

# COUNCIL

Monday, 28 February 2022

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor George Davies) in  
the Chair  
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Jeff Green)

Councillors	T Anderson	E Gleaves	S Mountney
	B Berry	H Gorman	Y Nolan
	J Bird	K Greaney	C O'Hagan
	M Booth	EA Grey	O Osanlou
	A Brame	P Hayes	C Povall
	D Brennan	S Hayes	L Rennie
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Hodson	J Robinson
	H Cameron	K Hodson	L Rowlands
	I Camphor	J Johnson	T Smith
	K Cannon	AER Jones	P Stuart
	P Cleary	C Jones	Jason Walsh
	W Clements	T Jones	Joe Walsh
	M Collins	M Jordan	S Whittingham
	H Collinson	S Kelly	I Williams
	C Cooke	B Kenny	KJ Williams
	T Cottier	D Kenny	S Williams
	T Cox	I Lewis	J Williamson
	S Foulkes	P Martin	G Wood
	S Frost	M McLaughlin	A Wright
	A Gardner	J McManus	
	P Gilchrist	D Mitchell	

Apologies Councillors C Carubia C Spriggs

## 75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Civic Mayor informed the meeting that he had been informed in advance of a number of Members who had a personal interest in agenda item 4c, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan' insofar as it related to the schools budget element by virtue of holding positions as school governors, as follows:

Councillors Bruce Berry, Allan Brame, Chris Carubia, Wendy Clements, Helen Collinson, George Davies, Steve Foulkes, Phil Gilchrist, Dave Mitchell, Yvonne Nolan, Tony Smith, Paul Stuart, Stuart Whittingham, Steve Williams and Gillian Wood.

Additionally, the Civic Mayor reported the following personal interests insofar as they related to the schools budget element, by virtue of those Members either themselves or close family members working in either Schools or the Council's Education and Children, or Young People's Directorate:

Councillors Liz Grey, Adrian Jones, Chris Jones, Cherry Povall, Jean Robinson and Les Rowlands.

Members were then invited to make any further declarations, Councillors Pat Cleary and Chris Cooke both declared personal interests as School Governors. Councillors Julie McManus, Helen Collinson and Moira McLaughlin declared personal interests by virtue of a family member's employment and Councillor Jo Bird a personal interest by virtue of her partner being a school governor, all insofar as they related to the schools budget element.

Councillor Jeff Green declared a personal interest in agenda item 4c, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan' by virtue of him being a member of Wirral Golf Club.

## 76 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor asked for any apologies and these were then given for Councillors Chris Carubia and Chris Spriggs.

The Civic Mayor then invited the Council to stand for a minute's silence in memory of former Leader of the Council, Alderman John Hale and also to reflect on the terrible events occurring in Ukraine with the Council's thoughts and prayers being with the Ukrainian people at this time. Ukrainian flags were flying at both Wallasey and Birkenhead Town Halls and Wallasey Town Hall had been illuminated in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, providing a small symbol of Wirral's solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

## 77 **BUDGET MEETING PROCEDURE**

The Council was then invited to consider the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 15 February 2022, in respect of the procedure to be adopted for this extraordinary meeting of the Council.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Tom Anderson, it was –

**Resolved – That, for the duration of the extraordinary meeting of 28 February 2022 (Budget Council):**

**(a) the procedure attached as Appendix A to the report be followed in respect of the meeting; and**

**(b) Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) be suspended together with such other standing orders as may conflict with the Budget Council procedure or the Mayor's administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.**

**78 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL - RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF 17 JANUARY AND 15 FEBRUARY, 2022**

Eight matters had been referred by the meetings of Policy and Resources Committee on 17 January and 15 February, 2022 (see minutes 79 to 86 post).

**79 COUNCIL TAX 2022/23 - TAX BASE, DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS AND LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The first item requiring approval was in relation to proposed Council Tax discounts, the motion for which was moved by Councillor Janette Williamson and seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan.

