



## Constitution and Standards Committee

**Date:** Thursday, 23 June 2022

**Time:** 6.00 p.m.

**Venue:** Wallasey Town Hall

**Contact Officer:** Bryn Griffiths

**Tel:** 0151 691 8117

**e-mail:** bryngriffiths@wirral.gov.uk

**Website:** <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

Please note that public seating is limited, therefore members of the public are encouraged to arrive in good time.

Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact [committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)

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

## AGENDA

- 1. NOMINATION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR OF THE CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

#### **4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2022.

#### **5. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS**

##### **Public Questions**

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Monday 20 June 2022, to the Council's Monitoring Officer ([committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link:

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Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question/statement by the deadline for submission.

##### **Statements and Petitions**

###### Statements

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, Monday 20 June 2022, to the Council's Monitoring Officer ( [committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk)) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.

###### Petitions

Petitions may be presented to the Committee if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Chair. Please give notice of petitions to [committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting.

##### **Questions by Members**

Questions by Members to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

6. **INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT (Pages 5 - 20)**
7. **WIRRAL COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT (Pages 21 - 42)**
8. **MEMBER STEERING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 43 - 78)**
9. **STATUTORY AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES (Pages 79 - 84)**

**Terms of Reference**

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## CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 13 April 2022

Present: Councillor P Gilchrist (Chair)

Councillors C Cooke S Williams  
C Jones P Stuart  
S Foulkes AER Jones (In  
place of J  
Williamson)

### 34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Janette Williamson, Councillor Moira McLaughlin, Professor Jones and Mr McCosh.

### 35 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were declared.

### 36 MINUTES

**Resolved – That the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2022 be agreed.**

### 37 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

The Chair reported that there had been no public questions, statements or petitions submitted.

### 38 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Director of Law and Governance introduced the report which presented the Committee with the recommended changes to the Constitution for operation as of the 2022/23 municipal year. It was reported that the Governance Working Group had undertaken a review of the Council's committee system following its first year of operation, and the resulting changes required to the Constitution to enable the outcome of the review to be implemented were presented to the Committee.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Chris Cooke, it was moved that the recommendation in the report be agreed, with the addition of "in particular, members' attention be drawn to the new committee structure, the overview and scrutiny ways of working, the revised petition scheme, the detailed procedures covering matters of urgency, the

reconsideration of overview and scrutiny function, the procedures for establishing sub-committees, along with the steps intended to inform members as they form agendas, and the enhanced role for Policy and Resources.”

The motion was put and agreed by assent.

A further motion was moved by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes, that “the Committee thanks all members of the Governance Working Group who have helped bring matters to a conclusion in time for the new municipal year”.

The motion was put and agreed by assent. It was therefore –

**Resolved – That**

- (1) Council be recommended to adopt the constitutional revisions as set out in Appendix A, in particular, members’ attention be drawn to the new committee structure, the overview and scrutiny ways of working, the revised petition scheme, the detailed procedures covering matters of urgency, the reconsideration of overview and scrutiny function, the procedures for establishing sub-committees, along with the steps intended to inform members as they form agendas, and the enhanced role for Policy and Resources.**
- (2) the Committee thanks all members of the Governance Working Group who have helped bring matters to a conclusion in time for the new municipal year.**

**39 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2022-23**

A report of the Director of Law and Governance was considered which recommended draft dates for Council and Committee meetings for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Members discussed the matter of holding committee meetings on days of national celebration and during school holidays.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Gilchrist, seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart it was –

**Resolved – That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/23 municipal year, subject to Policy and Resources Committee being rescheduled from 14 February 2023 to 15 February 2023 and officers being asked when designing the schedule in**

**future, to continue to take steps to avoid school holidays and significant dates.**

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## Constitution and Standards Committee

23 June 2022

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME: UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The role of the Independent Remuneration Panel, under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, is to make recommendations to the Council as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which allowances should be available and the amount of those allowances. Under the Regulations the Council is required to undertake a full review of the Members Allowances Scheme every four years but the Panel can also meet at any time at the request of the Council to consider any issues asked of the Panel.

This report provides the Committee with an update in respect to the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel and requests the Committee to refer to Council for decision a proposed change to the Members Allowances Scheme in respect to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) for Group Leaders and in respect to the Basic Allowance for Members both to be implemented from the 2022 municipal year.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The Constitution and Standards Committee is recommended to:

1. Refer to Council for decision the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation to amend the Members Allowance Scheme in respect to the level of Special Responsibility Allowance for Group Leaders and the Basic Allowance for all Members, as detailed in the report.
2. Recommend to Council that, if adopted, the new scheme become effective following July 2022 Council Meeting.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Panel was convened under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021). These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the Local Government Act 2000, require all local authorities to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Allowances Panel to review and provide advice on Members' allowances.
- 1.2 All councils are required to convene their Allowances Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their allowances scheme and they must have regard to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 1.3 The Panel met over the summer and autumn to consider two key issues at the request of the Constitution & Standards Committee, namely, the level of Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Smaller Groups and the provision of an SRA for Vice Chairs of Committees. The Panel at their first meeting also determined that they wished to re-visit the issue of the level of basic allowance provided to Members given that the Committee system had been in place for over a year.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The Panel was not restricted when considering the options in relation to the format of the scheme or the amount of the Allowances that are being presented to the Council for approval. The Panel had regard to:-
  - The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
  - The Government's "Guidance on Consolidated Regulations on Members' Allowances for Local Authorities in England".
  - A comparison of the level of Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances across Merseyside.
  - The current Members' Allowances Scheme for Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.
  - The results of the anonymous Member Survey
  - Job descriptions for the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairs, Vice Chairs and Group Spokespersons as detailed in the draft Council Constitution.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Panel membership is as follows:-
  - Peter Bounds (Chair)
  - Helen Brennan
  - Jenny Chapman-Brown
  - Tony Green
  - Steve Griffiths

- Keryn Malthouse

The Panel met on the following dates:

- 26 August 2021
- 9 September 2021
- 30 September 2021
- 4 November 2021
- 20 March 2022

## Proposals

### 3.2 Vice-Chairs Special Responsibility Allowance

A survey of those Members who were Vice Chairs in the 2020/21 municipal year and the 2021/22 cohort of Vice Chairs was undertaken. Following the initial consideration of the survey results the Panel determined that they wished to undertake a similar survey with Group Spokespersons so that they could better differentiate between the two roles. Based on the outcomes of the two surveys the Panel was of the opinion that there was insufficient evidence at the present time to warrant recommending an SRA for the role of Vice- Chair.

### 3.3 Group Leader & Deputy Group Leader Allowance

The Panel met with three of the five Group Leaders at their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021. They further had regard to written submissions from the Group Leaders who were not in attendance.

The Panel identified for consideration three options for which they sought the views of the Group Leaders. The Panel noted that all Group Leaders were in favour of SRA's being proportionate to that of the Leader of the Council. Having regard to the comments made and following a detailed discussion, the Panel determined that a combination of the initial options presented would form the best solution to make provision for an increase to the level of SRA paid for the leader of the 4<sup>th</sup> largest group. The recommendation of the panel is detailed in the table below with additional guidance in the event of any two political groups having an equal number of Members.

Leader of the Council	£24,000	100%
Leader of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 4 members)	£14,400	60%
Leader of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 4 members)	£7,200	30%
Leader of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 4 members)	£4,800	20%
Leader of Other Small Groups (minimum of 4 members)	£1,200	5%

Deputy Leader of the Council	£12,000	100%
Deputy Leader of the Largest Group ( if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	£12,000	100%
Deputy Leader of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 6 members)	£7,200	60%
Deputy Leader of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 6 members)	£3,600	30%
Deputy Leader of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Largest Group (minimum of 6 members)	£2,400	20%
Deputy Leader of Other Small Groups (minimum of 6 members)	£600	5%

- In the event of political groups having an equality in number of members, the total of the combined allowances would be shared between the group leaders i.e if there were two smaller groups with the same number of members, the leaders would receive 50% of the combined total for leader of those groups
- The same would apply for Deputy Leaders of groups, should they both have a minimum of 6 members

### 3.4 Basic Allowance

The Panel was informed of the Council decision at the Annual General Meeting in September 2021 not to accept the recommendation of the Panel to increase the basic allowance from £8,712 per annum to £9,148 per annum (an increase of 5%) effectively restoring it to a level close to that which applied in 2012. The Panel noted that the Council agreed that the allowance should be revised annually in line with the JNC Index.

At the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021, the Panel met with the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Conservative Group and the Leader of the Independent Group. The Panel were presented with written information from the Liberal Democrat and Green Group Leaders as well as up to date information relating to the Basic Allowances paid by other Local Authorities in the region.

Following the discussion with Group Leaders and having regard to the level of Basic Allowances paid by other Local Authorities, the Panel determined that they wished to recommend again to the Council that an amendment be made to the Allowances Scheme to increase the level of Basic Allowance from the present level of £8,864.92 per annum (an increase of 1.75% compared to 2021-22 in accordance with the index linked to the annual pay award for local government employees under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services national agreement) to £9,308.17 per annum (an increase of 5%).

The reasons for this recommendation were to set the Basic Allowance at such a level to encourage and make it possible for everyone to seek election to Council. The Panel was further of the opinion that the figure set in 2012 was no longer fit for purpose and did not accord with the outcomes of the All Member Survey undertaken during the course of the last review by the Panel. The Panel further noted from discussions with Group Leaders and Council Officer that Members were committing

more of their time to Council business following change of governance arrangements in September 2020.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The total Members Allowance Scheme in respect to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances is £806,536. It should be noted that an individual Member can only claim one SRA. A number of Councillors often perform two roles which would entitle them to an allowance. Being a Deputy Group leader whilst being a Committee Chair is one such example. Consequently, it is unlikely that there will be 100% draw down from the budget. As a result, there is no requirement to increase the Members' Allowances Budget.
- 4.2 As per the previous recommendation of the Panel in 2020, should the Council agree to the recommendation to increase the basic allowance, the increase is offset by a reduction in the overall cost of special responsibility allowances from the previous governance arrangements, reflecting the shift in decision-making responsibility from portfolio holders to all Council members consequent on the introduction of the committee system.
- 4.3 The Members' Allowances Scheme will form part of the Council's normal budget setting considerations.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council must appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to review its Scheme of Members' Allowances in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 5.2 Under the provisions of the 2003 Regulations, local authorities can exercise local discretion as to the amounts to be paid under their Scheme. Local Authorities must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Panel in determining allowances matters although it is a decision for Members whether or not to adopt the recommendations detailed in the report.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 There are no staffing or resource implications arising from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 If the Council does not approve the revised Allowances Scheme, Members will not receive any increase in either the Basic Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance as recommended by the Panel.

## 8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The Panel met with the Group Leaders and Deputies where they were able to attend. Furthermore, an anonymous electronic survey was sent to all Vice Chairs and Group spokespersons from the 2020/21 municipal year and the current cohort.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct equality impact implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no community wealth implications arising out of this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Steve Fox**  
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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Updated Members’ Allowances Scheme

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003  
The Government’s “Guidance on Consolidated Regulations on Members’ Allowances for Local Authorities in England”.

A comparison of the level of Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances across Merseyside.

The current Members’ Allowances Scheme for Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council.  
Job descriptions for the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairs, Vice Chairs and Group Spokespersons as detailed in the draft Council Constitution.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee	26 Sept 2019
Council	14 May 2019
	28 September 2020



# CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL

## Part 6

### MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Wirral Borough Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, hereby makes the following scheme:

1. This scheme may be cited as the Wirral Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme and shall have effect from the Annual Council Meeting on 28 September 2020

2. In this scheme, "councillor" means a member of the Wirral Borough Council who is a councillor;

"total estimated allowances" means the aggregate of the amounts estimated by the Director of Resources at the time when a payment of basic allowance and special responsibility allowances is made, to be payable under this scheme in relation to the relevant year, and for this purpose any election under paragraph 6 (Renunciation) shall be disregarded;

"year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.

#### 3. Basic Allowance

3.1 Subject to paragraph 7, for each year a basic allowance of £9308.17 shall be paid to each councillor. This allowance shall be revised annually in accordance with the index linked to the annual pay award for local government employees under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services national agreement.

#### 4. Special Responsibility Allowances

4.1 For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in schedule 1 to this scheme. These allowances shall be revised annually in accordance with the index linked to the annual pay award for local government employees under the National Joint Council for Local Government Services national agreement.

