Council's Eco Flex criteria. Eligible residents will receive a free gas connection and new gas central heating system, utilising the latest energy efficient boilers.

While homeowners and tenants will pay nothing toward the scheme, private landlords will need to make a small contribution to have a system installed, should their property be eligible.

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Portfolio report – Local Plan: Cllr Anita Leech

Following the decision of the Council in January to move ahead with consultation the formal consultation on the options for the Local Plan began. These are taking place over eight weeks and will finish on Monday March 23.

As part of this process there have been a number of drop-in sessions held at locations across Wirral for people to find out more about the options being put forward.

Around 1,000 people attended the drop-in sessions, while at the time of writing nearly 1,600 people had also registered through our online portal which opened for comments on the Council proposals.

It is important that as many people as possible take part in this consultation and let us know what they think of the proposals put forward so that the final Local Plan meets the needs of the borough's residents.

Wirral's Draft Local Plan will, when agreed, set out our vision for future development in the borough up to 2035, and will be reviewed at least every five years.

As a Council we are determined to use the process of developing the Local as an opportunity for regeneration in the borough, tackling inequality and in doing so improving the health and lifestyle of the residents, encouraging inward investment and boosting job opportunities. This is even more important now than ever before as we move ahead with development at Wirral Waters, push forward the regeneration of Birkenhead's town centre and continue to work to attract investment into the borough.

Under the proposals key regeneration locations in Birkenhead and Wallasey will play a crucial role in helping deliver the housing needed into the future, with many more brownfield and urban areas across the borough also being put forward to provide sites to meet the housing requirements, and opening up the chance for major regeneration of large parts of the eastern side of Wirral. The Council will continue to work closely with the Liverpool City Region and Homes England to secure the necessary funding to help deliver the preferred option.

In addition the development of the Local Plan will a major opportunity to support Wirral in playing its part in tackling climate change, laying the foundations for a greener future.

Following the end of the consultation Council officers will analyse the responses and use that information to begin taking the development of the Draft Local Plan to the next stage, with further consultation to take place later in the year.

The Council is currently making excellent progress in preparing the new Local Plan for Wirral which will set out how the Borough should be developed over the next 15

years, in line with National policy and legislation. We are meeting the key milestones for the extremely demanding timetable agreed with the Government.

Access to the evidence documents and consultation portal is available from wirral.gov.uk/localplan

Portfolio report – Regeneration and Growth: Cllr Tony Jones

1. INVESTMENT

Birkenhead Regeneration Framework

Wirral Council has commissioned Avison Young to develop a Birkenhead Regeneration Framework with area-based Delivery Action Plans which will shape future investment and regeneration plans for the area. The draft BRF will be delivered April 2020.

Future High Streets Birkenhead

In July 2019 the Council was informed that Birkenhead and New Ferry has progressed to the final stage of the Future High Streets Fund programme which allows the selected Town Centres to bid for up to £25m of government funds to transform their high streets (average award expected to be between £5-10m). The application criteria for Future High Streets Fund requires the need to demonstrate stringent value for money assessment in terms of the uplift in economic benefits provided by investment from the fund. The Council received a development grant from government to support the development of its application and has subsequently commissioned and appointed specialist regeneration consultant Avison Young to develop a Treasury Green Book Compliant Full Business Case submission.

Birkenhead stands on the threshold of transformative change, with a unique alignment of assets and circumstances that we believe presents the biggest and best regeneration opportunity in the country. Future High Streets Fund will ensure that we are able to deliver on the scale and pace of our ambition for Birkenhead Town Centre. A £25m bid has been submitted in draft to Government which includes strategic acquisitions; enhanced public realm and supporting infrastructure for a new commercial district which will deliver diversity and immediate footfall; a revitalised and reinvigorated market and enhanced connectivity and wayfinding, including a number of infrastructure improvements to reduce car dominance and create a safer environment for road users and pedestrians. Feedback from Government on this first draft is expected mid-March in advance of the final submission on 30 April 2020. Successful applicants are expected to be announced in Summer/Autumn 2020.

Hind Street (Birkenhead)

The council in partnership with consultants Avison Young will shortly commence a masterplanning exercise to facilitate development opportunities for this area of Birkenhead.

Wirral Waters

- Essential remediation, infrastructure and public realm work has commenced at Wirral Waters, following a £6m Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) Award from Homes England. The brownfield site improvements will also include a programme of streetscape work, such as the creation of dockside walkways and new public squares; improvements to connectivity between local bus and ferry services, cycles ways and pedestrian routes; and improvements to local amenities and car parking. This investment will support three residential projects: Wirral Waters One, a £90m development of one and two-bedroom apartments and affordable homes; the £55m House by Urban Splash development of modern, modular homes; and Belong Village, a specialist dementia care village.
- A Government minister visited Wirral in January to support the Maritime Knowledge Hub, which will be located in a Grade II-listed Victorian hydraulic tower at Wirral Waters. Following the visit, the minister said: “A key part of growing our world class maritime industry is its people, and the Maritime Knowledge Hub will be vital in training the next generation of mariners and ensuring our industry continues to thrive.” This will be followed up with the new minister now in post.
- A planning application will be submitted for MEA Park Phase II in the coming weeks. This development represents approximately £6m investment to create 12 new units for light industrial uses as part of the wider MEA Park Masterplan, which is targeted to provide a sector-focused environment to support business growth and capacity. The project will be supported by £1.5m from Wirral Waters Investment Fund.
- A £3.2m programme of public realm and green infrastructure improvements will commence at Tower Road South in the coming weeks. This work will create wider pavements, improved pedestrian and cyclist facilities, distinctive street lighting, tree planting and groundcover.

