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COUNCIL

Monday, 15 February 2010

Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Andrew Hodson) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Alan Jennings)

Councillors	RL Abbey	T Harney	S Quinn
	T Anderson	K Hayes	P Reisdorf
	C Blakeley	P Hayes	L Rennie
	A Bridson	S Holbrook	D Roberts
	S Clarke	P Johnson	L Rowlands
	IO Coates	AER Jones	J Salter
	J Crabtree	J Keeley	H Smith
	G Davies	S Kelly	W Smith
	P Davies	B Kenny	P Southwood
	WJ Davies	D Knowles	J Stapleton
	F Doyle	I Lewis	A Taylor
	W Duffey	AR McLachlan	S Taylor
	D Elderton	M McLaughlin	C Teggins
	G Ellis	C Meaden	G Watt
	S Foulkes	D Mitchell	R Wilkins
	L Fraser	R Moon	KJ Williams
	G Gardiner	S Mountney	P Williams
	P Gilchrist	C Povall	S Williams
	JE Green	A Pritchard	K Wood
	J Hale	J Quinn	

Apologies

Councillors	J George	M Redfern
	S Niblock	T Smith

93 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor referred to the recent deaths of Eileen Williams, Mayoress of Wirral 1986-87 and Councillor for Birkenhead Ward 1978-80 and of Douglas Jones, Director of Social Services 1974-81 and the Council stood in silent tribute to their memory.

The Mayor welcomed Sarah Louise Sherlock, a pupil of Pensby School, who gave a brief presentation on her fundraising efforts of over £3,000 which had included funds for a water pipeline in Africa, the people of Haiti affected by the recent earthquake and CAFOD. The members of the Council warmly applauded Sarah for her fundraising efforts.

The Mayor then welcomed Patrick Roberts and Kelly Scarth, both from South Wirral High School who gave a brief presentation on their recent moving experience of visiting Auschwitz – Birkenau in Poland. The members of the Council warmly applauded Patrick and Kelly for their informative speech.

The Mayor also referred to a letter he had received from the Mayor of Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, on behalf of the people of Wootton Bassett, thanking Wirral

Council for its support during the time of repatriation of those soldiers who had fallen whilst on service in Afghanistan.

94 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT-DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The members of the Council were invited to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at the meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest. The following declarations were made:

Councillor R Abbey declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 6 (Mid-Wirral Line) by virtue of his membership of Merseytravel and Motion 9 (Empty Rates) by virtue of his membership of the Merseyside Valuation Tribunal.

Councillor A Jones declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 11 (Activities for Young People) by virtue of his former Chairmanship of the Allandale Youth Club Management Committee.

Councillor J Williams declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Motion 10 (Impact of Business Rate Revaluation) by virtue of his employment.

Councillor I Lewis declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 6 (Mid-Wirral Line) by virtue of his membership of Merseytravel and Motion 8 (Prostate Cancer in Wallasey and Moreton) by virtue of him having held meetings with NHS Wirral on this subject.

Councillor Mrs K Wood declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of Motion 1 (Transformation of Adult Social Services – Residential and Nursing Home Care – Contracted Support) by virtue of her daughter's employment.

Councillor D Roberts declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 9 (Empty Rates) by virtue of her membership of the Merseyside Valuation Tribunal.

Councillor S Holbrook declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 5 (v) (Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document – Approval of Preferred Options) by virtue his employment.

Councillor S Taylor declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 6 (Mid-Wirral Line) by virtue of her employment with Merseytravel.

Councillor D Mitchell declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 6 (Mid-Wirral Line) by virtue of his membership of Merseytravel.

Councillor S Quinn declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Motion 8 (Prostate Cancer in Wallasey and Moreton) by virtue of her employment.

Councillor S Mountney declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 11 (Activities for Young People) by virtue of his chairmanship of the Wallasey Children's Services District Board.

Councillor G Ellis declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 1 (Transformation of Adult Social Services – Residential and Nursing Home Care – Contracted Support) by virtue of a relative being in a Wirral nursing home.

Councillor C Blakeley declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 6 (Mid-Wirral Line) by virtue of his membership of Merseytravel.

Councillor P Davies declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 8 (Prostate Cancer in Wallasey and Moreton) by virtue of him being a non-executive Director of NHS Wirral.

Councillor H Smith declared a personal interest in respect of Motion 1 (Transformation of Adult Social Services – Residential and Nursing Home Care – Contracted Support) by virtue of a relative being in a Wirral nursing home.

95 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 21, the Mayor received petitions submitted by –

Councillor G Watt on behalf of 33 signatories requesting the introduction of school day parking restrictions in Bramhall Close, off Grammar School Lane, West Kirby.

Councillor W Smith on behalf of 228 signatories requesting an improved play area in Higher Bebington, incorporating a BMX stunt park and all-weather football / basketball pitch.

Councillor C Povall on behalf of 152 signatories requesting traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at the junctions of Church Road, Kirket Lane and Highcroft Avenue, Bebington.