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 116 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 17 January, 2022, be agreed as follows:**

**The level and award of each local discount for 2022/23 be as follows:**

**Wirral Women's & Children's Aid**

**To continue to award Wirral Women & Children's Aid 100% discount. This remains unchanged from 2021/22.**

**Care Leaver's Discount**

**To award Care Leavers the requisite discount to reduce their Council Tax liability to zero until they are 25. This remains unchanged from 2021/22.**

**Empty Property Discounts**

**Discount category D = 0% Full charge on properties undergoing renovations.**

**Discount category C = 0% Full charge on empty properties from date they become unoccupied.**

**Both remain unchanged from 2021/22, Except for properties requiring adaptations to meet the need of a disabled person as described in Section 3.23**

**Empty Property Premium =**

**100% (200% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty for more than two years.**

**200% (300% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than five years.**

**300% (400% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than ten years.**

**All remain unchanged from 2021/22, except for properties requiring adaptations to meet the need of a disabled person as described in Section 3.23**

**Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme**

**The Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme, approved by Cabinet in October 2013, continues in its current format for 2022/23. The Scheme offers help and assistance in exceptional cases of hardship.**

**Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS)**

**The current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains to be the most appropriate scheme for Wirral Council and therefore will remain unchanged from 2021/22 apart from the following:**

**The scheme will be aligned to all the DWP's upratings and changes for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.**

## **80 CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 3 2021/22**

The second item requiring approval was in relation to a revised capital programme for 2021/22.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan it was -

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 128 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, be agreed as follows:**

- (1) the approval of the revised Capital Programme of £71.9 million for 2021/22, including the addition of the new grant funding referred to in section 3.4 in the report;**

(2) the approval of additional funding for the schemes referred to in section 3.5 in the report;

(3) the approval of the virements referred to in Appendix 3 in the report.

## 81 BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The third item requiring approval was the Council Budget and Council Tax setting for 2022/23. Councillor Janette Williamson formally moved the Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, and which was set out as a recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February 2022, minute 129, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan' but subject to an alteration, in that an addition be made with a new paragraph at (1) (i), as follows (the remaining paragraphs being re-lettered):

“An allocation of £125,000 from within the 2022/23 capital programme be identified to enable the total Climate Emergency Budget to remain at £250,000 from revenue and capital for 2022/23. This is in recognition of the increasing concern over the continuing pattern of severe weather and just recently, the worst storms we have seen in decades. We have an obligation to ensure our assets can be fit for purpose and remain in good order so that when such events occur again, we can continue to operate vital council services for residents, with no or minimal disruption’

This does not affect the existing revenue saving of £125,000 already proposed.”

### LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP AMENDMENT

The Liberal Democrat Group amendment was then formally moved by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, and seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly, as follows:

“That the motion proposed as set out in the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, in minute 129, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan' be subject to the following amendments in part (1):

(e) *Delete final sentence and insert...*

Brackenwood Golf Course currently proposed to cease operation as at 1 April 2022 to continue to operate until 30 September 2022 whilst expressions of interest for community asset transfer are sought and assessed which will provide a reduction of in-year savings of £55k. This will not affect the saving proposal to come into effect as at 1 April 2022, following Budget Council, for Hoylake Golf Course.

(g) (i) *Delete all and insert...*

Whilst it has been proposed that Greasby and Rock Ferry libraries are to remain operating for the purposes of community facility and library centres at a cost of £162k, it remains necessary for the Committee to look at the overall picture and consider the circumstances pertaining to all the other library locations covered by the current consultation.

(g) (ii) *Delete £282k and replace with £113k.*

*Insert new paragraph after "(h) ....Greenbelt where those sites are within it."*

(i) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed "Temporary Closure and Remodelling of Bidston Tennis Centre" be amended to reduce the savings proposals so as to make sufficient monies available to enable Bidston Tennis Centre to continue to operate until 31 March 2023 whilst public consultation and further discussions take place with the Lawn Tennis Association; which will provide a reduction of in-year savings of £114k."

## **GREEN GROUP AMENDMENTS**

The Green Group amendments were then formally moved by Councillor Pat Cleary and seconded by Councillor Jason Walsh, as follows:

### **First Amendment**

"That the motion proposed as set out in the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, in minute 129, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan' be subject to the following amendments in part (1):

*Delete/amend paragraphs (i) to (iv) in item 1 (g)  
Adjust the capital allocation at item 1 (g) (iii) to £750,000*

*Add a new paragraph as follows:*

Any efficiencies from across the Council achieved beyond the proposed savings at the end of Quarter 2 in 2022/23 and which do not conflict with existing budget provisions or contravene specific guidance or criteria will be allocated to support any successful bid to transfer an existing library facility to a community organisation up to a maximum of £250,000.