Wirral Growth Company

- Stage 2 public consultation on Birkenhead town centre development completed – findings worked into masterplan. Full report available online www.wirralgrowthcompany.co.uk
- Partnership Business Plan and draft indicative Site Development Plans for initial priority sites agreed by JV Board in January 2020 and Cabinet on 24th February 2020
- Pre-planning meetings and public consultation on Foxfield site carried out in February 2020. Findings currently being assessed and incorporated into emerging plans.
- Public consultation for Moreton Pasture Road site planned for May 2020.
- Pre-planning work for Birkenhead town centre development ongoing and on track for submission of planning application early summer 2020.

Liscard

- £1m grant funding agreement and detailed Action Plans for Liscard and New Ferry formally approved by Combined Authority in January
- Plans have been developed following engagement and consultation with ward councillors, local traders and stakeholders and will be delivered over 18 months to June 2021.
- Liscard activity will include: street scene enhancements, diversionary activity for young people to reduce anti-social behaviour, and development of a pump track cycle facility in Central Park; a business grant scheme to support new and existing businesses and reduce empty shops; an events programme to animate the town centre and increase visitor footfall. An integrated masterplan will be commissioned to develop a long-term vision for Liscard which could support a bid to Round 2 of the government's Future High Streets Fund.

New Ferry

The council has been working on a number of initiatives to support the regeneration of New Ferry, which includes a regeneration masterplan, a £1.3million acquisition programme, the LCR Town Centre Fund and applying to the Government's Future High Street Fund:

- Strategic Acquisitions – the council have recently purchased the freehold of the explosion site (41-43 Bebington Road). It will shortly be tendering for works to remove the concrete floor slab and foundations to enable the land to be used for meanwhile uses by the Community until construction work takes place. This will coincide with the simultaneous demolition of the derelict and unsightly former Griffiths's butchers shop (68-72 Bebington Road), to create additional space for the community.
- Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) – the draft business case was submitted to MHCLG on 15 January and feedback expected shortly. This will inform the submission of our final business case due with government on 30 April, with a decision expected over the summer.
- LCR Town Centre Fund – the council are working closely with New Ferry Community Land Trust (CLT) on a number of activities to enhance the appearance of the town centre. This includes the identification of a community asset, facilitating environmental improvements to the streetscene, to organising themed events.

2. BUSINESS

Good Business Festival

Council officers are working with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in support of The Good Business Festival. This week long, international event will take place in October to explore themes of sustainability and inclusive growth, which are now established as crucial measures of success for all businesses and organisations.

Wirral Business Support Service

Wirral Chamber's contractual outputs continue to meet or exceed targets. Since the start of their contract in 2017, the Chamber has engaged 1,333 businesses, directly assisted 704 with growth support, and supported the creation of 213 new enterprises.

3. EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS

The Wirral Ways to Work Programme

This programme delivers 3 x Projects supporting residents to find employment or training. They are: Worklessness Support Project; Wirral ILM; Careers Advice. The Wirral Ways to Work Programme continues to perform ahead of target and has supported 6,548 participants since it started in April 2016, with 3,399 of these achieving either employment or training, which is a positive outcome rate of 51.9%.

Fair Employment Charter

A pledge of the Metro Mayoral Manifesto was to establish a City Region Fair Employment Charter that recognises and celebrates businesses that promote social value by paying the Real Living Wage, minimising the use of 'zero hours' contracts, recognising and working with trades unions, procuring locally where possible, engaging with the social economy, providing quality apprenticeships, investing in their workforce and promoting gender equality."

This work is being taken forward through the CA via a reference group and internal delivery group. The consultation for the charter was scheduled to go live on 28 January 2020. There is an online consultation alongside a formal consultation that asks the public and key stakeholders several key and practical questions about how to deliver the charter. A two-tiered approach is proposed, with primary conditions established first and further conditions to be developed.

The launch of the Fair Employment Charter is currently planned to coincide with the Good Business Festival in October 2020.

Adult Education Budget

In April 2019 the LCR Combined Authority agreed to accept a grant allocation of £51,380,231 from the Department for Education in respect of the devolved Adult Education Budget for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2020. £982,326 has been ring-fenced for the delivery of adult community learning provision for residents aged over 19 for the 2019/20 academic year. The CA continues activity to develop the Skills Investment Statement for 20/21 to underpin future AEB delivery for 20/21 academic year. The document has been reviewed by council officers and has also been shared with City Region Portfolio Holders and is now in the final stages before consultation with the CA in Q4 2019/20.

