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## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 9 June 2021

Present: Councillor J Williamson (Chair)

Councillors	T Anderson	J Robinson
	P Gilchrist	P Stuart
	P Cleary	H Cameron
	EA Grey	W Clements
	T Jones	JE Green
	J McManus	L Rennie
	Y Nolan	

Deputy: Councillor M McLaughlin (In place of S Hayes)

### **1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Committee in this municipal year.

### **2 APOLOGIES**

Councillor Moira McLaughlin confirmed the apologies of Councillor Steve Hayes and that she was deputising for him.

### **3 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.

No such declarations were made.

### **4 MINUTES**

The Committee were asked to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous two meetings of the Committee.

In respect of minute 86 (17/3/21) 'Annual Workforce Monitoring Report 2019/20', Councillor Jeff Green raised the issue of the possible re-establishment of the Employment Sub-Committee (as referenced in the fourth paragraph of the minute).

Councillor Phil Gilchrist commented that, as an issue of governance arrangements, it was his understanding that this was to be looked at within the work programme of the Constitution and Standards Committee.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 17 and 24 March, 2021, be approved and adopted as correct records.**

**5 LEADER'S UPDATE**

The Chair gave what she said would be the last update on COVID-19 to come to this Committee, unless there were any drastic changes to the situation in the Borough. Since the lifting of some restrictions on 17 May, 2021 as per the national roadmap, Wirral had seen an increase in cases. For the week ending 5 June Wirral recorded 162 weekly cases, an increase of 86 cases (+113% increase) on the previous 7 days. The largest proportion of cases were in younger adults aged 30-39s

This rise in cases was expected as people mixed more and the more virulent Delta variant became the dominant virus in circulation.

There was some good news in that 76% of the eligible population had had 1 dose of the vaccine and 57.9% had had 2 doses. Wirral had also not seen a significant increase in patients being admitted to hospital. Vigilance in the race between the virus and the vaccine was required and the message remained, hands, face and space.

**6 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

The Chair reported that no questions from either members of the public or Members had been submitted. Nor were there any statements or petitions to receive.

**7 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING UPDATE**

Alan Evans, Director of Regeneration and Place, introduced a report which gave an update on Community Wealth Building.

A prosperous, inclusive economy where local people could get good jobs and achieve their aspirations was a key priority for the Council. Community Wealth Building was a key part of how this would be achieved and make a major contribution to the economic, social and health outcomes of the borough. The report gave an overview of activity to date, together with an overview of actions to accelerate this approach as part of Wirral's Strategic Recovery and forthcoming developments. He highlighted the Dock Branch project using and creating local jobs and apprenticeships and the use of Community Investment Bonds.

In response to Members' comments, he reported that an economic recovery plan would be taken to the Economic Regeneration and Development Committee looking at measures to kickstart the economy, particularly with

regard to retail, leisure and hospitality sectors. With regard to the Liverpool John Moores University research project, this was a work in progress and he would circulate an update on this to all Committee members. He referred to the work undertaken with the procurement team over the last two years since the Community Wealth Building Strategy was launched and in respect of the large construction contracts, doing what the Council could to ensure the use of local labour as much as possible.

With regard to the Keep it Local initiative, he agreed to supply more up to date information than the 2017/18 figures referred to in the report for contract spend and also promised to have this broken down by directorate and Committee. Partner organisations, such as in health had also been encouraged to roll out this initiative. Local businesses registered within the Borough were those which would be classified as local and not franchises of larger businesses.

Members expressed their support for the actions and developments outlined in the report and the Chair expressed her thanks to Rose Boylan for the report.

It was moved by Councillor Pat Cleary and seconded by the Chair, that an addition to the recommendations contained in the report, be made as follows:

‘Committee agrees that Community Wealth Building implications be added as a standard item to future officer reports across all of the Policy and Service Committees of the Council.’

The addition was agreed by assent, and it was therefore -

**Resolved – That,**

- (1) the progress made in driving Community Wealth Building in Wirral to date be noted and Committee endorses the approach going forward;**
- (2) Committee agrees that Community Wealth Building implications be added as a standard item to future officer reports across all of the Policy and Service Committees of the Council.**

## **8 USE OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS FOR CIVIC, COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

David Armstrong, Assistant Chief Executive, introduced a report which provided an update in respect of proposed arrangements for the safe operation of Council meetings for the administrative year 2021/22 giving due consideration to guidance and regulations arising from Covid-19.

In response to comments from Members, he stated that he would be happy to provide the Health and Safety guidance and Public Health England advice used in drafting the report, to Members. The report was purely about current arrangements for Committee meetings, both Wallasey and Birkenhead Town Halls were problematic buildings with regard to not having any air conditioning or ventilation equipment. Both buildings were being kept secure and technical appraisals for both buildings would be brought back to the Committee in a future report. The technical appraisals could take some time, but a work in progress update report would be brought back in the meantime. A Local Plan hearing could take place in the Floral Pavilion building conference suite if the Council was required to host such a meeting.