Councillor G Davies on behalf of 1265 signatories requesting works be undertaken at the main entrance to Birkenhead Park to prevent flooding and serious damage to the newly laid pathways and walkways of the park.

Councillor T Anderson on behalf of 22 signatories requesting the introduction of a 20mph zone in the area of Hillview Road, Irby.

Resolved - That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate chief officer and/or agency in accordance with Standing Order 34.

96 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 and 21 December, 2009 had been circulated to members and subject to the following corrections:

Minute 67 (Members' Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest) – in respect of Councillor Blakeley the declaration for Motion 15, delete, 'site meeting with senior council officers' and insert, 'site meeting with senior officers of Wirral Partnership Homes and shopkeepers, and attendance at a meeting with Senior officers of Wirral Partnership Homes and shopkeepers at Europa Boulevard, and at a previous site meeting with the Director of Regeneration'

Minute 67 (Members' Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest) – in respect of Councillor G Davies the declaration for Motion 15, delete 'his previous membership of the Wirral Partnership Homes Board' and insert, 'having received hospitality from Wirral Partnership Homes at a housing conference in Harrogate.'

Minute 67 (Members' Code of Conduct – Declarations of Interest) – in respect of Councillor S Williams the declaration for Motion 15, delete 'site meeting with senior council officers' and insert, 'meeting with senior officers of Wirral Partnership Homes and shopkeepers at Europa Boulevard.'

it was –

Resolved – That the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.

97 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 7(1) a number of matters were submitted for approval by the Council.

Resolved – That the following matters be approved.

(i) Cabinet minute 260 (14/1/10) - Local Development Framework – Approval of Amended Local Development Scheme.

(ii) Cabinet minute 261 (14/1/10) - Local Development Framework Evidence Base – Strategy for Retail, Town Centres and Commercial Leisure.

(iii) Cabinet minute 268 (14/1/10) - Local Transport Plan Capital Programme 2010/11.

(iv) Cabinet minute 308 (4/2/10) - Local Development Framework – Evidence Base – Open Space Audit.

(v) Cabinet minute 309 (4/2/10) - Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document – Approval of Preferred Options.

(vi) Cabinet minute 318 (4/2/10) - Emergency Road Repairs.

(vii) Cabinet minute 319 (4/2/10) - The Oval Sports and Recreation Centre, Bebington – Scheme Completion Report.

(viii) Cabinet minute 320 (4/2/10) - Councillor Call for Action – Record and Evidence Trail.

98 **MATTERS FOR NOTING**

Resolved - That the following matters be noted, as required by the Constitution:

(i) Cabinet minute 287 (14/1/10) - New Ferry Butterfly Park – Compulsory Purchase Order Powers (Reason: waiving of call-in).

(ii) Cabinet minute 314 (4/2/10) - Appointment of Consultancy Support for Housing Market Renewal in Birkenhead (Reason: compliance with Contract Procedure Rule 5.2).

99 **QUESTIONS**

(a) Mr Martin Morton, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted the following question relating to issues at Balls Road:

Why has this matter been referred to Cabinet when the matter was deliberately raised by Director of DASS John Webb as a smokescreen at Audit and Risk Management Committee in November 2008?

Can Council please advise:

(a) why this matter is now subject to scrutiny by Cabinet only?

and,

(b) where this investigation is up to, especially considering the issue is linked to the financial abuse of vulnerable people which lead to a PIDA "investigation" undertaken by the Audit Commission in 2007-8?"

Councillor M McLaughlin, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Inclusion, responded as follows:

The Director of Adult Social Services in his report to the Audit & Risk Management Committee (ARMC) on 3 November acknowledged that there had been some confusion regarding Balls Road. The Director confirmed that Internal Audit had made clear that the 'special charging policy' had not been applied to individuals at this property although investigations into charges for rent and services charges had shown some anomalies that needed to be resolved. The Director proposed to write to members once he was satisfied that the history of the charging had been unravelled and confirmed that he would report appropriately to Cabinet if any action was required. This is confirmed in the minutes of this meeting.

A thorough investigation into the charges applied at Balls Road has now been completed and Internal Audit has undertaken a review of the findings. In accordance with the Director's proposal to the ARMC on 3 November a letter is being sent to members of the committee, together with the chair of Health & Well Being Overview & Scrutiny committee and party leaders, to inform them of the findings.

Mr Morton then asked a supplementary question, to which Councillor McLaughlin undertook to provide a more detailed written response.

(b) Mr Michael Smith, of 58 East Float, Wallasey Dock Road, Wallasey, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted the following question:

Where I live we do not have bins because there are 180 apartments and the disposal of our domestic rubbish to either the tip or to be recycled is, according to our estates management, more easily managed by the use of "eurocarts".

We all pay council tax in band C but we are also being charged on top of that an average per apartment of an extra £93.00 per year to use these industrial style bins.

We believe we are being ripped off and we want to know why Biffa and or our landlord are allowed to get away with this.