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REPORT TITLE	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORT
REPORT OF	THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Members of the Council with an update on the work carried out by each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The report includes contributions from each of the Committee Chairpersons covering the period since the previous report presented to Council on 9th December 2019.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are requested to note the contents of this report and consider any questions they may have for the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To update Council Members on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to provide an opportunity for Council to ask questions on the activities undertaken.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options were considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ADULT CARE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.1 The Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee has continued to work closely with health partners across Wirral in recent months; delivering a comprehensive work programme and ensuring effective scrutiny through cross-party working.
- 3.2 Since last reporting to Council in December 2019, the Committee has held two ordinary meetings along with a special budget meeting to scrutinise savings proposals for 2020/21 under the remit of Adult Care and Health. In January 2020, Committee Members welcomed representatives from Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to provide an update on the sub-acute ward operating at Clatterbridge Hospital, in addition to an update report from health commissioners on the initial delivery of Urgent Care Transformation plans. Members were particularly keen to understand the early impact of the new model of care on residents in Moreton and Rock Ferry in light of the change in provision at the Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in these areas. As Chair of the Committee, I also wrote to the Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor in order to set out the Committee's concerns around the lack of adequate transport provision and its potentially damaging impact on patient access to health and care services on Wirral.
- 3.3 Following the special budget meeting in January 2020, Members identified a need to review additional sensitive financial information relating to the Adult Care and Health savings plans - with a subsequent private scrutiny session convened to specifically discuss detail around provider efficiencies delivered through Wirral Evolutions Local Authority Trading Company and increased provider fee rates associated with the actual cost of care. This workshop was held in February 2020 with findings and recommendations communicated to Cabinet for consideration.

- 3.4 The Health and Care Performance Working Group has continued to ensure stakeholder involvement within delivery of its work programme in order to strengthen its commitment to detailed review of service provision and performance across the Borough. In January 2020, Members focused on examining the Musculoskeletal (MSK) Integrated Triage Service – hearing from both patient representative groups, commissioners and MSK providers. Public Health officers also attended the meeting to apprise the Group of developments within the Change, Grow, Live drug and alcohol service, with Members satisfied with the impact of the programme’s robust improvement plan and the positive outcomes of the service.
- 3.5 The Committee’s last meeting of the 2019/20 municipal year was held on 27th February 2020. The development plan resulting from the 2019 Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) Peer Review was presented to Members and clearly showcased the whole system approach to social care improvement through collaborative working between the Council and colleagues within Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust and Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. The February meeting agenda also saw a report on the public health implications of poor quality housing and the Borough’s plans for improvement in this area. Although current scrutiny arrangements will cease at the close of this municipal year, health and care is always an ongoing priority and the Committee’s work programme will be included in the transitional plan to be taken into the new committee system and governance arrangements.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin

BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR’S REPORT

- 3.6 As part of the Committee’s work programme for the year, and to continue good practice, all opportunities for undertaking pre-decision scrutiny of Council strategies and policies have been explored. Following on from workshops and drop-in sessions held in 2019, Members of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee attended a workshop in February 2020 to look at the key regeneration projects in Birkenhead, Moreton and Bromborough and their associated business cases. This is the continuation of engagement with developers which has been a key part of scrutiny workplans. The success of key regeneration is vital for Wirral and having effective scrutiny in place is an important part in ensuring this happens.
- 3.7 The Task & Finish review into Camper Vans in New Brighton was completed this year, with the Panel engaging with residents and stakeholders to address wider issues and solutions regarding campervan parking in the Borough. The full report was brought to the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March for consideration.

- 3.8 Further to a report on the New Ferry disaster presented to Committee in September 2019, Members agreed to a Task & Finish scrutiny review which aims to ensure that all necessary steps have been taken to address those residents, traders and other people affected by the incident. The review was presented to the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2020 and all recommendations were agreed. The scrutiny review and report will be presented to Cabinet in March 2020.
- 3.9 At the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 23rd January 2020, Members also received an update on staff sickness levels from the Head of Human Resources and were interested to hear about the steps the organisation has taken to manage sickness absence. Also presented at Committee was a report from the Head of Service for Skills Learning and education on the impact of the Apprentice Levy. Notably, and after consideration by the Scrutiny Chairs, it was agreed that budget scrutiny be undertaken at Committee this year to ensure the budget proposals were discussed in an open and transparent manner. All budget recommendations were approved by Committee.
- 3.10 On 4th March 2020, reports were brought to committee on Business Rates retention. In addition to this, Members of the Committee also received an update on Commercialisation. The Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee has also continued to receive regular updates on the latest developments of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Councillor Dave Mitchell

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.11 The Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee has met once since the last Chairs' Report. At Committee in January, Members of the Committee received the Budget Savings proposals for the upcoming municipal year. Previous Budget Scrutiny had been undertaken in workshops, however after consideration from the Scrutiny Chairs it was agreed that Budget Scrutiny should be considered by Members in an open and transparent manner. As such, Committee reviewed the papers in advance and were able to ask questions of the Director for Children's Services. The budget recommendations and challenges of meeting the needs of a large Children Looked After population were noted by the Committee. As Corporate Parents the Committee urged the Director to continue to ensure that Children Looked After always get the most appropriate and excellent care placement available, having particular mind to the benefits of stable placements."
- 3.12 In the January meeting also received a report entitled 'Summary of Standards – Provisional Outcomes for Key Stage 4 & 5' from the Commissioner for Schools which that provided an in-depth analysis for the pupil outcomes at the age of 16 (GCSEs). Further to a workshop held in 2019, the Commissioner for Schools also

introduced a report in support of a summary presentation of the findings and proposed options from independent review of SEND provision. Following debate on the matter, Members were of the view that the options / recommendations as contained within the report not be progressed, but the source information was useful and should form the basis of further consultation and development of a plan to suit Wirral's need. It was noted that notwithstanding the Committee's lack of support for the recommendations, this it had been a very useful exercise in terms of pre-decision scrutiny.