A Member suggested that Group Leaders could be apprised of the measures in place as to how the two town hall buildings were being kept secure.

A Member suggested the need for a clear analytical examination of accommodation requirements over the next few years, with new Council offices in Birkenhead due to be completed in two or three years' time.

Members expressed some differing views as to the need for a working group to look into the issues raised in the report and also on the future use of the Town Hall in Wallasey.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was -

**Resolved (8:7) – That**

- (1) the arrangements for the safe operation of Council and Committee meetings to continue at the Floral Pavilion for a six-month period from May 2021 be approved, with a potential review in September 2021.**
- (2) the Assistant Chief Executive report back to the Committee on:**
  - (a) a review of the outcome of the HM Government Roadmap Review and revised Covid Regulations and / or Guidance following publication;**
  - (b) the implications of the impact that the Roadmap Review may have on Council and Committee Meetings in the context of the Council's estate; and**
  - (c) consideration of the works and investment required to enable Wallasey and Birkenhead Town Halls to operate Council and Committee meetings going forward in a safe and compliant manner.**

## **APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services, presented a report to the Committee which advised, in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and the terms of the Constitution, on the appointment of Members to the four Sub-Committees of the Policy and Resources Committee for 2021/22, as follows:

- The Senior Officer Appointments and Staffing Sub-Committee
- The Local Plan Steering Sub-Committee (and its Working Group)
- The Finance and Procurement Sub-Committee
- The Shareholder Board

Two of the sub-committees, the Senior Officer Appointments and Staffing Sub-Committee and the Local Plan Steering Sub-Committee (and its Working Group) would not be appointed in accordance with the political balance rules, having been unanimously agreed by the Council in September and October, 2020 that they be exempt from the rules on proportionality.

Responding to a Member's comment on a proposed Employment Sub-Committee, as referred to in minute 4, Vicki Shaw stated that any proposed new sub-committee would be a matter for Constitution and Standards Committee to look at, as clarity would be required on the terms of reference and also on amending the current Constitution.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was -

**Resolved – That this Committee,**

**(1) (a) confirms that the Senior Officer Appointments and Staffing Sub-Committee be appointed for 2021-22 with the terms of reference as referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the Director's report and will consist of:**

- (i) the leader (Chair of Policy & Resources Committee), or in their absence the Deputy Leader (Vice-Chair), who shall chair the Sub-Committee;**
- (ii) a member from each of the other Political Groups represented on the Policy & Resources Committee; and**
- (iii) the Chair, or in their absence the Vice-Chair, of the Policy & Services Committee with terms of reference most closely associated with the post concerned (or if that committee concerned is deemed to be the Policy & Resources Committee then the Deputy Leader (Vice-Chair)).**

**(b) appoint Members to serve on the Senior Officer Appointments and Staffing Sub-Committee in 2021-22, including the appointment of the Chair and named deputies.**

- (2) (a) confirms that the Local Plan Steering Sub-Committee be appointed for 2021-22 with the terms of reference identified with 5 Members of the Policy and Resources Committee, as well as Local Plan Working Group (terms of reference attached as Appendix 1).
- (b) appoint Members to serve on the Local Plan Sub-Committee in 2021-22, including the appointment of named deputies.
- (c) appoint Members to serve on the Local Plan Working Group in 2021-22, including the appointment of named deputies
- (3) (a) confirm that the Finance and Procurement Sub-Committee be appointed for 2021-22 with the terms of reference identified with 5 Members of the Policy and Resources Committee.
- (b) appoint Members to serve on the Finance and Procurement Sub-Committee in 2021-22, including the appointment of the Chair and named deputies.
- (4) (a) confirms that the Shareholder Board be appointed for 2021-22 with the terms of reference identified with 3 Members of the Policy and Resources Committee.
- (b) appoint Members to serve on the Shareholder Board in 2021-22, including the appointment of named deputies.
- (5) authorises the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership and substitute membership of those sub-committees listed in recommendations (1) to (4) above and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members. (Sub-Committee membership attached as an appendix to these minutes).

## 10 CONTAIN OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT FUND UPDATE

Julie Webster, Director of Public Health, introduced a report which provided an update in relation to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, specifically:

- An overview of this temporary fund and Wirral's awarded allocation up to 2021/22.
- The current position in relation to use of the fund to date, and the remainder to be allocated.