4.2 Subject to paragraph 6, the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.

4.3 No councillor shall be entitled to receive more than one payment by way of special responsibility allowance.

## 5. **Childcare and Dependants' Carers' Allowance**

- 5.1 An allowance not exceeding £8.72 per hour (or such other sum as may be prescribed as the National Minimum and National Living Wage) shall be payable towards or in respect of actual expenses necessarily incurred in arranging for the care of a child or other dependant by virtue of a member's attendance at a meeting of the authority, or any other meeting that is authorised by the authority, or designated as an approved duty under this Scheme, provided that no such payment shall be made to a relative or a member of the claimant's own household.

## 6. **Renunciation**

- 6.1 A councillor may by notice in writing to the Director of Law and Governance (or an officer authorised on their behalf) elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

## 7. **Part-year Entitlements**

- 7.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a councillor to basic and special responsibility allowances where, in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or that councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.
- 7.2 If an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a councillor is entitled by way of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance, then in relation to each of the periods:
- (a) beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect, or
  - (b) beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the year,

the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in the period bears to the number of days in the year

- 7.3 Where the term of office of a councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.



- 7.4 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (7.1), and the term of office of a councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in sub-paragraph (7.2) (a), the entitlement of any such councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the basic allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office as a councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.
- 7.5 Where a councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which they have such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.
- 7.6 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (7.2), and a councillor has during part, but does not have throughout the whole, of any period mentioned in sub-paragraph (7.2) (a) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in that period during which they have such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.

## 8. Travel and Subsistence

### Travel Costs

- 8.1 Travel costs incurred by members in performing "approved duties" as specified in Schedule 2 to this Scheme shall be reimbursed at the prevailing public transport rates, provided that the use of taxis or members' private motor vehicles may be permitted where public transport is either not available, or the journey by public transport would be likely to result in unreasonable delay.
- 8.2 Payment for the use of members' private motor vehicles shall be made at the rate of 45 pence per mile.
- 8.3 The allowance payable for the use of motorcycles or bicycles shall be in accordance with the rates prescribed by the scheme of conditions of service applicable to the authority's employees generally.

### Subsistence Payments

- 8.4 Members necessarily absent from home for a period in excess of four hours (but not including absence overnight) shall be entitled to receive a payment in respect of the purchase of meals at the following rates relevant to the time of day:-

Breakfast allowance (before 11 a.m.)	£7.00
Lunch allowance (12 noon to 2 p.m.)	£10.00

Tea allowance (3 p.m. to 6 p.m.)	£3.00
Evening meal allowance (after 7 p.m.)	£12.00

- 8.5 Notwithstanding the rates specified at (8.4) above, members shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the actual cost of meals taken on trains provided this is reasonable and supported by an official receipt, subject to the following limitations:

4-8 hours	cost of 1 main meal
8-12 hours	cost of 2 main meals
Over 12 hours	cost of 3 main meals

- 8.6 In cases where a meal is provided free of charge by an outside organisation, the entitlement to a subsistence payment shall be reduced by an amount equivalent to the rate prescribed for a meal relevant to the time of day, namely:

Breakfast	£7.00
Lunch	£10.00
Tea	£3.00
Evening Meal	£12.00

- 8.7 Members absent from home for a continuous period of 24 hours or more (necessarily including an overnight stay) shall be entitled to claim, in respect of the purchase of meals and overnight accommodation, reimbursement of the actual costs incurred (where supported by receipts) up to a maximum of:

Standard rate	£116.00
Central London/LGA Annual Conference Rate	£153.00

For the purposes of this section “Central London” is defined as the City of London and the London Boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.

- 8.8 The rates of allowances set out in clauses 8.4 to 8.7 above shall be revised from time to time in accordance with the rates prescribed by the scheme of conditions of service applicable to the authority’s employees generally.

## 9. Payment of Allowances

- 9.1 Allowances payable under this scheme shall be paid in equal monthly instalments of one-twelfth of the annual amounts specified in paragraph 3 above and Schedule 1 hereto.
- 9.2 Payment of allowances and expenses under this scheme shall be made by the Director of Resources by Bankers’ Automated Clearing Services (or such other method of payment as may be acceptable to the Council) on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of every month (except on Bank Holidays, when arrangements for earlier payment may be made).

9.3 Where a payment of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme in respect of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance would result in the councillor receiving more than the amount to which, by virtue of paragraph 7, they are entitled, the payment shall be restricted to such amount as will ensure that no more is paid than the amount to which they are entitled.

## 10. Other Allowances

10.1 Remuneration for Independent Persons sitting on the Constitution and Standards Committee will be as follows:-

Four Persons: payment of £30 per meeting or per three hours.

## SCHEDULE 1

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances.

	£
Leader of the Council (Chair of P&R)	24,000
Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice Chair of P&R)	12,000
Leader of the Largest Group (if not Leader of the Council)	14,400
Leader of the Second Largest Group (Comprising of at least 4 members and if not Leader of the Council)	14,400
Leader of the Third Largest Group (Comprising of at least 4 members and if not Leader of the Council,)	7,200
Leader of the Fourth Largest Group (Comprising of at least 4 members and if not leader of the Council)	4,800
Leader of Other Groups (Comprising of at least 4 members and if not Leader of the Council)	1,200
Deputy Leader of the Largest group (if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	12,000
Deputy Leader of the Second Largest group (Comprising of at least 6 members and if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	7,200
Deputy Leader of the third largest group (Comprising at least 6 members and if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	3,600
Deputy Leader of the fourth largest group (comprising of at least 6 members and if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	2,400
Deputy Leader of Other Groups (Comprising of at least 6 Members and if not Deputy Leader of the Council)	600
Mayor of Wirral	12,000
Deputy Mayor of Wirral	2,400
<u>Committee Chairs:</u>	
Chairs of the Policy and Services Committees (x6)	9,600
Finance Sub Chair	4,800
Chair of Planning Committee	4,800

Chair of Regulatory and General Purposes Committee / Licensing Act Committee (combined Chair role)	4,800
Chair of Audit and Risk Management Committee	4,800
Chair of Constitution and Standards Committee	4,800
Chair of Pensions Committee	3,600
Chair of Partnerships Committee	3,600

**Outside Organisations:**

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority representative (x2)	1,834
Liverpool City Region Transport Committee*(x4)	5,675
*Increase this SRA by 4,433 if also made a Lead Member OR increase this SRA by 2,660 if made Opposition Spokesperson	
Observer on Mersey Ferries Board	Expenses
Observer on Beatles Story Board	Expenses

**SCHEDULE 2****APPROVED DUTIES**

Attendance at any of the following is designated as an approved duty for the purpose of the payment of travel and subsistence allowances:-

- (a) meetings of the Council, committees (including advisory committees), subcommittees, member panels or working parties;
- (b) meetings of associations of local authorities (including committees, special interest groups or working parties) of which the council is a member;
- (c) meetings of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority;
- (d) meetings (including annual site inspections) authorised from time to time by the Cabinet and to which representatives of more than one political group have been invited;
- (e) formal site visits (organised in addition to the annual tour of inspection) by members of the Planning Committee;
- (f) meetings by the Party Leaders or their nominees with Government Ministers where at least two political groups have been invited;
- (g) meetings by the Party Leaders or their nominees at offices of the European Union in pursuit of Council policies (and when accompanied by officers);
- (h) attendance by, Party Leaders or Deputies and Committee Chairs or spokespersons (or their nominees) at briefings, meetings and events convened by a Chief Officer to deal with Council business;

- (i) Court hearings (e.g. on Licensing or other matters) where the member is attending on behalf of the Council;
- (j) Public Inquiries (when the member is representing the Council);
- (k) Training courses for Councillors included in an approved programme, as agreed by the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee;
- (l) attendance at seminars or presentations where this is authorised by a committee (for members of that committee only);
- (m) meetings of the following bodies to which the Council makes appointments or nominations:-

**(A) LEADER (Chair of Policy & Resources Committee)**

- Liverpool City Region Cabinet
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Panel
- Liverpool City Region Boards
- Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership - Director
- Local Strategic Partnership Assembly
- NW Regional Leaders' Board (Nomination)

**(B) ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

- Age UK
- Arch Initiatives - Wirral Management Committee
- Cheshire and Wirral NHS Partnership Trust: Appointed Governor
- Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust
- John Lloyd Corkhill Trust
- Merseyside Society for the Deaf
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust - Governors

**(C) CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION**

- Birkenhead Sixth Form College Governing Body
- C E Gourley VC Endowment Fund
- Lower Bebington School Lands Foundation
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- Oaklands Centre Management Committee
- St Bridget's Educational Trust
- West Kirby Residential School
- Wirral Metropolitan College Governing Body (Nomination)

- Wirral Play Council Executive Committee
- Wirral Play Partnership

**(D) ECONOMY, REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Chrysalis (General Partner) Limited - Director
- Conservation Area Advisory Committees
- Lairdside Communities Together
- Mersey Maritime Group Ltd
- Mersey / Dee Alliance
- North Birkenhead Development Trust (Director)
- Wirral Chamber of Commerce
- Wirral Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Wirral Council for Voluntary Service - Management Committee

**(E) ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND TRANSPORT**

- Active Travel Forum
- Liverpool Airport Consultative Committee
- Local Government Association Coastal Issues Special Interest Group
- Manchester Port Health Authority
- Mersey Port Health Committee
- Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority
- Merseytravel Committee of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- National Parking Adjudication Service Joint Committee

**(F) HOUSING**

- Magenta Living – Board members
- Magenta Living: Community Fund Working Group
- Magenta Living: Governance and Membership Committee
- Prima Management Board

**(G) TOURISM, COMMUNITIES, CULTURE & LEISURE**

- Beechwood Play and Community Centre Joint Management Committee
- Charing Cross Play, Youth and Community Centre Joint Management Committee
- Gautby Road Play & Community Centre Joint Management Committee
- The Lauries Centre
- Leasowe Play, Youth & Community Association Joint Management Committee
- Mayer Trust, Bebington
- Merseyside Cultural Forum

- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
- Merseyside Police and Crime Panel
- New Ferry Village Hall Joint Management Committee
- Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society
- Seacombe Community Association (Council)
- Tam O'Shanter Cottage Trust
- Wirral Community Safety Partnership
- Wirral Council and Riverside Challenge Fund Working Group
- Wirral Multicultural Organisation
- Woodchurch Community Centre Joint Management Committee

**(H) REGULATORY AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

- North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

**(I) SUPPORT SERVICES**

- Birkenhead Market Limited/Birkenhead Market Services Limited, Director
- Local Government Association: General Assembly
- North Western Local Authorities Employers' Organisation
- SIGOMA (LGA Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities)
- West Kirby Charities

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## CONSTITUTION & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday 23 June 2022

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION REPORT: WORKING EFFECTIVELY IN THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to comment on the actions taken in response to the findings detailed in the Working Effectively in the Committee System report which was produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) following a visit to Wirral Council in November/December 2021. That report can be seen at Appendix 1.

The actions taken in response to the findings can be viewed at Appendix 2.

The recommendations contained in the report aim to support Members in implementing all aspects of the Wirral Plan.

This is not a key decision.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Constitution and Standards Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider and comment on the report; and
2. Authorise the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair and Group spokespersons of Constitution and Standards Committee, to finalise the Council's response and submit it to the Local Government Association for consideration and feedback.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 Following a review of Governance in 2019, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council at their Annual Full Council Meeting on 28 September 2020 formally moved from the Cabinet Leader Governance Model to the Committee System. The Council further approached the Local Government Association (LGA) in the summer of 2021 to give a view on whether the Committee System is working effectively, and to support improvement. This work was completed in November and December. The outcomes can be viewed at Appendix 1. The Council's response is detailed at Appendix 2.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 No further options have been considered as the report is presented for consideration and comment to enable a full response to be sent to colleagues at the LGA.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The report issued by the LGA set out the context in which their work was completed following the publication of two assurance reports from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 2 November 2021 and the key issues highlighted, as well as the methodology undertaken through Sector Led Improvement. Their report also identified several considerations for the Council to take forward which may support improved effectiveness and efficiency within their Governance, and the delivery of wider recommendations identified through national Assurance Reports.
- 3.2 The LGA held sessions with the Political Groups as follows:
- 3 November 2021 – Discussion with Conservative Political Group.
  - 4 November 2021 – Discussion with Liberal Democrat Political Group.
  - 16 November 2021- Discussion with the Green Party-Political Group.
  - 18 November 2021 – Discussion with Independent Group Members.
  - 11 and 21 November 2021 – Discussions with Labour Political Group.
- 3.3 The full findings of the review can be viewed in the final report, however there were a number of key issues which are summarised below:
- There was widespread recognition and agreement that there was a need to reduce the number of Committees at the Council. Seven Policy and Service Committees creates challenges of coordination and increases the risk of fragmentation.
  - It was acknowledged that there is a need for Committees to prioritise issues most relevant to budget delivery, including prioritizing these issues within agendas and reports.
  - it was also recognised that one of the key factors which had frustrated local groups was the approach and use of Full Council Meetings. This frustration included recognition that this was not conducive to supporting the principles of collaboration or credibility, and that improvements in this forum would be beneficial to both relations across Groups and the Council's reputation.