- 3.13 At the same meeting Members of the Committee also received an update on Adult Learning which set out information on the service's developments, summary of delivery and achievements in the 2018/19 academic year. Members were apprised that Wirral Council's Lifelong Learning Service actively engaged and supported local residents (aged 19+) who are furthest from the labour market. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the services' planned improvements and recognised the contribution to improving the lives of adults in Wirral's more deprived communities during 2018/19.
- 3.14 A review of Healthy Weight in the Borough was undertaken by members of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2019 with the final of three Stakeholder session held in December 2019. These workshops were well attended with over 80 delegates from across multiple sectors in attendance. A large amount of data was generated from these sessions and a report has been compiled which will be presented to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2020, just after full Council.

Councillor Wendy Clements

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIR'S REPORT

- 3.15 The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee has continued to focus on delivering a comprehensive work programme over recent months, prioritising areas that highlight Wirral's commitment to climate change action and deliver an attractive and sustainable local environment for all residents.
- 3.16 The Committee's Task & Finish group recently concluded its scrutiny review of the strategic guidance within the Council's draft Tree Strategy, agreeing a positive set of recommendations to strengthen the authority's approach to tree preservation and risk management. This review highlighted the benefits of collaborative cross-party working and allowed for frank and honest discussions between Members and officers regarding the challenges that Wirral faces in maintaining and improving its tree stock and woodland. The findings of the review panel are due to be presented to Committee in March 2020, with subsequent referral to Cabinet for further consideration if agreed.

- 3.17 At the January 2020 meeting, the Committee focused primarily on undertaking pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's budget savings plans for 2020/21. Although Committee ultimately endorsed the budget plans within the Environment remit, Members requested further detail around a number of areas of financial pressure, notably street lighting and leisure income. The January agenda also provided Members with an opportunity to discuss the proposed Public Space Protection Order relating to dog control in the Borough. Committee were keen to ensure that proper consultation had, and will, take place with relevant stakeholders and interested parties so that resident opinion can be fully considered as part of any long-term plan for Wirral.
- 3.18 The final meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee will take place in March 2020, with planned agenda items covering a number of key issues; including the Council's Climate Change strategy, Flood Risk Management Annual Report along with an update on the future provision of the Floral Pavilion theatre and conference centre.

Councillor Tom Anderson

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no relevant risks identified.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Each Overview & Scrutiny Committee engages appropriately with relevant stakeholders when delivering its annual work programme.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Report compiled by:**
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APPENDICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Adult Care and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
Children and Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	9 December 2019
Council	14 October 2019
Council	18 March 2019
Council	10 December 2018
Council	15 October 2018
Council	19 March 2018
Council	11 December 2017
Council	16 October 2017
Council	20 March 2017

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MINUTE EXTRACT

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2020

24 PAY POLICY 2020/21

Tony Williams, Head of Human Resources, introduced a report which set out information on the Council's Pay Policy, which provided transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting pay by identifying:

- the methods by which salaries of all employees were determined;
- the detail and level of the salary package of its most senior staff;
- the Head of Paid Service's responsibility for ensuring the provisions set out in the statement were applied consistently throughout the Council and recommending any amendments to Full Council.

The Council was required by Section 38 of The Localism Act 2011 to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year.

The 2020/21 statement reflected key changes and updates that had occurred within the last financial year, including a new Foundation Living Wage rate which had been announced by The Living Wage Foundation in November 2019 as £9.30 per hour, an increase of 30p. The Council used the National Joint Council (NJC) nationally negotiated pay spine as the basis for its pay structure. The starting spinal column point was currently £9.25 an hour. Although no nationally agreed pay award had been made yet, the predicted increase for the NJC pay award for 2020/2021 meant that the starting spinal point would increase above the living wage rate of £9.30 by April 2020.

In response to Members' comments, Tony Williams informed the Committee that although 'Matrix' was the preferred supplier for the recruitment of agency workers, which the Council was duty bound to use under its contract, it was possible to go outside of the 'Matrix' system if recruitment could not be achieved via this, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules. With regard to IR35 (off payroll working rules), procedures were in place and a report would be brought to the successor committee.

Resolved – That it be recommended to Council that the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21, be approved.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

PAY POLICY STATEMENT

2020 – 2021

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. In line with the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), the purpose of this statement is to provide transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting pay by identifying:
 - The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined;
 - The detail and level of the salary package of its most senior staff i.e. 'Chief Officers', as defined by the relevant legislation;
 - The Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service responsibility for ensuring the provisions set out in this statement are applied consistently throughout the Council and recommending any amendments to Full Council.
- 1.2. The Council will consult with the relevant Trade Unions in relation to changes and updates to the Pay Policy, before the Policy is considered by Full Council.
- 1.3. Once approved by Full Council, this policy statement will come into immediate effect and will be subject to review on a minimum of an annual basis; the policy being approved by 31 March each year.
- 1.4. The Council may, by resolution, amend this Pay Policy, including after the beginning of the financial year to which it relates.

2. The Scope of this Policy

- 2.1. This Pay Policy Statement relates to staff employed by Wirral Council whose salary package including rate of pay and terms and conditions are determined by and are within the control of the Council.