Ensure that any groups interested in the transfer of community assets are signposted as appropriate to existing, contracted for, support provided by Wirral Council via third parties to assist with the preparation and development of relevant business cases.

*The amended resolution to read:*

- (g) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Reprovision of the Library Service” be amended to reduce the savings proposals so as to make sufficient monies available so as to enable:
- (i) ~~Greasby and Rock Ferry libraries to remain operating for the purposes of community facility and library centres at a cost of £162k ;~~ **£162K to be made available to the Tourism Communities Culture and Leisure Committee to permanently support library provision across Wirral pending a final determination further to the ongoing public consultation on the future of libraries.**
  - (ii) ~~expressions of interest in community asset transfer of the libraries to be supported in assisting the production and implementation of business cases at a cost of £282k ; and~~
  - (ii) an allocation from within the 2022/23 capital programme be identified, where necessary, to enable expressions of interest in community asset transfer of the libraries that may be closed to be supported in assisting the production and implementation of business cases at a cost of ~~£500k~~ **£750k;** and **ensure that any groups interested in the transfer of community assets are signposted as appropriate to existing, contracted for, support provided by Wirral Council via third parties to assist with the preparation and development of relevant business cases; and**
  - (iii) **any efficiencies from across the Council achieved beyond the proposed savings at the end of Quarter 2 in 2022/23 and which do not conflict with existing budget provisions or contravene specific guidance or criteria will be allocated to support any successful bid to transfer an existing library facility to a community organisation up to a maximum of £250,000; and**
  - (iv) libraries currently proposed to cease operation as of 1st July to continue to operate until 1st November 2022 whilst expressions of interest for their community asset transfer are sought and business cases developed and assessed, which will provide a reduction of in-year savings of £470k;

amounting to a reduction in Revenue savings of £162k for 2022/23 and future years **from the budget surplus**, and £470k for 2022/23 only **with the use of the £3m contingency reserve** to support this.

*That the following additional paragraphs be inserted after (g), the remaining paragraphs to be re-lettered (m) to (o):*

- (h) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Redesign of Youth Offer” be deleted. This will remove the proposal to withdraw £100k from the Youth Service budget and deletion of one post from the Youth Service.
- (i) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Increase in Charges for Waste and Environmental Services” be amended to reduce the

savings proposals so as to make sufficient monies available to enable no charge to be levied for new grey bins at a cost of £35K and no additional ERIC bulky waste collection charges to be levied at a cost of £12K making a total cost of £47K.

- (j) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Income Increase on Allotments” be amended to reduce the savings proposals at a cost of £25K.
- (k) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Reduction to the Climate Emergency Budget” be amended to reduce the savings proposals at a cost of £110K amounting to a reduction in revenue savings of £282k for 2022/23 and future years from the budget surplus.”

### **Second Amendment**

“That the motion proposed as set out in the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, in minute 129, ‘Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan’ be subject to the following amendments in part (1):

*That the following additional paragraph be inserted after (g), the remaining paragraphs to be re-lettered as appropriate:*

- (l) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Removal of Individual Member Budgets” be increased to £250K so as to make sufficient monies available to enable the Climate Emergency Budget for 2022/23 to be increased by £66K.”

### **COUNCILLOR JO BIRD’S AMENDMENTS**

Councillor Jo Bird then formally moved her amendments which were both seconded by Councillor Chris Cooke, as follows:

#### **First Amendment**

“That the motion proposed as set out in the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, in minute 129, ‘Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan’ be subject to the following amendments in part (1):

*Insert a new part (f) as follows, with the rest re-lettered:*

- (f) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Closure of Europa Fun/Leisure Pool & Enhanced Gym Offer” be amended to pause re-opening of Europa Fun/Leisure Pool & Enhanced Gym Offer, until 31 March, 2023.



This will not affect the saving proposal to come into effect as of 1st April 2022, following Budget Council.”