- the length and structure of officer's reports. With this in-mind, the Council should set out a programme of report writing training and support learning from best practice across the sector. This training should encourage officers to prioritise and consistently present financial issues presenting information in a format that is easily understood by people who do not have a technical finance background.
- It was felt that many papers presented to Committee included delegated decisions which were being presented 'to note' and by considering wider sector-norms on these issues, the Council may benefit by supporting the empowerment of Officers, reducing the administrative burden, and allowing greater political focus on priority issues.

3.4 The suggested officer response to the findings is detailed at appendix 2 of the reports and members are invited to consider and comment on the proposed responses.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Legal implications associated with this report have been addressed and considered through the adoption of the revised Constitution at Annual Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 All Members of the Council were sent a copy of the report and feedback issued by the LGA. Group Leaders were invited to comment on the initial draft before final publication.

8.2 Sessions were held between each Political Group and the LGA throughout November 2021.

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equality implications arising from this report.

#### **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environment or climate implications arising from this report.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

11.1 There are no direct Community Wealth Building implications arising from the report.

### REPORT AUTHOR:

Steve Fox  
Head of Democratic and Member Services  
stevefox@wirral.gov.uk

### APPENDICES

1. Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council: Working Effectively in the Committee System
2. Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council: Draft response to the LGA Report: Working Effectively in the Committee System

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Constitution  
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Local Government Finance Review – Wirral Council  
External Assurance Review Governance - Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	28 September 2020
Constitution and Standards Committee	17 February 2022
Constitution and Standards Committee	13 April 2022


# Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

Working Effectively in the Committee  
System

November - December 2021

Feedback report





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# 1. Background and Scope

Following a review of Governance in 2019, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC) voted at their Annual Full Council Meeting on 28 September 2020 to formally move from the Cabinet Leader Governance Model to the Committee System.

The Council approached the LGA in the summer of 2021 to ensure that the Committee System is working effectively, and to support improvement. This work was completed in November and December. The LGA recognise that the Committee System of the Council has only been in place for a little over 12-months, and that there will be natural refinements that the Council will wish to consider reflecting the learning and experiences of this first year. The LGA also recognise that the decision of the Council to move to the Committee System is legally bound, and therefore intended this work to be 'future facing' and to support practical changes to the existing System, rather than revisiting the original review of 2019 or the merits of differing models.

Therefore, the primary aims for this work were to support Councillors at WMBC to consider improvements to the Council's governance and the identification of considerations for the Council to take forward. It was also intended that this programme would:

- Refresh Councillors on the principles and practice of working effectively in the Committee System.
- Reflect on the current practice and approach of WMBC.
- Consider how the System is performing against design principles.
- Develop a shared understanding of recommendations and improvements to support improvement.
- Identify the necessary improvement as set-out through Assurance Reports commissioned through the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

This report sets out the context in which this work was completed following the publication of two assurance reports from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 2 November 2021 and the key issues highlighted, as well as the methodology undertaken through Sector Led Improvement. This report also identifies several considerations for the Council to take forward which may support improved effectiveness and efficiency within their Governance, and the delivery of wider recommendations identified through national Assurance Reports. Finally, it should be noted that this work does not represent a technical review of the Council's Constitution which would require additional legal input, but instead is designed to support facilitated reflection and a 'bottom-up' approach to developing locally owned recommendations for

improvement based upon the experience of the Council, the expertise of external Peers, and the current context of the organisation.

## 2. Context

WMBC was one of a small number of Councils to request exceptional financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic, asking for part capitalisation of its revenue budget through a formal application to DLUHC. This financial support was agreed in principle, subject to the outcome of an independent and external Assurance Review.

These reviews were announced on 30 June, with the Council's finances being reviewed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and its governance being reviewed by the previous Chief Executive of Darlington Council Ada Burns. These reports were published on 2 November 2021, setting out the methodology used, detailed findings, and a series of recommendations for the Council's improvement.

These reports contained further recommendations regarding the governance of the Council, including strengthening financial governance, reviewing/reducing the number of Committees, and revisiting the role of the Council's Decision Review Committee. This work has been incorporated into the LGA's programme and included in conversations with Councillors at WMBC. Therefore, it is hoped that this report will provide further triangulation of these findings and support the Council to act on their recommendations. These Reports also called for the establishment of an Independent Improvement and Assurance Panel, and the LGA has been invited to sit on this Panel.

Finally, WMBC has agreed to undertake a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in early 2022 in line with the recommendation in the assurance review. This will provide a further opportunity to engage with Councillors and Officers on progress against recommendations, and to consider wider issues of culture and capacity which may also relate to the Council's Committee System.

## 3. Current Committees of Wirral Metropolitan Council

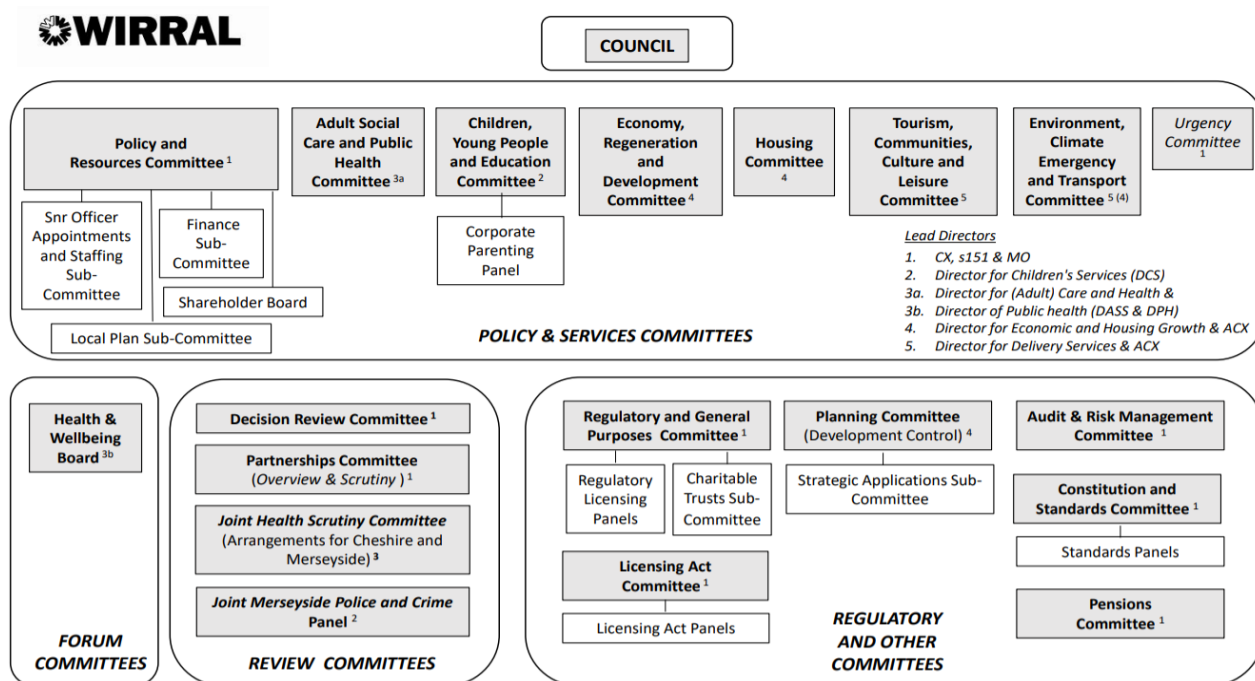
Whilst this work does not represent a formal review of the Council's Constitution, it is still important to set out an overview of the current governance arrangements of the Council, including the design principles which underpin it.

- **Accountability** – responsibilities and accountability should be clear, within the Council and to residents.
- **Credibility** – governance should assist good decision making, which involves proper and early scrutiny.



- **Transparency** – the decision-making process should be open and transparent to Members and to the public.
- **Collaboration** - decision making should be collaborative across parties and less combative.
- **Timeliness** – decision making should be both quick and effective and, when necessary, allow for urgent decision making.

WMBC Committee System includes seven Policy and Service Committees operating beneath Full Council and supported through a number of sub-committees. The Council also operates further Statutory Committees for a range of regulatory and judicial functions, including Planning, Regulatory, Licensing and Pensions. Finally, the Council runs a number of review Committees, including statutory Health Scrutiny, their involvement with wider Merseyside Police and Crime Panel, as well as a locally operated Decision Review Committee. These are illustrated in the diagram below:



The full list of Policy and Service Committees operated by the Council is set out below:

- Policy and Resources Committee.
- Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.
- Children, Young People and Education Committee.
- Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee.
- Housing Committee.
- Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure.
- Environment, Climate Change Emergency and Transport Committee.

## 4. Methodology & Approach

This work was completed in three-key stages: desktop research, structured conversations with all Political Groups of the Council, and a cross-party discussion on emerging findings and considerations for improvement.

The desktop research for this programme included consideration of the DLUHC assurance reports and analysis of their relevant findings and recommendations. This took place alongside analysis of other Local Authorities that operate the Committee System, including their size and structures in comparison to WMBC. This research also involved ensuring that LGA Peers were familiar with the structures and systems that operated in WMBC, as well as analysis of recent online meetings to observe decision making through these forums.

This research was used to support focus-groups with each of the five political groups at the Council. These focus groups were led by LGA peers working across the sector, selected for their experience of the Committee System and prior knowledge of WMBC. All Elected Members of the Council were invited to these sessions, and approximately two-thirds of Councillors took place in these conversations. Sessions were held on the following dates:

- 3 November 2021 – Discussion with Conservative Political Group.
- 4 November 2021 – Discussion with Liberal Democrat Political Group.
- 16 November 2021- Discussion with the Green Party-Political Group.
- 18 November 2021 – Discussion with Independent Group Members.
- 11 and 21 November 2021 – Discussions with Labour Political Group.

These discussions followed the same session plan to ensure consistency of approach and included common questions to support the triangulation of answers. These meetings were held over MS Teams and conducted virtually. It was important for these sessions to provide a safe space for political discussion and input, and therefore, they were led by the following political peers with the same Officer support being provided by the LGA.

- Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton (Labour Peer) – Leader of Barnsley Council.
- Cllr Mike Wilcox (Conservative Peer) – Staffordshire County Council.
- Cllr Sue Shanks (Green Peer) – Brighton and Hove City Council.
- Cllr Jayne McCoy (Liberal Democrat Peer) – London Borough of Sutton.

Following these sessions information was collated into key findings, themes, and considerations. This was feedback to the Council on 2 December 2021. This final

session was attended by all Group Leads, Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. This session was also attended by the Council's Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Resources, Monitoring Officer, and Head of Legal and Democratic Services. This meeting was chaired by Cllr Sir Stephen Houghton and attended by the LGA Peers and Officer that supported this work. The presentation that was used to lead this conversation is available upon request, but the key sections and conversations are covered within this report below.

## 5. Findings & Considerations:

Strong and successful governance is built on two key elements, the first is the formal processes and structures as set-out in the Council's Constitutions, setting out the rules and regulations for both Councillors and Officers. However, as important to these formal aspects is the environment in which they are applied, including the wider organisational culture, approaches to collaboration, and relationships.

### First Principles and Key Issues:

It should be noted that during the discussions with the five political Groups of the Council that there was a clear shared appetite across all to support improvement in how the Committee System is working for WMBC. This included a recognition for the Council to respond positively and proactively to the findings of the external assurance reports. There was also a common understanding from these discussions that the Committee System of the Council was still nascent having only been implemented in 2020, and therefore recognition that improvement would be iterative and would naturally include the lessons learnt through the first-12 months of working in this model. It should also be noted that there were several agreed positions that were outlined through these individual group sessions, which illustrate some emerging consensus which should be built on as far as possible.

During each respective discussion with political groups, participants were asked to describe how the Committee System of the Council currently felt from their perspective. Through this question we heard positive replies such as 'inclusive', 'democratic' and 'participatory', highlighting the engaging and open aspects of the system that exist. However, this question also received responses including 'duplication', 'over-complicated' and 'workload' highlighting some of the frustrations which were raised regarding the repetition that exists within the system and some of the challenges that are created regarding timeliness of decision making. This tension between inclusion and pace is a natural challenge that exists and requires further consideration as the Council moves forwards.

