

COUNCIL

Monday, 11 July 2022

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Jeff Green) in the
Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Jerry Williams)

Councillors	T Anderson	A Gardner	D Mitchell
	S Bennett	P Gilchrist	S Mountney
	J Bird	E Gleaves	Y Nolan
	M Booth	H Gorman	C O'Hagan
	A Brame	N Graham	A Onwuemene
	D Burgess-Joyce	EA Grey	O Osanlou
	H Cameron	J Grier	S Percy
	I Camphor	P Hayes	C Povall
	C Carubia	A Hodson	S Powell-Wilde
	M Collins	K Hodson	L Rennie
	H Collinson	J Hoey	T Smith
	C Cooke	J Johnson	P Stuart
	T Cox	C Jones	Jason Walsh
	A Davies	M Jordan	S Williams
	C Davies	S Kelly	V Wilson
	G Davies	B Kenny	G Wood
	T Elzeiny	D Kenny	A Wright
	L Fraser	I Lewis	
	S Foulkes	P Martin	

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	P Cleary	J McManus
		P Connolly	J Robinson
		K Greaney	Joe Walsh
		T Jones	J Williamson

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any matters to be determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

No such declarations were made.

19 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor announced that apologies had been received from Councillors Pat Cleary, Paul Connolly, Karl Greaney, Tony Jones, Julie McManus, Jean Robinson, Joe Walsh, Janette Williamson.

The Civic Mayor reported that a number of directors were leaving Wirral Council. It was reported that Alan Evans, Director of Regeneration and Place was leaving the authority after 17 years to explore other opportunities within regeneration, and the Civic Mayor thanked Alan for his work on driving forward the council's regeneration programme including Wirral Waters.

The Civic Mayor reported that Philip McCourt, Director of Law and Governance was also leaving the authority, having secured a role as a consultant at Bevan Brittan LLP. The Civic Mayor placed on record his thanks to Philip for undertaking the difficult role of Monitoring Officer, during which time he had overseen the roll out of the Committee System, the revision of the Constitution and the move to whole council elections.

The Civic Mayor also reported that Julie Webster, Director of Public Health was retiring from her role. It was reported that Julie had been with the Council since moving from the NHS in April 2013 and had been in her current post since August 2017, and the Civic Mayor outlined his admiration for Julie's passion and commitment to Public Health and the contributions she had made during her time which included the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Civic Mayor outlined that he had invited a number of members to the Mayor's Parlour following Council and that he looked forward to seeing them.

The Civic Mayor also informed the Council of the notable events he had attended since the last meeting, which included the 34th visits from guests from Alicante, the recommencement of public citizenship ceremonies and the 10th anniversary of Wirral Food Bank. The Civic Mayor extended his thanks to those who had been involved in the preparation of the Knife Angel launch at Birkenhead Park.

20 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 18 May 2022 and 25 May 2022 had been circulated to Members.

On a motion by the Civic Mayor seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart it was –

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 May 2022 and 25 May 2022 be approved and adopted as correct records.

21 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that no questions had been received from members of the public.

22 STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that no requests to make statements had been made.

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that a request to submit a petition had been received from Councillor Simon Mountney without the requisite notice but that the Mayor had agreed to receive the petition.

Councillor Mountney presented a petition of some 1248 signatures petitioning the Council to not build houses on fields and ex-farmland at Grange Hill in West Kirby.

Resolved – That the petition be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with Standing Order 11.2.

23 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Civic Mayor reported that no questions from Members had been received.

24 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

The first item requiring approval was in relation to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel to amend the Members Allowance Scheme in respect to the Special Responsibility Allowances for Group Leaders and Basic Allowance for Members.

Councillor Tony Cox moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded the recommendations of the Constitution and Standards Committee of 23 June 2022 with regard to the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The Civic Mayor put on record his thanks on behalf of the Council for the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The motion was put and it was –

Resolved (55:1) (1 abstention) – That the Members Allowance Scheme be amended in respect to the level of Special Responsibility Allowance for Group Leaders and the Basic Allowance for all Members, as detailed in the report, effective following July 2022 Council Meeting.

25 WIRRAL PLAN UPDATE

The second item requiring approval was in relation to an update to the Wirral Plan 2021-26 to allow the Plan to be res-set as a four-year plan for the full

term of the new administration following the Whole Council Elections in May 2023. Following feedback and officer clarification at the Policy and Resources Committee on 27 June 2022, the Wirral Plan had been further amended.

Councillor Paul Stuart moved and Councillor Yvonne Nolan seconded the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee of 27 June 2022 with regard to the Wirral Plan Update.