## **Second Amendment**

“That the motion proposed as set out in the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, in minute 129, ‘Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan’ be subject to the following amendments in part (1):

*Delete paragraphs (i) and (ii) from part (g) (becomes part (h)) and amend part (iv) (now (ii)) with the following insertions/deletions, as shown:*

(ii) libraries currently proposed to cease operation as of 1<sup>st</sup> July to continue to operate until ~~1<sup>st</sup> November 2022~~ **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023** whilst expressions of interest for their community asset transfer are sought and business cases developed and assessed, which will provide a reduction of in-year savings of ~~£470k~~ **£814K. With the use of £444,000 budget surplus and £370,000 from the £3m contingency reserve for delayed savings to support this.**

~~amounting to a reduction in Revenue savings of £162k for 2022/23 and future years and £752k for 2022/23 only with the use of the budget surplus to support this.”~~

The motion and amendments having all been formally moved and seconded, Councillor Janette Williamson then spoke to her motion.

Councillor Wendy Clements, as Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, then spoke to the Schools Budget element of the proposed budget.

Councillor Tom Anderson, as Leader of the Conservative Group, then addressed the Council on the budget proposals.

Councillors Phil Gilchrist and Pat Cleary then spoke to their respective amendments.

Councillor Steve Hayes, as Leader of the Independent Group, then addressed the Council on the budget proposals.

Councillor Jo Bird then spoke to her amendments and Councillor Chris Cooke spoke as seconder.

At 7.33pm the Mayor adjourned the meeting for a short break.

The meeting resumed at 7.46pm.

The budget proposals and amendments were then debated.

Councillors Jason Walsh, Stuart Kelly and Yvonne Nolan, then spoke to second their respective amendments and motion.

Councillors Jo Bird, Pat Cleary, Phil Gilchrist and Janette Williamson then replied to the debate.

The Mayor then invited Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, to comment in her capacity as Section 151 Officer to the proposals and amendments submitted. She confirmed that all the proposals were achievable and legal and none would change the statutory Council Tax calculations.

The Mayor then invited Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services, to explain the process for voting, having done so, the Council then proceeded to the votes.

**In respect of Councillor Jo Bird's first amendment, the Council divided as follows:**

For the amendment (6) – Councillors J Bird, P Cleary, C Cooke, E Gleaves, H Gorman and Jason Walsh.

Against the amendment (57) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, A Brame, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, K Greaney, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, D Mitchell, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, O Osanlou, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

The amendment was therefore lost (6:57).

**In respect of Councillor Jo Bird's second amendment, the Council divided as follows:**

For the amendment (7) – Councillors J Bird, P Cleary, C Cooke, E Gleaves, H Gorman, K Greaney and Jason Walsh.

Against the amendment (56) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, A Brame, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, D Mitchell, S

Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, O Osanlou, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

The amendment was therefore lost (7:56).

**In respect of the Green Group's first amendment, the Council divided as follows:**

For the amendment (11) – Councillors J Bird, A Brame, P Cleary, C Cooke, P Gilchrist, E Gleaves, H Gorman, S Kelly, D Mitchell, O Osanlou and Jason Walsh.

Against the amendment (52) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, K Greaney, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

The amendment was therefore lost (11:52).

**In respect of the Green Group's second amendment, the Council divided as follows:**

For the amendment (6) – Councillors J Bird, P Cleary, C Cooke, E Gleaves, H Gorman and Jason Walsh.

Against the amendment (57) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, A Brame, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, K Greaney, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, D Mitchell, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, O Osanlou, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

The amendment was therefore lost (6:57).

**In respect of the Liberal Democrat Group amendment, the Council divided as follows:**

For the amendment (14) – Councillors J Bird, A Brame, P Cleary, C Cooke, P Gilchrist, E Gleaves, H Gorman, K Greaney, S Hayes, S Kelly, M McLaughlin, D Mitchell, O Osanlou and Jason Walsh.

Against the amendment (49) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, J McManus, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

The amendment was therefore lost (14:49).

**In respect of the Labour Group budget motion, the Council divided as follows:**

For the motion (52) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, M Booth, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, K Greaney, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

Against the motion (11) – Councillors J Bird, A Brame, P Cleary, C Cooke, P Gilchrist, E Gleaves, H Gorman, S Kelly, D Mitchell, O Osanlou and Jason Walsh.

The motion was therefore carried (52:11).

**The Council were then invited to vote on the Statutory calculations for the Council Tax levels for 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**

The Council voted as follows:

For the motion (63) - Councillors T Anderson, B Berry, J Bird, M Booth, A Brame, D Brennan, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, K Cannon, P Cleary, W Clements, M Collins, H Collinson, C Cooke, T Cottier, T Cox, G Davies, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, E Gleaves, H Gorman, K Greaney, J Green, E Grey, P Hayes, S Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, AER Jones, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, I Lewis, P Martin, M McLaughlin, J McManus, D Mitchell, S Mountney,

Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, O Osanlou, C Povall, L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, T Smith, P Stuart, Jason Walsh, Joe Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, G Wood and A Wright.