These individual sessions with political groups also asked participants to set out how the Committee System is delivering against the design principles included within the Council's Constitution. This question asked participants to rank performance against the principles from one (poorly) to five (well). The table below shows the aggregated scores submitted:

Objective:	Score:
Accountability	4.18
Transparency	3.90
Credibility	2.5
Collaboration	2.4
Timeliness	1.8

It should also be noted that whilst scores differed across the political groups, the results were provided in the same order. This highlights a consensus across Councillors regarding the performance of the system and areas of improvement. These results also illustrate the tension that exists between the principles of accountability and transparency, and the practice of delivering swift and timely decisions through the system, and a recognition to improve the latter.

When these findings were discussed in a cross-party setting there was a shared appetite across the political groups to prioritise the timeliness of decision making to support this improvement. There was also a commitment across groups to respond positively to the findings of external assurance reports in a collaborative fashion.

## Strategic Issues

There was widespread recognition and agreement that there was a need to reduce the number of Committees at the Council. Seven Policy and Service Committees creates challenges of coordination and increases the risk of fragmentation. It was also noted this number of Committees made WMBC an outlier to other upper-tier, Unitary and Metropolitan Committee Systems with Kingston upon Thames having five, the London Borough of Sutton and Reading both having four. Within this context, it was recognised that a reduction would support coordination and would reduce the risk of fragmentation.

Therefore, there was agreement across groups to review and reduce the number of Committees, as well as recognition that this aligns to the following recommendation from the DLUHC Governance Review: *“Members to work with the Director of Law and Governance to review the Committee system to reduce the number of Committees, assign authority to the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of financial recovery, and significantly reduce the related administrative burden”*. When taking this recommendation forward, Group Leaders were keen that this work would be completed

'in-the-round' ensuring that changes were mindful of the need to prioritise financial recovery, but also considered alignment of potential mergers to avoid the risk of individual Committees having too big a remit or containing disparate issues and services. This review of the number of Committees should also consider the Council's approach to proportionality on sub-Committees and working groups. The Council currently takes a quorate approach to these groups, but this places a disproportionate demand on a small group of Councillors, and creates risks of work not being able to progress if meetings are not quorate.

Given the financial context of the Council, it was acknowledged that there is a need for Committees to prioritise issues most relevant to budget delivery, including prioritizing these issues within agendas and reports. This consideration could be enhanced through Member Development with Committee Chairs to ensure that this is appropriately reflected in Committee work-programmes. However, this focus on financial issues will require concerted effort from Officers, to ensure financial issues are clearly and concisely set-out in reports, and that the Committees are provided with regular, timely and accurate financial reporting on issues of service spend and the delivery of savings. This aligns with section 3.21 of the DLUHC Governance Review which highlights the risk of lengthy reports risking distraction from key decisions.

Throughout this programme of work, the LGA heard differing perspectives on the roles and functions of the Policy and Resources Committee. These ranged from presenting the Committee as being 'above' the other Committees and playing a leading role on issues of budget and strategy, to being alongside and equal to other Committees (as illustrated on the diagram in section 3.0). There is an urgent need for the Council to clarify this relationship, and it was recognised that there would be benefits to empowering the Committee to lead on issues of financial recovery (within the budget parameters set by Full Council). This would enable the Committee to sign-off implementation plans and to monitor their implementation. This would take forward the findings from section 3.20 and 3.24 of the DLUHC Governance Review which called for Policy and Resources to lead on the budget process and delegate to the other Committees as appropriate. This will also require collaboration across Committees to ensure that there are not contradictions between them. This cross-Committee working will also be required to avoid the risk of 'silo-thinking' and avoid slippage on the financial decisions made by the Policy and Resources Committee.

It was noted that the Council currently operates three different approaches to scrutiny. This includes the natural scrutiny and debate that takes place on a decision prior to it being voted on in Committee, the opportunity for a decision to be referred out of delegation subject to 40% of the Committee voting against it, as well as the use of a Decision Review Committee. The Decision Review Committee (DRC) has only been used once in the past 12-months, to challenge an item which had already been

discussed at Full Council within WMBC's Budget Framework. The DRC was highlighted through the assurance reports as a risk to the Councils progress and as being at odds with the aims of their new model: "*the Decision Review Committee poses a risk to swift decision making, and it is difficult to understand the rationale for retaining a feature of the strong Leader and Cabinet model in a Committee system*". Therefore, it was agreed across Groups to revisit the need for this Committee considering the Scrutiny provided through existing discussion and referral levels.

Finally, it was also recognised that one of the key factors which had frustrated local groups was the approach and use of Full Council Meetings. This frustration included recognition that this was not conducive to supporting the principles of collaboration or credibility, and that improvements in this forum would be beneficial to both relations across Groups and the Council's reputation. Support for this forum could include ensuring that there is greater clarity across Members regarding the processes and procedures for agenda setting, and the potential benefits of all member training on issues of code of conduct. There should also be consideration of the support required to Elected Members, including the Chair and Deputy Chair to ensure that there is consistent understanding regarding the forum of Full Council, and this could include development and training (including the Council's code of conduct).

## Practical Issues

Throughout this programme of work, it was clear that there was respect between Officers and Councillors of WMBC, this included a great deal of recognition from Councillors for the challenges that Officers faced working in the new system. The Committee System has increased the number of Officers who interact directly with Members, and therefore further thought should be given to the training and development needed for staff to work in this space. From experience elsewhere, the LGA have found that this training can often be most effective when jointly developed and delivered. The Council should also consider the content of their Member-Officer protocol to ensure that relationships are well articulated and defined to reflect the working practice that they wish to have in-place in WMBC. This issue was also identified by DLUHC Governance Review (section 4.5) which highlighted the current 'transactional nature' of these relationships.

One of the core elements to this relationship is how information is presented to Members, and through this work we received feedback from Councillors regarding the length and structure of officer's reports. With this in-mind, the Council should set out a programme of report writing training and support learning from best practice across the sector. This training should encourage officers to prioritise and consistently present financial issues presenting information in a format that is easily understood by people who do not have a technical finance background.

The Council may also wish to consider releasing capacity within their Committee System. One example of this was the involvement of Group Leaders in the Council's Appointment Panel which has met 12 times over the past 12 months. The Council should consider the appropriate level of Councillor involvement in this Committee (and the appointments for which it is most necessary) and bring practice in line with wider norms across the sector. This comparison should also extend to Councillor involvement in disciplinary matters, as the time requirements of Councillors through existing Committees means that these create an additional demand.

Finally, given the need to ensure that the Committee System of the Council focuses on financial recovery, supporting timely and empowered decision making, there is a need for the Council to consider their scheme of delegation. It was felt that many papers presented to Committee included delegated decisions which were being presented 'to note' and by considering wider sector-norms on these issues, the Council may benefit by supporting the empowerment of Officers, reducing the administrative burden, and allowing greater political focus on priority issues. In discussions across Groups there was a shared willingness to consider these issues against practice elsewhere.

## 6. Considerations

The considerations below are set-out for the Council to incorporate in their reforms to the Committee System through the appropriate local forums and Committees. This list will support further dialogue across the Council and will act as a useful mechanism for checking progress through both the Independent Assurance Panel and the 2022 Corporate Peer Challenge. These considerations are not set-out in priority order, but instead reflect the findings as outlined in section 5.0.

- 1: The Council should look to build on the areas of political consensus highlighted within this report to continue to respond positively to the findings of the external assurance reports of DLUHC.
- 2: Recognising the shared frustrations across all Groups on issues of timeliness and collaboration, these design principles should be given primacy when considering improvements to the Committee System.
- 3: All Groups were keen to promote the credibility of the Committee System. This requires joint work across groups in joint forums, most notably, Full Council, and consideration for the required changes for these meetings to be used more productively.

- 4: There is a willingness from all Groups to reduce the number of Committees in operation. However, this work needs to be completed holistically to ensure that there are similar scopes and scales to Committees, and to avoid the risk of work being unevenly distributed or poorly aligned.
- 5: There is a need to make sure that the agendas and work programmes of Committee meetings focus on the priority issues facing the Council. Given an average meeting length of approximately two-hours, issues of financial recovery need to be prioritised as far as possible.
- 6: This focus on finance issues will require officers to ensure that these matters are presented concisely and clearly in reports. Furthermore, this will also require timely and accurate finance reporting to present appropriate information to Councillors to support strategic discussions.
- 7: The Council should revisit their approach towards Scrutiny and consider the appropriateness of the Decision Review Committee given the existing systems in place.
- 8: There is a need to empower the Policy and Resources Committee to provide leadership on the delivery of the Council's budget framework and act as a central and coordinating forum for reporting and monitoring progress. This may require changes to the Committees Terms or Reference but will also need careful communication with Councillors both on and beyond the Committee (including Member Development). This also needs to recognise that there will still be a need for cross-Committee working and collaboration to avoid silo-thinking and mitigating the risk of push back against financial decisions made by Policy and Resources.
- 9: The Council should consider their practice against sector norms to ensure that they are appropriately aligned on issues of Group Leader input on staff appointments, Councillor input on disciplinary proceedings, and the Council's Financial Scheme of delegation. These practical issues have the potential to free up significant capacity within the Committee System, and support more empowered decision making.
- 10: Central to improvements to any governance system is how information is presented to Councillors. There is a need for the Council to set out further training for officers to ensure that there are consistent, clear, and concise reports being provided to Committees to support Members in their roles.

## 7. Next Steps:



Following the cross-Party meeting with Group Leaders and LGA Peers on 2 December, the materials from this session were distributed to the Council to support dialogue and discussions of the Council's Constitution and Standards Committee Working Group. This Group is leading locally on changes and reforms to the Council's Constitution and wider Committee System.

This Working Group considered a report of the Director of Law and Governance on 14 December that referred to this work to further support local discussions, and it has been agreed this report will be formally taken to this Working Group for their meeting on 9 February 2022.


The LGA appreciate that the Council's approach to reviewing their Committee System arrangements is multifaceted and includes other key strands alongside this review, such as:

- **Assurance Reports:** Recommendations included within the External Assurance Review completed by CIPFA and Ada Burns.
- **Questionnaire:** A locally developed questionnaire which was distributed to all Councillors and several key officers at the Council. The findings of this questionnaire were presented to the Working Group at their January Meeting.
- **External Comparisons:** Officers of the Council have completed comparative analysis on the Committee Structure and System of the Council to other Upper Tier, Unitary and Metropolitan Authorities that have the Committee model.

This approach will enable the Council to bring together different sources of information and will support local and well-informed conversations on these issues. This Report will provide further support and reflections for these conversations, however, it is essential that this work and these reforms are locally owned.

Finally, WMBC have agreed to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in early 2022, and this will offer a natural opportunity to review the Council progress with regards to improvements to the Committee System. This report will also be provided to the Peer Challenge Team to support their understanding of the Council's governance. The Peer Team will be able to consider the response of the Council to these findings and their response to external recommendations and will also set out further issues and changes which will support the Council's improvement.

## 8. Contact Details:



The point of contact for this work at WMBC was Steve Fox (Head of Member and Democratic Services, ([Steve.Fox@Wirral.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Fox@Wirral.gov.uk) and 07786976315). For further information on the content of this report or this programme of work, please contact either of the following LGA Officers.