Councillor Tom Anderson moved an amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Andrew Gardner, as follows:

Deletion of paragraph (1)

Delete 'and their approval be recommended for approval by Council in July' in paragraph (2)

Deletion of paragraph (3)

Add new paragraph (2) –

(2) Council resolves that 'Active Travel', as a cross-cutting policy, now be solely reserved to Policy and Resources Committee.

Following a debate, the amendment was put and lost (22:35) (1 abstention).

A further debate took place in relation to the original motion. The motion was put and agreed (34:22) (1 abstention). It was therefore –

Resolved (34:22) (1 abstention) – That

(1) the progress made against the Wirral Plan deliverables as set out in Appendix 2 be noted and request that all future progress of deliverables be presented using the framework in the amended delivery plan agreed at Council (Min. 25, Council, 6th September 2021). This framework is informed by the agreement between the chairs of Economy, Regeneration and Development (now Economy, Regeneration and Housing) Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee (Min. 27, P&R, 30th June 2021).

(2) the refreshed Wirral Plan 2022/23 priorities as set out in Appendix 3 be approved.

(3) officers be requested to work with the Council's political leadership and committee chairs during 2022/23 to develop a new four year plan for adoption following the elections in May 2023.

26 **REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE PANEL**

The third item requiring approval was in relation to the report of the Independent Assurance Panel, established to oversee the Council's improvement in response to the external assurance review commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) which was published in November 2021. The report was a requirement in line with the Terms of Reference of the Panel and would be submitted to DLUHC to provide an independent assessment on Wirral Council's improvement progress over the previous 6 months.

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Tom Anderson, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the report of the Independent Assurance Panel be noted.

27 **WIRRAL COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The fourth matter requiring approval was in relation to the Wirral Council Improvement Plan which had been developed in response to the External Assurance Review commissioned by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and also responded to the report and recommendations arising from the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2022. Further to the endorsement at Policy and Resources Committee on 27 June 2022, a number of minor amendments had been made to the plan to make it more presentable for members and key stakeholders.

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the Improvement Plan be approved.

28 **CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2021-22**

The fifth matter requiring approval was in relation to the Capital Outturn for 2021/22.

On a motion by Councillor Paul Stuart, seconded by Councillor Angie Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That

(1) the additional year-end re-profiling of £30.4m from 2021/22 to 2022/23 be noted.

(2) the financing of the Programme for 2021/22 be noted.

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

29 DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

The Civic Mayor reported that if any questions were in relation to matters for committees where the Chair was not in attendance, a written response would be provided.

Councillor Tony Cox asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey, in respect of minute item 79 of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee seeking confirmation of when the deferred coastal on and off-road parking charges would be coming into effect.

In response Councillor Liz Grey sought the advice of the Deputy Monitoring Officer, who advised that the consideration of the parking charges report had been deferred by the Committee following the threat of a legal challenge in relation to the matter and detailed advice to members was in the process of being prepared. Once the full detailed legal advice was available the officer recommendations would be presented to the Committee again with detailed legal advice.

Councillor Jo Bird asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, in respect of minute item 9 of Policy and Resources Committee seeking confirmation of how much of the underspend on the existing Adult Social Care budget was as a result of providers not paying the Real Living Wage and asking whether that underspend could be reserved for paying the Real Living Wage. The Civic Mayor advised that a written response would be provided.

Councillor Simon Mountney asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey, in respect of minute item 73 of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, clarifying whether work had started on the West Kirby sea defence wall and whether the appropriate consultations and concluded and been published.

In response, Councillor Liz Grey confirmed that she had visited the site with the Environment Agency and work had started with good progress having been made, and that she had been informed that all of the necessary documentation was in order.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor Tony Jones, in respect of minute item 77 of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee, asking why the working group established to oversee the performance of legal support to the regeneration programme had not yet met. The Civic Mayor advised that a written response would be provided.

Councillor Andrew Gardner asked a question of Councillor Liz Grey, in respect of minute item 67 of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, asking the Chair to confirm whether the Parking Strategy fell within the Terms of Reference of the Committee, whether the Strategy was in place and if not when it would be.

In response, Councillor Liz Grey advised that a meeting was due to take place to discuss the remit of the different committees which would determine where Parking Strategy sits, and that a strategy was in development which she felt would be an excellent strategy.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Tony Jones, in respect of minute item 7 of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee, seeking clarification on when there would be explanation as to the technical reasoning behind the withdrawal of the item 'Sale of Land at Cross Lane, Wallasey'. The Civic Mayor advised that a written response would be provided.