- An outline summary of emerging priorities and plans, supporting the ongoing COVID-19 response and population health recovery over the next twelve months.
- Recommendations relating to the development of future spending proposals for this fund, linked to other existing COVID-19 funding and the wider recovery and renewal priorities for Wirral.

Responding to Members' comments, she acknowledged the difficulties faced by some when asked to self-isolate and that work was ongoing, with the help of Community Connectors to support individuals who were finding it difficult. With regard to contact tracing she expressed full support for it being carried out locally and reassured the Committee that no care home residents were being discharged from hospitals without first having a negative COVID test.

Members expressed their thanks to the Director of Public Health and all her team for the amazing work which had they had undertaken over the past 15 months.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was -

**Resolved – That,**

- (1) this Committee notes the contents of the report, the progress made to date and supports the ongoing COVID-19 response;**
- (2) a Member Working Group be established to consist of eight Members (3:2:1:1:1) to give oversight to future spending proposals for this fund, linked to other existing COVID-19 funding and the wider recovery and renewal priorities for Wirral.**

## 11 **2021/22 BUDGET MONITORING AND 22/23 BUDGET PROCESS**

Shaer Halewood, Director of Resources, introduced a report on the 2021/22 budget monitoring and 2022/23 budget process.

The Committee was aware that the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had provided a conditional offer of exceptional financial support (capitalisation directive) for 2021/22 of up to £10.7m. One of the conditions of that offer was that the Council would need to provide evidence from the assurance review of the authority's financial position and its ability to meet any or all of the identified budget gap without any additional borrowing. Therefore, it was vitally important that the Council had robust processes in place to manage and monitor the in-year financial position, to ensure it was reporting a forecast balanced position to the end of the year and that the process for 2022/23 budget setting was underway early so that a budget could be agreed by full Council in March.

The report also outlined the processes and information to be provided for all Policy Committees to monitor their specific budgets and to ensure that the committee budgets remained within the relevant envelope and to take collective responsibility via the Policy and Resources Committee to ensure that the whole Council budget remained in balance at all times, by agreeing mitigating actions to bring the budget back in line, should a deficit be forecast.

The report reminded Members that one of the key documents required to enable the Council to receive approval for exceptional financial support was a balanced five-year medium term financial plan (MTFP). A summary of this was provided in the budget report to the Committee on 17 March 2021 (minute 87 refers). Each Committee, supported by officers, was accountable for identifying, developing and agreeing savings proposals during the summer to ensure a draft balanced budget could be considered by this Committee in October 2021, to enable budget consultation to start in a timely manner in November 2021.

To enable the officer budget proposals to be scrutinised by the Committee, it was recommended that a budget workshop be established to consider the content of the MTFP and make recommendations into the Committee on the viability of the proposals, the robustness of the pressures / growth items and to recommend any additional proposals that the Committee required officers to prepare.

The Chair expressed support for the approach but also the need for a reboot of the commercial strategy providing more income generation for the Council rather than a continual need to find savings and suggested an item on the work programme looking at the Council's appetite for risk with a commercial strategy.

Responding to comments from Members, Shaer Halewood, acknowledged that no single committee had come forward to take on the zero based budgeting approach, and that to minimise the risk of achieving the savings identified all committees could take this on, although there was no assurance that this could happen. After some discussion on the subject, it was suggested that the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee could be the pilot Committee to initially trial zero based budgeting with other committees potentially following on.

Responding to further comments, Shaer Halewood, stated that more detailed information for budget workshops with a breakdown of budget headings would be provided including on bad debt provision. Some of this information was not readily accessible due to the financial systems being based on directorates and not individual committees. Policy and Resources Committee would have oversight of all the Policy Committee proposals in October on which to take decisions as to what went out for consultation in November. Updates would be provided to this Committee before the October meeting.

With regard to the Capitalisation Directive, the MHCLG commissioned external review, due to start this month would conclude in the summer, and any recommendations would be taken forward for the Council's budget setting process for next year. There would be a report on capital receipts with a forecast income of £4.6m from assets for 2022/23 and these would form part of the budget workshop for Members to look at which assets they would be happy to dispose of to form part of next year's budget savings.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was -