- Matthew Dodd ([Matthew.Dodd@Local.gov.uk](mailto:Matthew.Dodd@Local.gov.uk) or 07780 226 852)
- Claire Hogan ([Claire.Hogan@Local.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Hogan@Local.gov.uk) or 07766 250 347)

**Appendix 2 : Wirral Council Response to the Local Government Association Report: ‘Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council: Working Effectively in the Committee System (Dec 2021)’**

<b><u>LGA Recommendation</u></b>	<b><u>Response</u></b>
<p>The Council should look to build on the areas of political consensus highlighted within this report in order to continue to respond positively to the findings of the external assurance reports of DLUHC.</p>	<p>Fortnightly Group Leader &amp; Deputy meetings are held and chaired by the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>Group Leader away days were held in Dec 21, Jan 22, Mar 22. Further meetings are planned for the 22/23 municipal year.</p>
<p>Recognising the shared frustrations across all Groups on issues of timeliness and collaboration, these design principles should be given primacy when considering improvements to the Committee System.</p>	<p>Committee System Review has been undertaken. The revised Constitution was formally adopted at Annual Council May 22.</p> <p>Constitutional changes have been supported at an officer level via the implementation of a refreshed report sign off process. Key Decision reports signed off at SLT.</p>
<p>All Groups were keen to promote the credibility of the Committee System. This requires joint work across groups in joint forums, most notably, Full Council, and consideration for the required changes for these meetings to be used more productively</p>	<p>It is proposed that a review of the Council Meeting Procedure Rules will be undertaken by the Governance Working Group in the 22/23 Municipal Year.</p>
<p>There is a willingness from all Groups to reduce the number of Committees in operation. However, this work needs to be completed holistically to ensure that there are similar scopes and scales to Committees, and to avoid the risk of work being unevenly distributed or poorly aligned.</p>	<p>The adoption of a revised constitution in May 2022 saw the dissolution of the Housing Committee, Partnerships Committee, and the Decision Review Committee. The process for ‘dissent’ was also removed and replaced by the opportunity for the P&amp;R Committee to ‘reconsider’ decisions made by Policy and Services Committee (in respect to key decisions)</p>

	<p>Policy Committees are able to conduct their own reviews on any issues which fall within the remit of the Committee.</p> <p>Commitment to further review the Committee System at an appropriate time in the 22/23 Municipal year.</p>
<p>There is a need to make sure that the agendas and work programmes of Committee meetings focus on the priority issues facing the Council. Given an average meeting length of approximately two-hours, issues of financial recovery need to be prioritised as far as possible.</p>	<p>The agenda for any Committee meeting will be carefully managed by the Chair and Group spokespersons. The Constitution stipulates that the items of business that require a decision should relate to budget and policy decision, performance monitoring or which are necessary to discharge their overview and scrutiny functions.</p>
<p>This focus on finance issues will require officers to ensure that these matters are presented concisely and clearly in reports. Furthermore, this will also require timely and accurate finance reporting in order to present appropriate information to Councillors to support strategic discussions.</p>	<p>This will be achieved through frequent meetings of the Finance Sub Committee.</p> <p>Policy Committees have been encouraged to Chair and Group Spokes budget monitoring groups</p>
<p>The Council should revisit their approach towards Scrutiny and consider the appropriateness of the Decision Review Committee given the existing systems in place.</p>	<p><b>See above in respect to constitutional changes</b></p>
<p>There is a need to empower the Policy and Resources Committee to provide leadership on the delivery of the Council's budget framework and act as a central and coordinating forum for reporting and monitoring progress. This may require changes to the Committees Terms of Reference but will also need careful communication with Councillors both on and beyond the Committee. The new role for this Committee may also require additional Member Development.</p>	<p>The Budget process already agreed by P&amp;R in March for 23/24 which details the interaction between P&amp;R, Finance Sub, and the Policy Committees.</p> <p>The Council has a robust New Member Induction Programme and a Member Portal which hosts a library of training materials. A Member Learning &amp; Development Strategy 2023-27 is currently being developed to align with the Council's electoral cycle. Furthermore, a designated Principal Officer in Democratic Services has been designated responsibility for co-ordinating and leading Member Development. Quarterly update reports will</p>

	be submitted to the Member Support Steering Group.
The Council should consider their practice against sector norms to ensure that they are appropriately aligned on issues of Group Leader input on staff appointments, Councillor input on disciplinary proceedings, and the Council's Financial Scheme of delegation. These practical issues have the potential to free up significant capacity within the Committee System, and support more empowered decision making.	The Constitution has been amended to reflect this with the terms of reference for the Senior Staffing Appointments Sub Committee amended.
Central to improvements to any governance system is how information is presented to Councillors. There is a need for the Council to set out further training for officers to ensure that there are consistent, clear and concise reports being provided to Committees to support Members in their roles.	A Committee Co-ordination and Oversight Group has been created, chaired by the Head of Democratic & Member Services. The purpose of the Group is to offer support and advice to report authors and to QA reports before they are released to Committees. The report sign-off process has been refreshed in respect to key and non-key decisions. External validation was sought in respect to the new processes and a positive response was secured. Quarterly updates will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team.

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## CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

23 June 2022

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>MEMBERS SUPPORT STEERING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT MAY 2021 – APRIL 2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable the Constitution and Standards Committee to be appraised of the work to date and ongoing planned work of the Members Support Steering Group. The Constitution and Standards Committee will receive this report at the first meeting of each municipal year.

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. The Members Support Steering Group helps Members in their implementation of the five key themes within that plan:

- Sustainable Environment
- Brighter Futures
- Inclusive Economy
- Safe and Pleasant Communities
- Active and Healthy Lives

This is not a key decision.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Constitution and Standards Committee is recommended to endorse and comment on the report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The report provides the Members of the Constitution and Standards Committee with the opportunity to review, appraise and to contribute to the work undertaken by the Members Support Steering Group during the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Not to submit a report to Committee. This was discounted as it was deemed appropriate to appraise the Constitution & Standards Committee on the work undertaken by the Steering Group.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Members Support Steering Group was established by the Constitution and Standards Committee at their meeting on 24 February 2021. The newly formed Group was a product of the merger of the former Member Support Group and Member Equipment Steering Group.

#### **3.2 Terms of reference**

The role of the Member Support Steering Group is to:

- provide cross-party strategic leadership to member learning, development, support so as to enable members to help deliver the Refreshed Wirral Plan 2021-2026 and its themes;
- provide cross-party strategic leadership to the member ICT offer to ensure that equipment, software and systems used by members enables them to effectively undertake their duties;
- Provide oversight on the development of the Member Portal;
- Ensure all members have the requisite skills, knowledge and attributes to be able to meet their varied duties and responsibilities;
- Actively promote, encourage and oversee member culture, development and support;
- Explore, research, gather insight, examine and develop and implement new innovative methods, approaches and initiatives to improve member culture, development and support.
- Drive continuous improvement in member culture, development and support within political groups.
- “Provide an overview of support to members in fulfilling their roles and duties as Councillors.
- Oversight of the Member Welfare Policy



### 3.3 **Membership**

Membership is appointed from the Constitution and Standards Committee and comprises of seven members, appointed by reference to political proportionality. Membership for the 2021/22 municipal year was as follows:

Councillors:            P Gilchrist  
                              S Hayes  
                              K Greaney  
                              J Johnson  
                              P Stuart  
                              S Williams

### 3.4 **Frequency of Meetings**

The Group met on three occasions during the previous municipal year in July 2021, November 2021, and March 2022. It is proposed that the group meets in July, November, January and March during the current municipal year.

### **Work undertaken to date**

#### 3.5 **Members Portal**

The Members Portal was rolled out to all Members December 2020 supported by a programme of training. Training on how to use the Portal is offered to all Members annually as part of the New Member Induction Programme. The Portal offers a number of facilities for Members to utilise but a primary goal on implementation was to make the process of reporting cases and casework management more efficient and user-friendly for Members. During the previous municipal year, Members of the Steering Group were kept updated with developments to portal including: Migration of reporting functions, the implementation of a notes feature and the sign posting to Members training resources.

3.6 Alongside reporting cases the Portal also serves as a domain for Members to gain all the relevant information they need to undertake their role. A highlight is the training library recordings and clips which is regularly updated.

#### 3.7 **New Member Induction Programme**

3.8 The Members Support Steering Group were instrumental in contributing to the new Member Induction Programme for 2022/2023 as attached as an appendix to this report (appendix 1). They also reviewed and approved updates to the material circulated to new members upon election night (Appendix 2). The programme was highlighted received positive comments from both the Independent Panel and from colleagues from the Local Government Association during the recent Peer Challenge. It will be further reviewed (alongside the wider Member Learning &

Development Offer) to ensure sure that it aligns with the 2023-2027 Whole Council electoral cycle.

3.9 For 2022/2023 a number of new training opportunities were included in the programme:

- All Member Finance
- Pensions
- Committee System and Decision-Making
- Corporate Parenting
- Carbon Literacy
- Mental health awareness and wellbeing
- Social Media

### 3.10 **Member Welfare Policy**

It had been recognised and communicated through the Constitution & Standards Committee at their meeting on 23 June 2021 (minute 7 refers) that there were insufficient structures in place to support Councillor's wellbeing. The Committee agreed that Member Welfare should be included in the terms of reference for the Member Support Steering Group and tasked the Group to both develop and have oversight of policy.

3.11 A project group was established made up of officers from Organisational Development and Democratic & Member Services Officer and an offer was presented to the Member support steering group on 3 March 2022 and signed off. and is attached to this report as appendix 3.

3.12 To inform the policy, a survey was circulated to Members on the matter and the results are attached in appendix 4. As a result of feedback received, officers are looking at options for further safeguarding in in respect of lone working. More information on this will be delivered in due course.

### 3.13 **Members Development Strategy 2023-2027**

A project group has been established to design a Members Development Strategy 2023-2027 in order to provide Members with the tools and skills they need to undertake their role as councillor both within their ward and in the committee room. Updates will be provided to the Member Support Steering Group and the intention is to present the final strategy to the Feb 2023 meeting of this Committee for approval and adoption.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The majority of Member Training is provided in house by council officers, however there have been a number of training events that have been provided by external individuals or agencies. Should there be a cost implication the Members Support Steering Group is consulted and if the majority do not agree to the spend an ad -hoc meeting can be arranged to discuss concerns.
- 4.2 During the financial year (1 April 21 – 31 March 22) the total cost for Members Training was £4,332. This included individual training courses as requested by Members and costs for external trainers providing sessions for all Councillors.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Members Development is included within job packages of two members of staff working in Democratic Services with HR and organisational development support .

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 If the Members Support Steering Group fails to meet and be consulted regularly there could be ineffective oversight on development of individual members.

#### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Members of the Steering Group are consulted and reported to during meetings in the municipal year and as and when necessary

#### **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 There are none arising directly from this report

#### **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Where possible training is delivered virtually as a means to prevent unnecessary carbon emissions in car journeys.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Elected Members are committed to improving the lives of the people across Wirral and that is at the core of the work we do. Wirral Council will continue to develop our Social Value agenda in all procurement where relevant and proportionate to ensure that businesses we contract with, are supporting our local communities and adding value beyond their contractual requirement.

**REPORT AUTHOR: Vicky Simpson**  
**Senior Democratic Services Officer**

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email: victoriasimpson@wirral.gov.uk

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – New Member Induction Programme May 22  
Appendix 2 – Member Induction Booklet  
Appendix 3 – Member Welfare Policy  
Appendix 4 – Results from Member Survey

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Role of a Councillor – Local Government Association

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor – University of Birmingham

Highlighting Political Leadership – Local Government Association

Constitution

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

## MAY 22

### NEW MEMBER SPECIFIC

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 BANK HOLIDAY	3	4	5 Local Elections	6	7
8	9	10 Member's Induction 10:00am – 16:00. Floral Pavilion	11	12	13 MS teams/ mod.gov Members Portal training – new – MS members Ms TEAMS, 2PM	14
15	16 The Role of The Independent Panel 4-5pm MS Teams	17 'Being a Councillor' – Code of Conduct Training –5-7pm Wallasey Town Hall	18	19	20	21
22	23 Finance Training 5-7pm- MS Teams, 6pm	24	25	26 Chair's Training , 4:00pm – 5:30pm. MS Teams	27	28
29	30 Audit & Risk Management Training 10-12am – MS Teams,	31 Planning Committee Training 5-7PM MS TEAMS				

OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS

MANDATORY TRAINING

MANDATORY FOR THOSE APPOINTED TO COMMITTEE AND DEPUTIES

## JUNE 22

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 BANK HOLIDAY	3 BANK HOLIDAY	4
5	6 Committee System and Decision Making 5-7pm, MS Teams	7 Licensing Training , 4 - 5pm , Wallasey Town Hall	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16 5pm – carbon literacy 6pm – mental health awareness and wellbeing – MS Teams	17	18
19	20	21 Corporate Parenting 4 - 5pm Wallasey Town Hall	22 Pensions Committee Training 4:30- 5:30pm – Wallasey Town Hall	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

**NEW MEMBER SPECIFIC**

**OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS**

**MANDATORY TRAINING**

**MANDATORY FOR THOSE APPOINTED TO COMMITTEE AND DEPUTIES**

**NB – TEAMS INVITATIONS WILL BE SENT OUT IN ADVANCE TO YOUR COUNCILLOR EMAIL ADDRESS**

*Wirral Council's*

# **INDUCTION GUIDE**

## **FOR NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS**

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2022/2023





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## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

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The initial welcome and introduction is one of the most important aspects of a new Council Member's induction and so we encourage you to attend our Welcome Meeting on the 10 May 2022 as the first step on your journey as a Wirral Council Member.

Your term of office is for one year. On 21 March 22, an extra ordinary meeting of the Council resolved to move to Whole Council Elections commencing at the Local Authority Elections scheduled for May 2023. means that following the election scheduled for May 2021, elections will then be held every four years.

Members are crucial to the Wirral Plan 2025. You bring with you very different experiences, skills, and knowledge of everyday life. That is why we like to spend time getting to know you and letting you know how we can work as one team to deliver a better future for the people of Wirral.

We have produced this Induction Guide to support you in your first few months as a Wirral Councillor. Our aim is to include the basics of what you need to know: from committee meetings, decision making, and key contacts within the Council, through to the IT that is vital for fulfilling your role.