Against the motion – none.

The motion was therefore carried (63:0).

**A. Resolved (52:11) – That Council,**

- (1) Having considered the response to the financial proposals forming a draft budget for the purposes of consultation under section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act, set out as:**

**Appendix 1 Report of the Section 151 officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves**

**Appendix 2 Savings, income and efficiencies proposals**

**Appendix 3 Five year Medium-Term Financial Plan**

**Appendix 4 Budget consultation**

**Appendix 5 Policy & Service Committee budget proposals feedback**

**Appendix 6 Pressures/Investments**

**Appendix 7 The position for the Dedicated Schools Grant**

**Appendix 11 Medium-Term Financial Strategy**

**and approved the same as the basis of the formulation of the draft budget subject to the following alterations and additions to the supporting proposals as set out at Appendix 2. These being:**

- (a) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed “Permanent Closure and Demolition of Woodchurch Leisure Centre” be amended to contain an additional element to the proposal that:**

**Demolition of the Woodchurch Leisure Centre will not be progressed whilst a process is undergone to consider the feasibility of any expressions of interest submitted to the Council by 30 September 2022 for the transfer of the Leisure Centre to be operated by a community group or trust. Any transfer of the Leisure Centre will include the earmarked capital costs of £330k for demolition being made available to assist with required capital maintenance works to the site. In addition, if the Directorate is able to make any efficiencies above and beyond the proposed savings at the end of Quarter 1 in 2022/23, that this will be earmarked**

towards project support for any successful bid to transfer the facility to a community organisation. This does not affect the proposed revenue saving.

- (b) That a report be brought as soon as practicable to the Policy & Resources Committee to establish a Community Asset Transfer policy in respect of services and assets identified in the budget proposals, which should be fully integrated with the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and the principles adopted within it.**
- (c) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed "Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Team" be deleted. This will remove the proposal of £50k to review the Anti-Social Behaviour Team as the Committee is acutely aware of the blight that anti-social behaviour has on our residents' lives and the detrimental impact it has on our communities. The £50,000 attached to this saving may be found from a different resource, that being using the Annual Community Safety Grant which the Council receives from the Police and Crime Commissioner which is as yet unallocated for 2022/23. This will both protect our communities and save jobs.**
- (d) That the Director for Neighbourhoods ensure that the forthcoming reports to Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee contain:**

  - (i) a full exploration of all proposals submitted during the consultation period for Hoylake and Brackenwood golf courses, including options for increasing fees, alternative provision and environmental projects;**
  - (ii) delivery plans for a children's activity area in the main swimming pool at Europa Pools on dedicated days and school holidays; and**
  - (iii) a consideration of how future leisure provision may be underpinned by the Community Wealth Building Strategy and is best able to deliver the Wirral Plan objectives to reduce health inequalities in the Borough.**
- (e) That expressions of interest be invited for the transfer of one or more golf courses to a community run body, to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022, to be developed as a business case and assessed by the Council. This will not affect the saving proposal to come into effect as of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, following Budget Council.**

- (f) That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee in respect of a review of the Council's Social Value Policy, which is requested to take place within the coming six months and focussed on an ambition to make it more ambitious in its targets and for it to integrate with the social value framework currently being developed by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.
- (g) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed "Reprovision of the Library Service" be amended to reduce the savings proposals so as to make sufficient monies available so as to enable:
- (i) Greasby and Rock Ferry libraries to remain operating for the purposes of community facility and library centres at a cost of £162k ;
  - (ii) expressions of interest in community asset transfer of the libraries to be supported in assisting the production and implementation of business cases at a cost of £282k ; and
  - (iii) an allocation from within the 2022/23 capital programme be identified, where necessary, to enable expressions of interest in community asset transfer of the libraries that may be closed to be supported in assisting the production and implementation of business cases at a cost of £500k ; and
  - (iv) libraries currently proposed to cease operation as of 1<sup>st</sup> July to continue to operate until 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022 whilst expressions of interest for their community asset transfer are sought and business cases developed and assessed, which will provide a reduction of in-year savings of £380k;

amounting to a reduction in Revenue savings of £162k for 2022/23 and future years and £662k for 2022/23 only with the use of the budget surplus to support this.