3. Other Legislation Relevant to Pay and Salary Package

- 3.1. In determining the pay and salary packages of all of its employees, the Council will comply with all relevant employment legislation.
- 3.2. It is Council policy to ensure that there is no pay discrimination within its terms and conditions of employment, including pay structures. Any pay differentials can be objectively justified through the use of job evaluation, which directly establishes the relative levels of posts by grades according to the requirements, demands and responsibilities of the role.
- 3.3. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities Regulations 2017), the Council is required to publish an annual gender pay gap report, reporting a snapshot of the workforce in scope as at 31 March (previous year).
- 3.4. The Council will ensure that it meets the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014. The Transparency Code requires that all local authorities publish certain information related to the organisation, salaries and fraud including:
 - Organisation chart
 - Senior salaries
 - The pay multiple

- Trade union facility time
- Fraud
- Constitution

4. Pay Structure

- 4.1. The Council uses the National Joint Council (NJC) nationally negotiated pay spine (i.e. a defined list of salary points) as the basis for its pay structure.
- 4.2. The Council employs staff on other pay and terms and conditions including Craft, Youth and Community, Soulbury, Teachers, NHS, and pay is in accordance with national pay spines.
- 4.3. The Council adopts the national pay bargaining arrangements in respect of the establishment and revision of national pay spines, for example through any agreed annual pay increases negotiated with joint Trade Unions, subject to any local agreements in place.
- 4.4. Where a nationally negotiated pay spine does not apply, the Council will determine the salary rate through local negotiation and agreement.
- 4.5. All other pay related issues are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, in accordance with collective bargaining.
- 4.6. In determining its grading structure and setting salary packages for any posts which fall outside the scope of the national pay bargaining arrangements, the Council takes account of the need to ensure value for money in respect of the use of public expenditure, balanced against the need to recruit and retain employees who are able to meet the requirements of providing high quality services to the community.
- 4.7. There are circumstances where the terms of Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employees: TUPE) may determine the eligibility of pay awards for employees who transfer into the Council on protected terms and conditions.

4.8. Variations to Pay Grade

- 4.8.1. From time to time it may be necessary to take account of the external pay levels in the labour market in order to attract and retain employees with particular experience, skills and capacity. Where necessary the Council will ensure the requirement for such is objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators, using data sources available from within the local government sector and outside, as appropriate.
- 4.8.2. Any temporary supplement to the salary scale for the grade is approved in accordance with the Council's Honoraria Policy, or any applicable market rate supplement arrangements.

4.9. Job Evaluation

4.9.1 Post grades are determined using Job Evaluation schemes and the Council's pay structures.

4.10. The Living Wage

4.10.1. Living Wage rates are based on Minimum Income Standards methodology and seek to take account of real living costs for essential goods and services.

4.10.2. Through the Council's Pay Policy Statement, the Council is committed to and pays the Living Wage for all employees.

4.10.3. The Living Wage rate is reviewed and announced by The Living Wage Foundation on 1 November each year. The Council will consider any increases to the Living Wage as part of the annual Pay Policy Statement. If agreed, increases to the Living Wage will take effect from 1 April the following year. The provision for the Living Wage will be kept under review.

4.13.4 The current Living Wage rate for outside London increased from 1 November 2019 to £9.30 per hour.

4.11. New Appointments

4.11.1. New appointments will normally be made at the minimum Spinal Column Point (SCP) of the relevant pay scale for the grade. Where the candidate is already in receipt of remuneration above the minimum SCP of the relevant pay scale, the appointment will normally be made at the nearest equivalent SCP in the grade. If the employee is already in receipt of acting up or honoraria this will also apply.

4.11.2. The appointment salary may be varied with the agreement of the Head of Human Resources. Proposals should be made by the recruiting manager, supported by a business case providing objective justification for the proposed variation prior to any offer of employment.

4.12. Progression through Pay Grades

4.12.1. An employee's progression through the increments of a particular pay grade is linked to length of service. Increments are awarded on 1 April each year, or for new appointments between 1 October and 31 March, six months from the start date.

4.12.2. The arrangements and factors considered in determining an individual's progression through different pay grade may be determined by experience, skills and qualifications as set out in the relevant Job Description and progression criteria.

5. Senior Management Salary

- 5.1. For the purposes of this statement, senior management means 'Chief Officers' as defined under section 43(2) of the Localism Act 2011. This includes statutory chief officers, non-statutory chief officers and deputy chief officers as listed within that Act.
- 5.2. The posts falling within the statutory definition are set out in '*The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency* (*'the data transparency code'*)'.
- 5.3. The Council's grading structure for Chief Officers is as follows:
 - Chief Executive
 - Senior Director 1
 - Senior Director 2
 - Director 1
 - Director/Deputy Director 2
 - Assistant Director 1
 - Assistant Director 2
- 5.4. The terms and conditions, including the payment of any allowances for Chief Officers is set out within the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers of Local Authorities constitution conditions of service salaries. All details of Chief Officer salaries are published in accordance with the Transparency Code.
- 5.5. The Chief Executive handbook sets out the terms and conditions of employment for the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service. Some provisions within this also apply to Council's Statutory Officers (Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer).