As a new Member of Wirral Council, you will be offered a range of development opportunities, in a planned and supported way, to help you through your first few months. You will have the opportunity to attend relevant learning and development events to support you in your role as a Ward Councillor and as a Community Leader for Wirral. You will also be offered the opportunity to discuss your own personal development plan and to form a Learning and Development Programme.

**Congratulations on your election and welcome to your new role as a Wirral Councillor.**



**Paul Satoor**  
Chief Executive

### The Councillor's Role

As a democratically elected local representative, you have a unique and privileged position - and the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

The role of a Councillor means that every day you will be expected to balance the needs of your local area, your residents and voters, community groups, local businesses, your political party (if you belong to one) and the Council. All will make legitimate demands on your time - on top of your personal commitments to family, friends, and workplace.

As the local elected representative, you will engage with residents and groups on a wide range of different issues and take on an important community leadership role. At the Council, your overriding duty is to the Borough as a whole and you will contribute to the development of policies and strategies, budget setting, and be involved in scrutinising decisions. You may also make decisions on planning or licensing applications.

### Representing your local area

A Councillor's primary role is to represent their ward and the people who live and work in it.

Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the Council. As well as being an advocate for your local residents and signposting them to the right people at the Council, you will need to keep them informed about the issues that affect them.

In order to understand and represent local views and priorities, you need to build strong relationships and encourage local people to make their views known and engage with you and the Council. Good communication and engagement are central to being an effective Councillor.

As a local Councillor, your residents will expect you to:

- respond to their queries and investigate their concerns (casework);
- communicate Council decisions that affect them;
- know your patch and be aware of any problems;
- know and work with representatives of local organisations, interest groups and businesses;
- represent their views at Council meetings; and
- lead local campaigns on their behalf.

### Community leadership

Community leadership is at the heart of modern local government. Councils work in partnership with local communities and organisations - including the public, voluntary, community and private sectors - to develop a vision for their local area, working collaboratively to improve services and quality of life for residents. May 2019 saw the launch of a new model for community engagement that enables Councillors to work in a way that responds to the needs of their local community.

### Developing Council Policy

Councils need clear strategies and policies to enable them to achieve their vision for the area, make the best use of resources and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities. As a Member of the Council, you will contribute to the development of these policies and strategies, bringing the views and priorities of your local area to the debate. How you do this will depend on the committees and forums you are appointed to. The policies contained in the Council's Policy Framework must, however, be signed off by the Council on which every Councillor sits.

### Further responsibilities

Alongside the opportunities to improve life in your local communities there are additional responsibilities that fall upon you as you exercise your role.

You commit to adhere to a Code of Conduct, you must make balanced and legal decisions, you must adhere to the law when handling personal information, and more.

Our Induction Programme is intended to highlight these potential pitfalls and to protect you from the consequences.

### The 21st Century Councillor

A major study has been undertaken looking at the current context and demands on Councillors at a time of budget reductions and the changing public sector landscape.

The study looked at the roles, skills and support needed to enable individual Councillors to undertake their crucial front-line role of making connections with their communities and building a strong democratic place.

We are looking at the themes of the research to contribute to the development of our support for Councillors.

There is also a challenge for Councillors to think about how best you can be supported to be actively engaged in shaping the future.

You can access the full research report at <https://21stcenturypublicservant.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/21st-century-councillor.pdf>

### The Local Government Association (LGA) New Councillor Hub



This online resource is designed as a quick reference guide to provide you with the essential information that you need to know as a Councillor: [www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/highlighting-political-leadership](http://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/highlighting-political-leadership)

## THE BENEFITS OF INDUCTION FOR NEW MEMBERS

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*This section explains more about the induction you will receive as a newly elected Member.*

### Why Induction is Important

There are enormous benefits in adopting a structured approach to introducing a newly elected Member to their role as a Councillor. Everyone gains - the Council, the community, and individual members of the public.

Councillors need training and development to carry out their varied and demanding duties. Induction is fundamental to the development of newly elected Members.

Benefits include:

- A speedier contribution by the elected Member in carrying out their ward representative and wider roles.
- Speedier resolution of ward problems and more informed decision making.
- Time saved (things are not learned through trial and error, others are not interrupted at what might be inconvenient times and being informed from the start means less time is taken correcting mistakes).
- Less frustration as Members know what is expected of them.
- Members know where to go for help/action.
- Improved communications between Members and Officers.
- Members who are confident about and can support what the Council does.
- Evidence that we help and support newly elected Members carry out their role in the same way we would an employee.
- Ensuring Members comply with the law - both in decision making and in handling personal information.

### The Induction Process

We aim to help newly elected Members to understand their role and carry out their duties effectively. This will ensure that we can all contribute to achieving the Council's vision and pledges set out in the Wirral Plan.

It is important to note and acknowledge that the greatest impact on the confidence of newly elected Members will be the welcome and support they receive from other Members and Officers with whom they come into contact.

The induction process in Wirral will welcome newly elected Members to the Council, outline the support available and provide information to help develop an understanding of:

- How the Council operates;
- The elected Members' roles and responsibilities;
- How this fits in to what the Council is trying to achieve - Wirral Plan;
- Issues facing the Council;
- Codes, protocols and guidance which apply to elected Members; and
- Member support.

# THE WIRRAL PLAN

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Wirral's strategic ambition and priorities for the Borough were brought together in October 2021 when Wirral Council unanimously agreed the Wirral Plan 2026. The Plan was based on what people told us matter, and in it we set out our stall and commit to what we will deliver over the next five years.

## The vision for the Wirral Plan 2021-26 is:

*Equity for People and Place:*

*To create equity for people and place and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses.*

The Wirral Plan focuses on reducing inequalities across Wirral as we all work to recover from the pandemic, physically, emotionally, financially. We will use this unique point in time to ensure Wirral's recovery is on the right track to create a fairer and more prosperous place for people to live and work; making sure we meet and even exceed our obligations in responding to the Climate Emergency; and tackling inequalities and building a fairer, more prosperous Wirral where anyone can achieve their aspirations and share in the future successes of the borough.

## The thematic priorities for the Wirral Plan 2026 are:



High level thematic priorities remain broadly the right ones, but further work is underway to agree short term deliverables for the coming year and align these with the emerging Improvement Plan. Further engagement will take place in Spring 2022 so that Members can shape and agree these specific actions and priorities.

# THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

Wirral is a Member led Council, setting the direction with big ambitions for the Borough. Councillors in Wirral serve Wirral residents, helping them raise and achieve their aspirations for the community, supporting wealth, health and quality of life. We recognise that the Council cannot do this alone, and as a Councillor you will act as an ambassador for the Council, influencing and working with our communities and the broader public, private and community/voluntary sectors.

Fundamental to the ambitions of the Council are for all within the Council - both Councillors and Council employees - to work together with residents and partner agencies. We need to continue to develop skills that allow us to work collaboratively, influencing and supporting our partners to work towards our common goals and to deliver better outcomes for our community.

Local Government is set in a fast-changing environment. We recognise that Members need to be provided with the opportunity to develop the tools and skills needed to deliver a challenging agenda. The Member Learning & Development Programme, of which the Induction Programme set out in the following pages is a key part, aims to provide Members with the tools and learning they need to mobilise local communities, grow community capacity, and support local innovation.

Council employees are essential for making the Council's ambitions a reality and achieving the goals, priorities and policies set by Councillors. Our People Strategy sets the direction for how we will enable the delivery of the Wirral Plan through our people.

There are 5 strands to the People Strategy:

**Talent** - we will seek to attract diverse and talented people and retain them by recognising and rewarding their success and contribution while supporting their personal and professional development.

**Leadership** - we will continue to develop and invest in our leaders and managers to ensure they have the skills they need to lead the organisation through future challenge. Our leaders will continue to be visible across the Council and will listen, lead and engage with compassion, openness and honesty.

**Values, behaviours and performance** - we have a clear set of values and behaviours that our people bring to life in their work. We will ensure that all our people understand how their role contributes to delivering the best outcomes for our residents and are motivated to perform at their best.

**Embracing change** - we will develop opportunities for people to collaborate, problem solve, and innovate across the Council and involve our workforce and stakeholders in shaping the future. We will equip managers to value our people and help them to embrace change.

**Wellbeing** - we will continue a two-way conversation to create an environment where our staff feel happy, motivated and healthy at work. Our leaders and managers will have the right skills and tools to embed health, safety and wellbeing across the organisation and we will ensure all staff have the right training to do their job safely.



# SKILLS FOR WIRRAL COUNCIL MEMBERS: MEMBER INDUCTION PROGRAMME

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**This induction programme** is intended to best equip councillors whilst maximising the degree to which they can work effectively as a Leader. The Programme places Councillors as Community Leaders and at the heart of effective delivery.

The training sessions detailed below will be provided as part of the Induction programme for the cohort of Members who are newly elected in the May 2022 Local Elections. Sessions from previous induction cohorts have been recorded and are available to view in the Member's Training Library accessible through the Member's Portal (instructions below).

Some of the courses are open to all elected Members, while others provide mandatory training for membership of certain committees such as Planning and Licensing.

These are indicated as ● New Members, ▲ All Members, and ■ Committee Specific Training.

- Microsoft Teams Training
- ▲ Members' Portal - Casework Management
- Being a Councillor - Code of Conduct
- ▲ ■ Planning Committee Training
- ▲ General Data Protection Regulations Training
- ▲ ■ Licensing Training
- ▲ ■ Audit and Risk Management Committee Training
- ▲ Finance Training
- ▲ Social Media Training
- ▲ Personal Safety and Member Welfare Training
- ▲ ■ Pension Committee Training
- ▲ Committee System and Decision Making Training
- ▲ ■ Corporate Parenting Training
- ▲ Wirral Council's Declared Environment and Climate Emergency
- ▲ Mental Wellbeing and Welfare
- The Role of the Independent Assurance Panel

## Accessing the Training Library:

To access the Library, first log in to your Members' Portal account. You can access the Members Portal from the intranet, or by scrolling to the very bottom of the Council website and clicking the 'Councillor Portal' hyperlink. Once on your Portal homepage, scroll down to the 'Tools & Resources' section and click on the 'Training for Councillors' icon.

When you click on this icon, you will be taken through to a SharePoint Training Page. The 'Training Library Resources' can be found, and the training can be accessed by either clicking on the hyperlink for the session you are interested in or scrolling down to the embedded videos at the end of the webpage. If you have any issues accessing the training Library or have further questions, please contact your Group Office Manager or Vicky Simpson, Senior Democratic Services Officer, who will be happy to help.

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

*Professional • Accountable • Customer Focused • Ambitious*

The Chief Executive and the Chief Executive's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) provide leadership, professional advice and support to Members and wider council officers.

The Strategic Leadership Team leads the delivery of the Council's policies and procedures in accordance with the strategic aims and objectives agreed by the Council.

### Chief Executive of Wirral Council is Paul Satoor

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### Assistant Chief Executive is David Armstrong

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### Director of Neighbourhood Services is Nicola Butterworth

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### Director of Children's Services is Simone White

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Email: simonewhite@wirral.gov.uk

### Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer) is Philip McCourt

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### Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) is Shaer Halewood

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### Director of Adults' Care and Health and Strategic Commissioning is Graham Hodgkinson

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### Director of Regeneration and Place is Alan Evans

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### Director of Public Health is Julie Webster