**Resolved – That,**

- (1) Committee notes the content of the report and the current forecast position of savings for 2021/22 and the ongoing work being undertaken to mitigate any under achievement due to the National Employers' pay award offer in paragraph 3.14 of the report;**
- (2) Committee notes that it may be possible to reduce the value of exceptional financial support in 2021/22 as a result of utilising some of the Contain Outbreak Management Funding for expenditure currently committed against the Tranche funding, but that this will be monitored during the year and an update provided to the Committee at the quarterly reporting;**
- (3) Committee convene a series of budget workshops to identify any alternative savings / income / reductions in pressures to ensure that the agreed budget savings for 2021/22 can be made as highlighted in paragraph 3.10 of the report;**
- (4) Committee agree for officers to work on the current proposals within this report at paragraph 3.25 for the 2022/23 budget, and tasks officers with developing them into full business cases, where appropriate, for inclusion in the 2022/23 budget proposals to Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval;**
- (5) Committee convene a series of budget workshops to identify any alternative savings / income / reductions in pressures for 2022/23 to ensure that a full suite of costed and deliverable proposals can be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee at its October meeting for approval;**
- (6) Committee agrees to commence the Zero Based Budgeting project within the budget workshops, as highlighted in paragraph 3.19 of the report to contribute to the overall savings target of £170k in 2021/22, commencing with Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee undertaking the process, fully supported by officers to**

**enable a framework to be developed for other Committees to follow.**

**12 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services, introduced a report which advised how this Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme.

The work programme would be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. The report provided the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year and was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Chair suggested that an item on Income Generation be added with a report to come regularly to the Committee.

In response to a Member's comment on the item 'One Wirral Change Programme' due to come to the Committee in July, the Chief Executive agreed that he would ask his officers to look at how this could best be scheduled to enable a thorough examination of the issues and detail the report was likely to contain.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan, it was -

**Resolved – That the Policy & Resources Committee work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year, with the addition of Income Generation, be agreed.**

**13 MOTION - SUPPORT FOR BRITISH VALUES LOCALLY**

The Committee considered a motion, 'Support for British Values Locally', which had been referred from 22 March, 2021 Council meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee that a report was being prepared for the next Constitution and Standards Committee meeting, which would be giving full consideration to reviewing the Flag Flying Policy in line with national guidance.

**Resolved – That Committee notes a report on the matter was to be considered by the Constitution and Standards Committee.**

**14 MOTION - COMMUNITY INVESTMENT BONDS**

The Committee considered a motion, 'Community Investment Bonds', which had been referred from 22 March, 2021 Council meeting.

**Resolved – That this matter be included as part of the Work Programme with a report to a future meeting.**

15 **MOTION - REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

The Committee considered a motion, 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers', which had been referred from 22 March, 2021 Council meeting.

**Resolved – That this matter be included as part of the Work Programme with a report to a future meeting.**

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## MEMBERSHIP OF P & R SUB – COMMITTEES – 2021/22

### SENIOR OFFICER APPOINTMENTS AND STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

To Consist of:

- (1) The Leader (Chair), or in their absence Deputy Leader
- (2) a member of each of the Political groups represented on the Policy and Resources Committee; and
- (3) the Chair, or in their absence the vice chair of the Policy and Services Committee with terms of reference most closely associated with the post concerned

MEMBERS	DEPUTIES
<b>1 Labour</b>  Janette Williamson (Chair)	Yvonne Nolan
<b>1 Conservative</b>  Lesley Rennie	Tom Anderson
<b>1 Liberal Democrat:</b>  Phil Gilchrist	Chris Carubia
<b>1 Independent:</b>  Steve Hayes	Moira McLaughlin
<b>1 Green:</b>  Pat Cleary	Chris Cooke
<b>+ 1 Chair of appropriate Policy and Performance Committee</b> Adult, Social Care and Public Health – Yvonne Nolan Children, YP & Education- Wendy Clements Economy, Regeneration and Development- Tony Jones Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport – Elizabeth Grey Housing – Julie McManus Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure – Helen Cameron	

**FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE  
(5 P & R MEMBERS)**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>DEPUTIES</b>
<b>2 Labour:</b>  Janette Williamson (Chair) Yvonne Nolan	Paul Stuart
<b>2 Conservative:</b>  Tom Anderson Jeff Green	Lesley Rennie
<b>1 Liberal Democrat:</b>  Phil Gilchrist	Chris Carubia

**LOCAL PLAN STEERING SUB-COMMITTEE  
5 Members from P & R Committee**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>DEPUTIES</b>
<b>1 Labour:</b>  Janette Williamson (Chair)	Yvonne Nolan
<b>1 Conservative:</b>  Tom Anderson	Lesley Rennie
<b>1 Liberal Democrat:</b>  Phil Gilchrist	Chris Carubia
<b>1 Independent:</b>  Steve Hayes	Moira McLaughlin
<b>1 Green</b>  Pat Cleary	Chris Cooke

**Local Plan Working Group Members to consist of:**

**Councillors Tony Jones, Tom Anderson, Phil Gilchrist, Harry Gorman and Steve Hayes**

**SHAREHOLDER BOARD**  
**(3 Members)**

<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>DEPUTIES</b>
<b>2 Labour:</b>  Janette Williamson (Chair) Yvonne Nolan	  Paul Stuart
<b>1 Conservative:</b>  Jeff Green	  Helen Cameron

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