6. Recruitment of Chief Officers

- 6.1. The Council's policy and procedures with regard to recruitment of Chief Officers is set out in Part Four of The Council's Constitution. The appointment of Chief Officers and Deputy Chief Officers is delegated to the Employment and Appointments Committee as set out in Part Three of The Council's Constitution.
- 6.2. The determination of the salary to be offered to any newly appointed Chief Officer will be in accordance with the pay structure and relevant policies in place at the time of recruitment. The Council's Chief Officer pay scales are published on the Council's website.
- 6.3. The Localism Act Guidance says that Council should have the opportunity to vote before salary packages of £100,000 or more are agreed. Through the Council's Constitution, this is delegated to the Employment and Appointments Committee, as above, which appoints Chief Officers other than for those roles where the full Council has reserved powers in respect of defined posts.
- 6.4. There is a statutory requirement to notify the Leader of the Cabinet of the selection decision and provide an opportunity for each Cabinet Member to make representations on the decision to the proper officer.

- 6.5. A meeting of full Council will approve the appointment to the following:
- Head of Paid Service;
 - Section 151 Officer (also known as Chief Finance Officer);
 - Monitoring Officer;
 - Returning Officer (for which expenses may be claimed); and
 - Electoral Registration Officer.

7. Additions to Salary

- 7.1. In addition to basic salary, the following posts receive additional pay as set out below:

Post / Tier of post	Payment details
Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	Returning Officer duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National statutory amount for Parliamentary/National Elections. • Locally determined amount in accordance with national guidance for Local Government Elections.
All eligible employees	Allowances in accordance with the Council's Terms and Conditions.

8. Pension Contributions

- 8.1. The employer's pension contribution is required to be published under S7 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.
- 8.2. The Council will automatically enroll all eligible employees into the Local Government Pension scheme and the Council is required to make a contribution to the scheme representing a percentage of the pensionable salary due under the contract of employment of that employee.
- 8.3. The rate of contribution is set by Actuaries advising Merseyside Pension Fund and reviewed every three years in order to ensure the scheme is appropriately funded.

9. Payments on Termination

- 9.1. The Council's approach to statutory and discretionary payments on termination of employment for all employees, including Chief Officers, prior to reaching normal retirement age, is set out within the Council's Enhanced Discretionary Severance Scheme.
- 9.2. The Council will keep its Enhanced Discretionary Severance Scheme under review. Any changes, as approved by full Council are published in accordance with the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) regulations 2006.

9.3 Any payments upon termination in respect of a Chief Officer exceeding £100,000, (apart from contractual payments, where the Council has no discretion) shall be subject to a vote at Council or relevant Committee or Panel of Members with delegated authority to approve such payments. Payments upon termination are subject to any legislative requirements or caps.

10. Lowest Paid Employees

10.1. The lowest paid persons employed by the Council are employed on full time equivalent rates in accordance with the council's grading structures. The grading structures take account of the Living Wage hourly rate (see section 4).

10.2. The relationship between the rate of pay for the lowest paid employee and Chief Officers is determined by the council's job evaluation schemes.

As required by the Localism Act, the following table provides the Council's salary ratios.

Definition	Ratio
The average full time equivalent (fte) earnings and the Chief Executive	1: 5.64
The lowest paid employee full time equivalent (fte) earnings and average Chief Officer earnings	1: 5.69
The lowest paid employee full time equivalent (fte) earnings and average Chief Officer earnings	1: 3.41

10.3. As part of its overall and ongoing monitoring of alignment with external pay markets, both within and outside the sector, the Council will use available benchmark information as appropriate. In addition, upon the annual review of this Statement, the Council will also monitor any changes in the relevant 'pay multiples' and benchmark against other comparable local Authorities.

11. Accountability and Decision Making

11.1. In accordance with the Constitution of the Council, the Employment and Appointments Committee is responsible for decision making in relation to Chief Officer recruitment. The Employment and Appointment Committee may delegate this to the Head of Paid Service.

11.2 The Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service has delegated responsibility for decision-making in relation to the recruitment, pay, terms and conditions and severance arrangements in relation to employees of the Council below Chief Officer level.

12. Re-employment / Re-engagement of Employees

12.1. The Council will not re-employ any former employees that have left the Council through early retirement or under the Voluntary Severance Scheme where there

has been a cost to the Council, except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Head of Human Resources.

- 12.2. The Council will not consider applications from former Wirral employees who were dismissed from employment.

13. Publication

- 13.1. Upon approval by full Council, this statement will be published on the Council's Website and Intranet.

- 13.2. In line with the requirement of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014, the Council will publish an organisation chart covering staff in the top three levels of the organisation, which will include the following information:

- Grade
- Job Title
- Salary in £5,000 brackets
- Salary ceiling (the maximum salary for the grade)

- 13.3. The following information for senior salaries (employees whose salary in that year was at least £50,000) will also be published:

- Job Title
- Salary

Motion 1 - Hoylake beach raking, March 2020

Proposed by: Councillor Liz Grey

Seconded by: Councillor Pat Cleary

This Council believes that environmental policy should be evidence based and respect the views of Government environmental bodies.

Council notes that;

In January 2020, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission published a joint statement declaring that they support and promote actions to restore

“natural habitats such as wetlands, sand dunes and salt marsh” and “use nature to reduce the impact of floods while removing carbon from the atmosphere and improving habitats for wildlife.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environmental-bodies-set-joint-vision-to-tackle-climate-change>

It is clear from recent media and social media coverage that there are diverse views within the local community, with many strongly in favour of a more natural approach to beach management. Natural England request that we engage with residents to enable greater education about the environmental, flood protection, health and well being and economic benefits of natural beach development.