Tel: 0151 666 5142

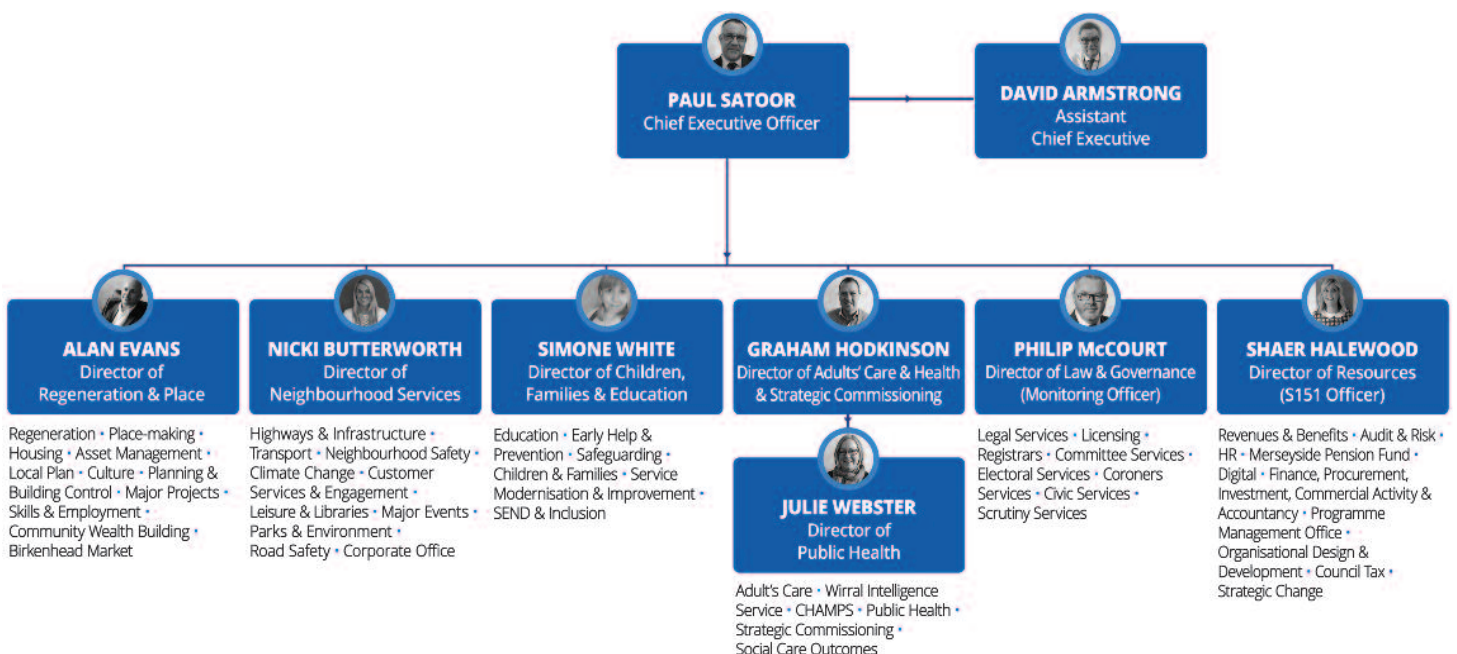
Email: juliewebster@wirral.gov.uk

### Our Vision:

*To secure the best future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services.*

### We are working together to deliver:

*Inclusive Economy. Sustainable Environment. Safe & Pleasant Communities. Brighter Futures. Active & Healthy Lives*





## Key Service Contacts

**Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service),  
Paul Satoor**

Tel: 0151 691 8589  
Email: paulsatoor@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Chief Executive, David Armstrong**

Tel: 0151 666 4313  
Email: davidarmstrong@wirral.gov.uk

**Director of Law & Governance,  
(Monitoring Officer), Philip McCourt**

Tel: 0151 691 8491  
Email: philipmccourt@wirral.gov.uk

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## Resources

**Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer),  
Shaer Halewood**

Tel: 0151 691 8688  
Email: shaerhalewood@wirral.gov.uk

**Director of Merseyside Pension Fund,  
Peter Wallach**

Tel: 0151 242 1309  
Email: peterwallach@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Human Resources &  
Organisational Development, Tony Williams**

Tel: 0151 691 8678  
Email: tonywilliams@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Finance & Investment,  
Daniel Kirwan**

Tel: 0151 691 8026  
Email: danielkirwan@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Strategic Change,  
Tim Games**

Tel: 0151 691 8170  
Email: timgames@wirral.gov.uk

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## Neighbourhoods

**Director of Neighbourhood Services,  
Nicola Butterworth**

Tel: 0151 606 2130  
Email: nicolabutterworth@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Parks & Environment,  
Colin Clayton**

Tel: 0151 691 8361  
Email: colinclayton@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Highways &  
Infrastructure, Simon Fox (acting)**

Tel: 0151 606 2334  
Email: simonfox@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Neighbourhood Safety &  
Transport, Mark Camborne**

Tel: 0151 606 2071  
Email: markcamborne@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Leisure, Libraries &  
Customer Engagement, Andy McCartan**

Tel: 0151 606 2247  
Email: andrewmccartan@wirral.gov.uk

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## Children, Families & Education

**Director of Children, Families & Education,  
Simone White**

Tel: 0151 666 4591  
Email: simonewhite@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Children & Families,  
Kerry Mehta (acting)**

Tel: 0151 666 4293  
Email: kerrymehta@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Early Help & Prevention,  
Elizabeth Hartley**

Tel: 0151 666 4238  
Email: elizabethhartley@wirral.gov.uk

**Assistant Director: Education,  
James Backhouse**

Tel: 0151 666 4303  
Email: jamesbackhouse@wirral.gov.uk

## **Adults' Care & Health and Strategic Commissioning**

### **Director of Adults' Care & Health and Strategic Commissioning, Graham Hodgkinson**

Tel: 0151 666 3650

Email: grahamhodkinson@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Care & Health Commissioning People, Jason Oxley**

Tel: 0151 666 3624

Email: jasonoxley@wirral.gov.uk

### **Director of Public Health, Julie Webster**

Tel: 0151 666 5142

Email: juliewebster@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Consultant in Public Health, Rachel Musgrave**

Tel: 0151 666 5164

Email: rachaelmusgrave@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Consultant in Public Health, Elspeth Anwar**

Tel: 0151 606 5201

Email: elspethanwar@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Consultant in Public Health, Jane Harvey**

Tel: 0151 606 5201

Email: janeharvey2@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Strategic Partnerships (cutting across Children's & Adults'), Carly Brown**

Tel: 0151 666 4390

Email: carlybrown@wirral.gov.uk

## **Regeneration & Place**

### **Director of Regeneration & Place, Alan Evans**

Tel: 0151 691 8515

Email: alanevans@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Special Projects, David Ball**

Tel: 0151 691 8395

Email: davidball@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Chief Regeneration Officer, Sally Shah (acting)**

Tel: 0151 691 8148

Email: sallyshah@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Asset Management & Investment, (vacant)**

N/A

### **Assistant Director: Housing, (vacant)**

N/A

### **Assistant Director: Chief Planner, Kathleen Lawless (interim)**

Email: kathleenlawless@wirral.gov.uk

### **Assistant Director: Culture & Visitor Economy, (seconded)**

N/A

## Organisational Support - Legal and Democratic & Member Services

Legal and Democratic & Member Services advise the Council on matters relating to Members' conduct and the Members' Register of Interests, Member support and matters relating to Council decision-making arrangements, and the recording of decisions.

Committee Services support the practical arrangements for meetings of the Council and its Committees. Any member of the team can be contacted with enquiries about forthcoming meetings.

The team maintains Wirral Council's Calendar of Meetings which can be accessed via the Intranet.

Here you will be able to find out about the various Council Committees. You will also be able to find out about the Committees you have been appointed to sit on and examine agendas and minutes of any meeting.

**Philip McCourt**  
**Director of Law & Governance**  
**(Monitoring Officer)**  
Tel: 0151 691 8491  
Email: philipmccourt@wirral.gov.uk

**Vicki Shaw**  
**Head of Legal Services &**  
**Deputy Monitoring Officer**  
Tel: 0151 691 8481  
Email: vickishaw@wirral.gov.uk

**Steve Fox**  
**Head of Democratic &**  
**Member Services**  
Tel: 0151 691 8145  
Email: stevefox@wirral.gov.uk

**Daniel Sharples**  
**Democracy Business Manager**  
Tel: 0151 666 3791  
Email: danielsharples@wirral.gov.uk

**Mike Jones**  
**Principal Democratic &**  
**Member Services Officer**  
Tel: 0151 691 8363  
Email: michaeljones1@wirral.gov.uk

**Andrew Mossop**  
**Principal Democratic &**  
**Member Services Officer**  
Tel: 0151 691 8501  
Email: andrewmossop@wirral.gov.uk

**Patrick Sebastian**  
**Principal Democratic &**  
**Member Services Officer**  
Tel: 0151 691 8424  
Email: patricksebastian@wirral.gov.uk

### Ward Surgeries / Ward Meetings

Details of any Ward Surgeries that you hold should be passed to Committee Services so that they can advertise them on the Council website.

## Organisational Support - General

### Group Office Managers

Political Groups have been allocated a Council Officer to act as their Office Manager. The Office Manager acts as a point of first contact and provides a range of administrative and support services.

### Contacts

#### Labour Group

Please contact Barbara Turner on  
Tel: 0151 691 8540  
Email: barbaraturner@wirral.gov.uk

#### Conservative Group

Please contact Andrea Shillinglaw on  
Tel: 0151 691 8652  
Email: andreashillinglaw@wirral.gov.uk

#### Liberal Democrat Group

Please contact Elsie Graney on  
Tel: 0151 691 8653  
Email: elsiegraney@wirral.gov.uk

#### Independent Group and Green Group

Please contact Gill Pinch on  
Tel: 0151 691 8068  
Email: gillpinch@wirral.gov.uk

### Identity Card

You will be provided with a council identity card, which will also act as a means of entry to appropriate council buildings.

### ICT

You will be provided with ICT equipment in order to fulfil your role and will have the opportunity to attend relevant training were necessary.

You will be required to sign a declaration for all equipment provided stating that you abide by the Council's ICT requirements.

The Council now holds paperless meetings. Unless it has been agreed for Members to receive paper copies of reports because of medical or other reasons, you will receive all your agenda papers for meetings by a link to the Council's intranet via email.

However, the Council is required by regulations to seek your consent to the forwarding of the summons/agenda for meetings by electronic means. The summons/agendas for a meeting must specify the time and place of the meeting, along with detail of the business to be transacted. The reports accompanying summons/agenda are not covered by these Regulations.

You will be requested to sign a form to provide confirmation of your consent to receive the summons/agenda for meetings by electronic means.

### Postal Service

Any correspondence relating to your Council role can be mailed and the cost of the postage will be borne by the Council. However, please remember to affix the correct postage for any personal or non-council related mail you may wish to send.





# MEMBER WELLBEING

## Resource Booklet

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# Wellbeing At Wirral

Our vision for wellbeing at Wirral Council is for all **our people to feel happy, healthy and engaged**. This includes our Elected Members.

This booklet signposts a range of internal and external resources that Members can access to support them to manage all aspects of their wellbeing.

## Five Elements of Wellbeing



# Physical Wellbeing

## Discounted Invigor8 Membership

Members are eligible for a discounted membership at our Invigor8 Leisure Centres. This includes access to all 7 gyms, a range of exercise classes, swimming pool use, tennis court hire and more.

More info can be found on the [Wirral Leisure website](#). To purchase a discounted membership call the team at 0151 606 2010 and ask for a 'Corporate Membership'.

## Local Walking/Running Groups

The Wirral is home to a number of local walking and running groups. Not only are these a great opportunity to keep active but also to meet new people and socialise.

You can find a [list of local walking groups here](#). A list of running groups can be found on the [Wirral Leisure website](#).

## Eating Well

The NHS offer some useful tips for eating a balanced diet on [their website](#). The [Healthy Food guide website](#) also has a range of articles and expert advice to help you improve your diet.



You may also be interested in this podcast - '[How to Personalise Your Diet for Increased Energy and Better Health](#)'.

### **Weight Management Programme**

Partly funded by Wirral Public Health, the Wirral Leisure Weight Management Programme is a free programme aimed at supporting individuals to manage their weight in a safe and non-judgemental environment.

You can find out more about this programme and the eligibility criteria on the [Wirral Leisure website](#).

### **Lower my Drinking App**

If you're looking to cut back on your alcohol consumption, why not try the free 'Lower My Drinking' app.

Designed by clinical psychologists and behavioural scientists, the app provides advice and scientifically-proven tools to reduce drinking to the recommended limit of 14 units a week or less. You can download the app to your smartphone using the links below:

App Store <https://apple.co/3ka80iv>

Google Play <https://bit.ly/3i3KYY0>

# Mental Wellbeing

## **Mindfulness**

Many people find practising mindfulness helps them manage their day-to-day wellbeing, helping them become more self-aware, and feel calmer and less stressed.

For a useful definition of mindfulness watch this [3-min video](#). You also have access to the recording of a [Lunch & Learn session around Mindfulness](#). This includes tips for incorporating mindfulness practice into your everyday life.

## **Mental Health Resources**

Our new Learning Experience Platform 'Flo' has a range of resources exploring mental health, it's importance to our wellbeing, and how we can support and develop good mental health for ourselves and others.

You can access a 'playlist' of Mental Health resources [on Flo here](#).

## Resilience and Managing Stress

Effective stress management helps you break the hold stress has on your life, so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive. The ultimate goal is a balanced life, with time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun—and the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

The [LGA have a comprehensive workbook](#) that can help you understand the signs of stress and develop strategies to deal with it. You can also access eLearning around managing stress and personal resilience on the [LGA eLearning platform](#).

The [NHS 'Your Mind Plan' tool](#) provides tailored support and tips on how to deal with stress, boost your mood, improve sleep and feel more in control. There are also a range of resources around stress and resilience available on [Flo](#).

## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Members can access the Council's EAP for advice and support with a range of work and personal issues. The service is provided by an independent, external company and is impartial, confidential, and free.