- (h) That the savings proposal listed at Appendix 2 headed "Review of Golf Offer" be amended to contain an additional element to the proposal that:

"Closure of these sites will require alternative proposals for use to be brought forward, which the Council intends as landowner will be for leisure or outdoor use only and would be appropriate to the Greenbelt where those sites are within it."

- (i) That an allocation of £125,000 from within the 2022/23 capital programme be identified to enable the total Climate Emergency Budget to remain at £250,000 from revenue and capital for

**2022/23. This is in recognition of the increasing concern over the continuing pattern of severe weather and just recently, the worst storms we have seen in decades. We have an obligation to ensure our assets can be fit for purpose and remain in good order so that when such events occur again, we can continue to operate vital council services for residents, with no or minimal disruption.**

**This does not affect the existing revenue saving of £125,000 already proposed.**

- (j) That an additional proposal be listed at Appendix 2:**

  - (i) To provide additional useable funding by adopting a proposal to reduce the temperature in occupied Council buildings by 2 degrees, which will in general create a reduced energy cost of £113k; and**
  - (ii) That the £113,000 savings identified around council energy costs are re-directed into the Local Welfare Assistance Fund to be ringfenced for fuel poverty in the form of one-off flat payments to those residents in most need of assistance with their fuel bills. Residents across the Borough are currently suffering from a cost of living crisis which means many are choosing between heating and eating. To enable this to be allocated fairly, the Director of Resources is requested to establish a process that will distribute the money in an equitable manner.**

- (k) Members should be kept fully informed of the response to all consultations so that the proposals brought forward tonight are seen in context and that developments involving community asset transfer are assessed by the Policy and Resources Committee in due course.**
- (2) Noted the role of the Change Programme and the approach to currently active Service Reviews in delivering budget proposals.**
- (3) Adopts a Revenue Budget of £330.13m.**
- (4) Approves any surplus funding available from a budget proposal of £330.13m to be transferred to the General Fund.**
- (5) Accordingly:**

  - (a) agrees the summary Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) set out as Appendix 3 and adopts the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out as Appendix 11;**



- (b) adopts the fees and charges set out as Appendix 9, with delegated authority being granted:
    - (i) to the Section 151 Officer to update the Council's Fees and Charges Directory prior to publication before 1 April 2022
    - (ii) to the relevant Director with portfolio, in consultation with the relevant Committee's Chair and Group Spokespersons, to vary existing fees and charges;
  - (c) approves the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2022/23 set out as Appendix 10;
  - (d) set and maintain the level of General Fund Balances at 4% of the Council's net revenue budget, based on a locally determined assessment of the financial risks that the Council may face in the future in accordance with the report of the Section 151 Officer (Appendix 1);
  - (e) authorises, in respect of the Budget Proposals, that the Director with portfolio undertake such actions as they consider necessary to implement the agreed Budget and deliver the savings, income and efficiency proposals developed as part of the formulation process and update Committees accordingly;
  - (f) approves the 2022/23 Schools Budget of £316.2m.
- (6) Delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer, following consultation with the Chair and Group Spokespersons of the Policy and Resources Committee, to do anything necessary to give effect to the proposals contained in the report and to address any funding changes, if any, arising from the final Local Government Finance Settlement once agreed by Parliament.

**B. Resolved (63:0) –**

**It be noted that in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), that Policy and Resources Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 calculated the Council Tax Base 2022/23 for the whole of the properties in its area as 95,172.39 (Item T in the statutory formula).**

**That the following amounts be calculated and approved by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”):**

a) £163,030,300 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act (amended) as the Council Tax Requirement for 2022/23 (item R in the statutory formula). This amount (D) is determined as being the difference between:

(i) £859,505,100 this being the aggregate of the amounts calculated in accordance with Section 31A (2) of the Act (as amended), i.e., the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates that will be charged to a revenue account for the year in performing its functions, that are required to be set aside for contingencies and reserves and required to be transferred from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in the year and

(ii) £696,474,800 this being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31A (3) of the Act (as amended), i.e. the aggregate of the amounts of income that the Council estimates will be credited to a revenue account for the year in accordance with proper practices, the amount of reserves that are estimated to be used to provide for the items referred to in paragraph (a) above, and required to be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in the year.