This council accepts that the national and international designations; SSSI, Ramsar, SAC and SPA, need to be better protected. The previous style of beach management has led to the SSSI designation being classed by NE as “*unfavourable: declining*” and threatens numerous habitats and species.

This council further accepts the NE advice that the changes along our coastline are inevitable, potentially of great interest and of environmental value. This is especially true in the current environment and climate emergency.

This council recognises the importance of following the guidance of Natural England in the development of a new, evidence-based management plan for Hoylake beach. Having received a report outlining what we should and should not do regarding maintenance of the beach, it would be unwise and improper to ignore it.

Council notes that the report makes it clear that NE want us to pursue a management plan that works with ever changing natural coastal ecosystems and not to destroy them.

Council further notes that NE urges us to apply the precautionary principle.

This council therefore supports the continued cessation of raking and spraying on Hoylake beach. The Council will cooperate fully on all data requested by NE and will work to develop new plans that are consistent with NE advice.

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Motion 2 - Wirral Council asked to back the RSPCA's Fireworks Campaign

Proposed by: Councillor Ian Lewis

Seconded by: Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council thanks Wirral residents who have shared concerns over the use, and misuse, of fireworks in the Borough, following the national campaign by the RSPCA and others.

While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, they can cause significant problems and fear for other people and animals. They can be a source of fear and distress for many animals (including pet animals, farm livestock and wildlife). Animals affected not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries – sometimes very serious ones – as they attempt to run away or hide from the noise.

Council notes the work undertaken by the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, through Operation Banger, to reduce anti-social behaviour and sporadic events, linked to fireworks and bonfires.

Council therefore resolves:

- to continue to support a number of organised, local displays with residents encouraged to attend
- to request all public firework displays within Wirral to be advertised in advance of the event, including the local authority social media channels, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to continue visits to local suppliers of fireworks, including 'pop up' suppliers in October and November, to ensure compliance with existing legislation and to encourage fireworks that are appropriate for public display.

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Motion 3 - INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF WIRRAL'S SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) SERVICE

Proposed by: Stuart Kelly

Seconded by: Chris Carubia

Council supports the right of parents to seek the best possible educational and life chance outcomes for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability.

Council recognises that the Director of Children Services has commissioned an external review of the SEND service from the LGA and North West Association of Directors of Children Services

As this review will directly engage with parents and children with SEND, we welcome this.

Council is anxious that the findings of this external review of SEND should be shared with elected members at the earliest opportunity with a view to introducing the improvements that parents are anxious to ensure take place.

Council notes that

- i. for the academic year 2017/18 and calendar year 2019 there were 57 appeals against the outcome of the EHCP process
- ii. In the calendar year 2019 there were 36 appeals made against the outcome of the EHCP process with only 2 having been successful for the Council.

Council believes that in taking cases to tribunal where they have shown to have little chance of success is detrimental to parents and to the children involved. Council is therefore anxious that elected Members should have as full as possible understanding of the reasons behind the number of appeals and their results.

Whilst these cases form a low percentage of the numbers requiring the help of our support services, Members are anxious to learn lessons from this and seek assurance that the external review will sufficiently independent and thorough to assist this understanding.

Council considers that the review commissioned needs to include a study of the Children's Services Department's approach to parents and their children, the management of the service, and the processes that have led to unnecessary conflict with parents through the tribunal system; and to make recommendations that will help to reduce the Authority's record of recourse to tribunal, to increase the support and assistance offered to parents and SEND children, examine competencies and culture, and to liaise with established parent support groups

Council requests the Leader of the Council to instruct the Chief Executive and Director of Childrens Services to ensure that the review is rigorous and reports to Members on its outcomes and recommendations for improvement as soon as practicable.

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Motion 4 - Supporting the Streetcar proposals for Wirral Waters

Proposed by: Councillor Pat Cleary

Seconded by: Councillor Andrew Gardner

Council notes;

- The brownfield-first policy contained in the draft local plan which commits Wirral to building 12,000 new homes on brownfield sites by 2035
- That work has already commenced on providing the first new homes at Wirral Waters
- That the new Eureka facility is expected to attract up to 200,000 visitors p.a. to Seacombe within a few years

Council also notes the proposals by Peel Holdings to incorporate a Streetcar light rail system as an integral part of creating a modern, sustainable transport scheme to support the wider aims of the Wirral Waters development. Council welcomes the positive comments of the Council Leader regarding the Streetcar proposals during the debate on the Local Plan consultation at Full Council on January 13th, 2020.

Council believes the Streetcar proposals offer many potential benefits including:

- creating a sustainable, potentially zero-carbon transport infrastructure for Wirral Waters;
- minimising car dependency and associated land use, thereby freeing up more land for green spaces and residential development as well as easing pressure on our precious green belt;
- attracting more people to Wirral as a tourist attraction in its own right
- linking existing rail and ferry transport hubs, thereby creating an integrated public transport system that will support residential, commercial and tourism objectives.

Council therefore believes that progress on the Streetcar scheme is vital if Wirral Waters is to achieve its full potential for the people of Wirral and that effective cooperation between all relevant parties including Peel Holdings, Wirral Council and Merseytravel is essential to its future success.