The EAP can also provide telephone and face to face counselling. Members can contact the EAP 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and talk in confidence to a qualified adviser. [More information can be found here](#).

## Keep Learning

Learning something new each day can contribute to our mental wellbeing by enhancing our self-esteem, giving us a sense of purpose and achievement, and sparking our creativity.

Below are some ideas for how you can keep learning:

- Cook a new recipe
- Start learning a new language
- Watch a documentary
- Take up a new hobby
- [Watch some TED Talks](#)
- Listen to some of [Radio 4's 'In Our Time'](#) shows

You can also access a whole host of learning resources on our new [Learning Experience Platform 'Flo'](#).

# Financial Wellbeing

## Resources, Tools and Guides

You can find a range of information to help you manage your finances on the [Money Saving Expert website](#). This includes a '[Money Makeover](#)' guide, which will help you to review your bills to make sure you have the best deals.

The '[Ask Martin Lewis](#)' podcast is another great resource. Give [this one about Energy Bills](#) a listen to get started.

The [Money Helper website](#) also offers a range of advice and support, including free impartial guidance on your pension options with Pension Wise - [see here](#).

You can also access free and impartial financial advice through our [Employee Assistance Programme](#).

# Social Wellbeing

## Staying Connected

Staying connected with others is a crucial aspect of wellbeing that can act as a buffer against poor mental health. Maintaining good relationships can:

- help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow you to support others

[Action for Happiness](#) have created a calendar of [actions](#) you can take to help you connect with others - challenge yourself to complete one action everyday.

## Peer-to-Peer Support

The new hybrid working environment makes it all the more important that we stay connected with colleagues. Take a look at [this BBC article around how to build better relationships remotely](#).

Have you considered organising regular coffee mornings for your Group members? These can be either face-to-face or virtual and are a great way to stay connected.

# Environmental Wellbeing

## Member Safety

The LGA has a variety of resources on this topic. This includes guides for Members around [personal safety](#) and [handling intimidation](#).

There is also a collection of resources to support you with your online communications and handling online abuse - [see here](#).

## Work Environment

The environment within which we work can have a big impact on our mood, as well as our productivity and creativity. [This article](#) offers 18 ways to improve your work environment and optimise productivity.

Taking your meetings outside is another way you can change up your environment, get some fresh air and boost your wellbeing. Walking meetings have been shown to boost creativity - find out more in this [Harvard Business Review article](#).

# Members Development Questionnaire

16

Responses

04:20

Average time to complete

Closed

Status

1. Do you know how to access training resources available to all Elected Members?



2. If yes, have you accessed materials available?



3. Are you aware of the remit of the Member Support Steering Group?



4. Are you aware that you can request specific training in order to fulfill your role as Committee member?

● Yes 9  
● No 7



5. Are you aware of the support provided to you as a Member via your Group Office Manager?

● yes 14  
● no 2



6. Do you feel supported in your individual development needs?

● yes 12  
● no 4



7. Are you aware of the Employee Assistant Programme in order to assist with welfare needs?

● yes	8
● no	8



8. How often do you feel overwhelmed in respect to the demands placed on you as a Councillor?

● Daily	2
● Weekly	3
● Monthly	5
● Yearly	0
● Never	6



9. If you answered other than never, would you like to comment?

10  
Responses

Latest Responses

"usually when 2 meetings coincide and you would like to att..."  
 "Working from Home has not helped , due to Covid"

2 respondents (20%) answered **Council** for this question.



10. Would you like to see the Council do more to support your welfare needs?

● yes 8  
● no 8



11. If yes, please explain how you would wish to be supported

7  
Responses

Latest Responses

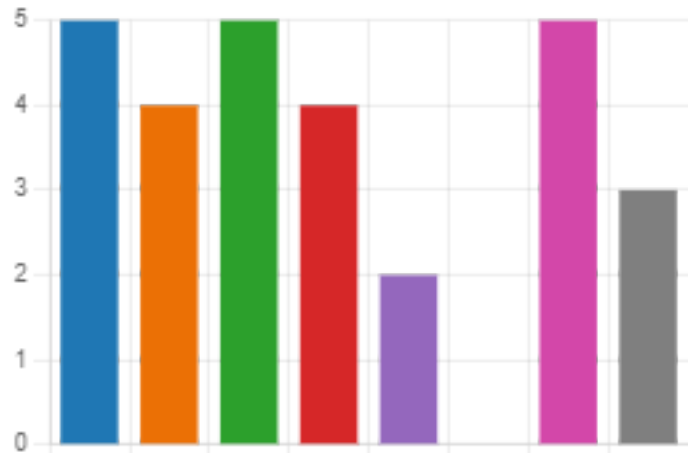
2 respondents (29%) answered **work** for this question.

allowance was higher meetings\workshops Emails  
mix of vertual high volume time pressures volume adn offi  
consideration lack of empathy **work** times and lack m  
mindful of demands killer day of back to backs  
executive summary committee papers disa|



12. Members can benefit from a comprehensive training programme and online training offers in the member portal. What additional training or enhanced training opportunities would you find the most beneficial to assist you in undertaking your role as Councillor ( select all that apply)

- ICT Training 5
- Finance Training 4
- Communications/ Social Media 5
- Decision making and governanc... 4
- Chairing a committee 2
- Risk training 0
- Member Welfare 5
- Other 3



13. If you answered ' Other' please describe training courses that you would benefit from attending

2  
Responses

Latest Responses

14. Would you prefer training courses to be delivered virtually via microsoft teams, or in person at a Council venue?

- Virtual 10
- In person 6



15. What time during the day is best suited for you to attend training

● Morning (9am onwards)	4
● Early afternoon ( from 1pm)	2
● late afternoon (from 4pm)	2
● Evening (from 6pm)	3
● Don't mind	5



16. How would you assess your IT skills?

● Advanced	6
● Intermediate	6
● Basic	4



17. Please use this space to make further comment on training available to Councillors

4  
Responses

Latest Responses

*"Having been a Councillor for 34 years I have received lots of...*



## CONSTITUTION AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 June 2022

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF PANELS, STATUTORY / ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES 2021/2022</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE</b>

### REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to enable the Constitution and Standards Committee to review the continuing need for various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, and to appoint members and named deputies to serve on those (including the statutory committees and panels) that are to be retained in 2022/2023.

### RECOMMENDATION/S

The Constitution and Standards Committee is requested to authorise the Monitoring Officer as proper officer to carry out the wishes of the Group Leaders in allocating Members to membership of the Statutory and Advisory Committees listed in the report and to appoint those Members with effect from the date at which the proper officer is advised of the names of such Members.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 The Committee is required to appoint the membership of various panels, statutory / advisory committees and working parties, which fall under its remit at the start of each Municipal Year.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 Other options considered include not appointed to the statutory and advisory bodies or appointing a different number of members.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **STATUTORY COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

- 3.1 The following statutory committees and panels, all of which have full delegated authority, were retained during 2021/2022.

#### **3.2 Standards Panel and Standards Appeals Panel**

Sub-Committees of between three (3) and five (5) members of the Constitution and Standards Committee with responsibility for arrangements under which decisions can be made on an allegation that a Member of the Council or its committees has breached the Members' Code of Conduct.

The Committee or a Panel may regulate, where necessary, its own procedures to deal with any matter arising in connection with its duties, provided that the procedures remain in accordance with the principles set out at Article 13 of this Constitution. This includes that, subject to any statutory rules or procedures detailed elsewhere, a Panel acting as a tribunal is permitted, when all evidence has been submitted and speakers (if any) have finished, will hold discussion in the presence of the speakers and, as appropriate and in compliance with the Access to information Procedure Rules, the public and press, and the decision making may thereafter be taken in private adjournment.

It is expected that decisions will then normally be announced to those present and remaining post-adjournment, at least in summary form, before a decision is issued in writing.

#### **ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES**

- 3.3 The following is a list of advisory and consultative bodies that were retained or created in 2021/2022 to assist the Committee in its work.

##### **(i). Members Support Steering Group**

(This group was established by the Committee on 24 February, 2021, by the merger of the former Member Support and Members' Equipment Steering Groups)

The role of the Group is to:

- provide cross-party strategic leadership to member learning, development, support so as to enable members to help deliver the Refreshed Wirral Plan 2021-2026 and its themes;
- provide cross-party strategic leadership to the member ICT offer to ensure that equipment, software and systems used by members enables them to effectively undertake their duties;
- Provide oversight on the development of the Member Portal;
- Ensure all members have the requisite skills, knowledge and attributes to be able to meet their varied duties and responsibilities;
- Actively promote, encourage and oversee member culture, development and support;
- Explore, research, gather insight, examine and develop and implement new innovative methods, approaches and initiatives to improve member culture, development and support.
- Drive continuous improvement in member culture, development and support within political groups.

#### **(ii). Governance Working Group**

The Governance Working Group was set up as working group of members to consider constitutional and governance related matters in advance of reports and recommendations being submitted to the Constitution and Standards Committee.

Appendix 1 to this report outlines all Statutory and Advisory Committee appointments for the 2021-22 municipal year.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There is a requirement under the Council's Constitution to appoint Members to various panels, advisory committees and working parties.

#### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT; STAFFING AND ASSETS**

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

#### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 If the Council does not appoint to its statutory bodies there is a risk that it will fail to fulfil its statutory duties.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

8.1 It is for political groups to decide how they wish to allocate their committee places.

## **9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR: Dan Sharples**  
**Principal Democratic and Member Services Officer**  
telephone: (0151) 666 3791  
email: danielsharples@wirral.gov.uk

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Statutory and Advisory Committee Appointments 2021-22

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Constitution

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Constitution and Standards Committee</b>	<b>23 June 2021</b>
<b>Constitution and Standards Committee</b>	<b>24 February 2021</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>28 September 2020</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>14 May 2019</b>
<b>Council</b>	<b>15 May 2018</b>

### **Standards Panel**

Paul Hayes – Conservative  
Phil Gilchrist – Liberal Democrat  
Moira McLaughlin – Independent  
Chris Cooke – Green

Labour – in order of preference:

1. Janette Williamson
2. Paul Stuart
3. Chris Jones
4. Steve Foulkes
5. Karl Greaney

### **Standards Appeal Panel**

Formed of those members of the committee who were not involved in any matter considered by the Standards Panel Meeting.

Tony Cox – Conservative  
Chris Carubia – Liberal Democrat

Labour – in order of preference:

1. Janette Williamson
2. Paul Stuart
3. Chris Jones
4. Steve Foulkes
5. Karl Greaney

### **Member Support Steering Group**

Jenny Johnson – Conservative  
Steve Williams – Conservative  
Phil Gilchrist – Liberal Democrat  
Steve Hayes – Independent  
Pat Cleary – Green  
Paul Stuart – Labour  
Karl Greaney – Labour

### **Governance Working Group**

Tony Cox – Conservative  
Phil Gilchrist – Liberal Democrat  
Moira McLaughlin – Independent  
Chris Cook – Green  
Paul Stuart – Labour

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## Terms of Reference:

The Constitution and Standards Committee is responsible for overseeing the operation of the Council's Constitution and for promoting and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct and probity within the Council, including the exercise of all functions of the Authority in relation to ethical standards and, in particular, those under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- (a) to keep the Council's constitutional arrangements under review and to make recommendations as to amendments and improvements to the Council's Constitution, including the codes and protocols;
- (b) to oversee and agree such minor and consequential changes to the Council's constitutional arrangements as are recommended by the Monitoring officer from time to time;
- (c) to hear and determine complaints against members alleging breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- (d) to take an action in respect of a member found to be in breach;
- (e) to oversee and approve the operation of the Council's functions relating to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct amongst members and co-opted members of the Council including:
  - (i) approving and issuing guidance to Members
  - (ii) making recommendations to Full Council regarding the suggested amendment of the Members' Code of Conduct
  - (iii) approving training to be provided to members in the Code of Conduct
  - (iv) monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct
- (f) to approve the granting, to any Council employee, of a dispensation in relation to disqualification from political activities Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
- (g) to select and recommend to Council persons for appointment as members of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel;
- (h) to select and recommend to Council persons for appointment as an Independent Person;
- (i) to receive and approve proposals regarding the Council's exercise of powers covered by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act;

- (j) to issue dispensations to any member in respect of statutory and non-statutory disclosable interests;
- (k) to monitor and review as necessary the operation of whistleblowing procedures;
- (l) to consider reports arising from external inspections, audit investigations, Ombudsman investigations where maladministration is found, legal challenges and other sources which cast doubt on the honesty or integrity of the Council or its Members; and
- (m) to consider and make recommendations on such other matters as the Committee itself thinks appropriate or which are referred to it by Council, which further the aim of promoting and maintaining the highest standards of conduct within the Council.