b) £1,713.00 being the amount calculated in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act (amended) as the Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2022/23. This amount being calculated as item R divided by item T (as above).

c) That in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act that the following amounts are calculated for each valuation band in the area:

**Wirral –Basic Amount of Council Tax per Valuation Band**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>£1,142.00</b>	<b>£1,332.33</b>	<b>£1,522.66</b>	<b>£1,713.00</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>£2,093.67</b>	<b>£2,474.33</b>	<b>£2,855.00</b>	<b>£3,426.00</b>

These amounts being the amounts given by multiplying the amount calculated as the Basic Amount of Council Tax by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings in a particular valuation band which is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D.

It be determined that the amount set in (c) above as the Council's Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2022/23 is not excessive in accordance with the principles determined by the Secretary of State under section 52ZC of the Act (as amended) and that no Referendum to approve the Basic Amount of Council Tax is required. The

principles require a Referendum to be held for any increases of 3% or above, as per the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23. The Settlement included provision for local authorities with social care responsibilities to increase the level of Council Tax by 1% for the Adult Social Care precept; and by up to 2% for the Council element. Where Council Tax is increased at or above 3% a local referendum will be required. The overall proposed increase in the Wirral basic Council Tax is 2.99%, including a Council increase of 1.99%, and is therefore within the Settlement's ceilings.

#### Wirral –Basic Amount of Council Tax Comparison for Referendum

	2021/22	2022/23	Change	Change
	£	£	£	%
Band D	1,663.27	1,713.00	49.73	2.99

To note that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside, the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority issue precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area. This will be as indicated in the tables which when received will be included in updated tables to Council.

#### Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside

A	B	C	D
£157.98	£184.31	£210.64	£236.97
E	F	G	H
£289.63	£342.29	£394.95	£473.94

#### Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority

A	B	C	D
£55.74	£65.03	£74.32	£83.61
E	F	G	H
£102.19	£120.77	£139.35	£167.22

#### Liverpool City Region Combined Authority –Mayoral Precept

A	B	C	D
£12.67	£14.78	£16.89	£19.00
E	F	G	H
£23.22	£27.44	£31.67	£38.00

**That having calculated the amounts for Wirral together with the Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region – Mayoral Precept the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Act hereby sets the following amounts as the total amount of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings.**

**Total Council Tax for Wirral**

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>£1,368.39</b>	<b>£1,596.45</b>	<b>£1,824.51</b>	<b>£2,052.58</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>
<b>£2,508.71</b>	<b>£2,964.83</b>	<b>£3,420.97</b>	<b>£4,105.16</b>

**82 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022-27**

The fourth item requiring approval was in relation to the capital programme for 2022-27.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was –

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 130 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, be agreed in that the following be approved:**

- (1) new bids as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report requiring £8.963 million borrowing for inclusion in the Capital Programme;**
- (2) any new bids supported by grant funding do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority;**
- (3) the Capital Programme 2022/27 (as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report);**
- (4) that the Director of Resources be requested to present updates on the capital programme in accordance with the agreed capital monitoring arrangements.**

**83 CAPITAL FINANCING STRATEGY 2022/23**

The fifth item requiring approval was in relation to the Capital Financing Strategy 2022/23.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was –

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 131 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, be agreed in that the following be approved:**

- (1) the Capital Strategy for 2022/23;**
- (2) the associated Prudential Indicators to be adopted;**
- (3) the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision policy.**

**84 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022/23**

The sixth item requiring approval was in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was –

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 132 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, be agreed in that the following be approved:**

- (1) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2022/2023;**
- (2) the Treasury Management Indicators.**

**85 INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2022/23**

The seventh item requiring approval was in relation to the Investment Strategy 2022/23.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was –

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 133 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February, 2022, be agreed in that the following be approved:**

**the Investment Strategy for 2022/2023 which includes potential investment in the following activity areas:**

- 1. Commercial Property**
- 2. Service Investments: Loans**
- 3. Service Investment: Shares (non-currently held)**
- 4. Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees**

**EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

The eighth item requiring approval was in relation to the external auditor appointment 2023/24 to 2027/28.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was –

**Resolved – That the recommendations contained within minute 118 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 17 January, 2022, be agreed as follows:**

**That Council enter into the option to enter into the procurement exercise led by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors for a period of five financial years from 1st April 2023.**