To that end, Council looks forward to rapid progress in bringing forward and implementing the first stage of the Streetcar plans as a basis for assessing its potential and viability to serve the wider East Wirral area. Council requests that the leader provides regular feedback on progressing these plans.

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Motion 5 - Fair Employment Charter

Proposed by: Councillor Brian Kenny

Seconded by: Councillor Janette Williamson

This Wirral Council agrees that all Employees have the right to be treated with dignity and fairness at work. This Council therefore agrees to give full support to developing a Fair Employment Charter for the Liverpool City Region, involving the North West TUC and the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram.

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Motion 6 - Breastfeeding Friendly Wirral

Proposed by: Councillor Wendy Clements

Seconded by: Councillor Mary Jordan

Council notes the extensive and resounding evidence that breastfeeding saves lives, improves health and saves money in every country worldwide. It protects children from a vast range of illnesses including infections, diabetes, asthma, heart disease and obesity, as well as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (cot death). It supports the mother-baby relationship and the mental health of both baby and mother. However, recently Wirral University Teaching Hospital's breastfeeding initiation rate stood at only 61.21%.

Council further notes that James P. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF 1980 - 1995, said: "Breastfeeding is a natural 'safety net' against the worst effects of poverty. Exclusive breastfeeding goes a long way toward cancelling out the health difference between being born into poverty and being born into affluence. It is almost as if breastfeeding takes the infant out of poverty for those first few months in order to give the child a fairer start in life and compensate for the injustice of the world into which it was born."

Council therefore resolves to:

- be a Baby Friendly employer
- Adopt the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme in Wirral to increase the number of venues where breastfeeding mothers can feel confident to nurse, and thus support a cultural shift towards breastfeeding in our area.
- Sign up all council buildings as Breastfeeding Welcome venues

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Motion 7 - A FUTURE PATH FOR HOUSES IN WIRRAL

Proposed by: Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by: Councillor Dave Mitchell

Council considers it essential that, in preparation for effective work under the new Committee system, Members have an overview of the work that has been undertaken on:

- a. tackling the problem of empty properties in Wirral, along with the rate of bringing them into use;
- b. the composition of the waiting list for properties as known to Property Pool Plus in order that the needs of the population can be established;
- c. close working relationships with organisations assisting the homeless
- d. working with registered social landlords to ensure appropriate developments on sites;
- e. the currently known and planned construction programmes of registered social landlords;
- f. establishing a close working relationship with Homes England with a view to securing funding for appropriate developments;
- g. the results of discussions with Homes England to date.

Officers are requested to arrange for a briefing seminar, open to all Members, at an early date in the new municipal year, so that a clear overview is obtained to inform future policies.

As part of this, officers are requested to:

- outline the steps that might be required to open a housing revenue account, if and when required, and
- consider how prudential borrowing and other financial arrangements might be used or required to develop housing in Wirral to meet local needs;
- review the organisational and managerial issues that would face the Council;
- establish how a working relationship with registered social landlords could meet such objectives.

The information can then be properly considered by the Housing Committee in the first instance.

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Motion 8 - Wirral: A fair tax council

Proposed by: Councillor Steve Hayes

Seconded by: Councillor Chris Cooke

Council notes:

- The pressure on organisations to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time has never been stronger.
- Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- 3 Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement
- Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.
- It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.
- The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by organisations with a combined annual income of £50bn and more than 6,500 outlets and premises, including many social enterprises and co-operatives.

Council believes:

- Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn’t be.
- Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, and policing. It also promotes social justice by redistributing wealth.
- As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
- Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned -e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.
- More action is needed, however current law significantly restricts councils’ ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
- UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Council recommends Cabinet to:

- Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.
- Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
- Ensure contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes.
- Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.

- Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
- Promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride.
- Support calls for urgent reform of UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies

References and links

[Introduction to the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration:](https://fairtaxmark.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Intro-to-CFFTD.pdf)

<https://fairtaxmark.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Intro-to-CFFTD.pdf>

Motion 9 - SOLIDARITY WITH EU27 CITIZENS

Proposed by: Councillor Andy Corkhill

Seconded by: Councillor Dave Mitchell

Council notes that we currently have a significant number of EU27 citizens who are awaiting confirmation that they may remain in the country, and homes, in which they have chosen to live.

Council also notes that there are a vast number of EU27 citizens who, having lived in Wirral for a significant amount of time contributing socially, culturally and economically to the Borough, now feel unwanted because some of those who voted in the 2016 Referendum have challenged their right to remain. Across the country, incidents of crimes against foreigners have risen since this vote and have spiked since 31 January 2020.

The Wirral, as a forward-thinking, progressive Borough, should do all it can to support its EU27 citizens, standing up for their rights as valued members of our communities and denounce in the strongest terms any persecution aimed at them purely because they were not born in Great Britain.

Council should seek to counter the hostile environment enacted by successive governments and show the thousands of EU27 citizens still in Wirral that they belong and are welcome here. Despite the promises from Boris Johnson that the rights of the EU citizens to remain in the UK be guaranteed, there has been resistance and delay from government in producing physical documentation and evidence - as voted for in the House of Lords - leaving EU citizens under a cloud of uncertainty and risking a new Windrush-style scandal.

A formal statement of support from the policy-makers of the Borough should not be underestimated in allaying any fears that EU27 citizens' rights are in anyway subservient to that of British citizens.

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