Councillor Jean Quinn, Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services responded as follows:

The Council has a duty to remove and dispose of domestic household waste that is presented for collection in a proper manner. This service is funded from Council budgets that include the Council Tax paid by residents. Under Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) the Council is able to state how and when waste should be presented for collection. This includes specifying the size and type of container that must be used. However, there is no duty upon the Council to provide these containers free of charge to residents.

When the Council first moved to a wheeled bin service, residents were issued with their first wheeled bin free of charge. However, the Council has no obligation to provide waste containers free of charge and the costs of replacing lost and stolen bins, as well as providing bins to new developments has escalated in recent years. A "Bin Charging Policy" was introduced in November 2008 that set out charges for new and replacement bins.

Developers of Multi-occupancy dwellings often choose to use communal "bulk bins" as this saves space on site. Management Companies and agents acting on behalf of residents can opt to provide their own containers, or they may rent them from any Waste Collection provider, including the Council's contractor, Biffa. Whilst this information is now captured in the Council's "Bin Charging Policy", it has always been the case that management companies and agents must make their own arrangements for the suitable containment of their refuse. The leasing fee referred to by Mr Smith covers the provision and maintenance charge for the bins provided by Biffa. An added advantage of using communal bins is that Biffa will enter onto site to empty the bins. This avoids putting this responsibility onto residents to move the bins to the kerb edge, or having to employ an individual to present the bins on the kerbside, as residents using wheeled bins are obliged to do.

Finally, I would like to point out that the Council has recently offered all multi-occupancy dwellings free bulk recycling bins, even though it was not obliged to by law. It is hoped that by providing bins for recycling that more residents will attempt to recycle their rubbish. In some circumstances, this may even mean less residual containers are needed on site therefore reducing the cost to residents of residual bulk bin provision.

Mr Smith then asked a supplementary question, to which Councillor Quinn responded accordingly.

100 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

The matters listed for debate in accordance with Standing Order 5(1)(I) were dealt with as indicated in minutes 101 to 111 below.

The Leader of the Council requested that Standing Order 7 (8) be applied from 8.30pm or after one debate for each political group, whichever came first.

Resolved (unanimously) – That Standing Order 7 (8) be applied as above.

101 **MOTION: TRANSFORMATION OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES – RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOME CARE - CONTRACTED SUPPORT**

(Councillor Mrs K Wood, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the chamber during the debate on this item).

Proposed by Councillor Geoffrey Watt
Seconded by Councillor Tony Pritchard

(1) Council notes:

(a) the further measures proposed by Cabinet to reduce the contracted cost of residential and Nursing Home Care from private sector providers.

(b) that the Department of Adult Social Services is the major purchaser of such services in Wirral and has a legal duty under the Competition Act not to exploit its dominant position.

(c) that many of Wirral's residential and Nursing Homes are small family businesses and currently provide services on extremely tight margins.

(2) Given the potential risk to the well being of service users, the quality of care provided and employment in this key sector, Council calls on Cabinet to keep the needs of people uppermost in its mind and ensure that it is fully aware of the consequences for vulnerable service users as it negotiates revised contracts with service providers if, through the approach it is adopting, such businesses are forced to withdraw from the provision of such services.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor Denise Roberts

Delete all after '(1) Council notes:'

Insert:

(a) The proposal to maintain the current baseline fee levels for care homes as an interim measure, pending the re-negotiation of new contracts for 2011, which will take account of the fact that fee levels in Wirral remain among the highest in the area, and which will also take account of the need to develop quality premiums within the contracts which properly reflect the standards of care within the homes and which lead to improved quality of life for residents.

(b) Council further notes that the recent Care Quality Commission's report on Wirral's Adult Social Services judged Wirral to be "performing well", and that Wirral's success in reducing the number of people being placed in care homes and the reduced fees levels contributed to that judgement, particularly when taken alongside the investment in services which are helping more people remain in their own homes for longer. These include enhanced Home Care, Home Re-ablement, Assistive

Technology and the development of four Extra Care Housing Schemes, three of which are in Wallasey.

Following a debate, the amendment was put to the vote and carried with the Council dividing as follows:

For the amendment (36) – Councillors RL Abbey, A Bridson, IO Coates, J Crabtree, G Davies, PL Davies, WJ Davies, F Doyle, S Foulkes, G Gardiner, PN Gilchrist, T Harney, S Holbrook, A Jennings, AER Jones, SE Kelly, BM Kenny, ARC McLachlan, M McLaughlin, Mrs CM Meaden, GD Mitchell, RK Moon, J Quinn, S Quinn, PTC Reisdorf, DE Roberts, JJ Salter, H Smith, WW Smith, PM Southwood, JV Stapleton, A Taylor, CM Teggin, R Wilkins, KJ Williams and Mrs P Williams.

Against the amendment (24) – Councillors T Anderson, C Blakeley, Mrs SL Clarke, WA Duffey, DM Elderton, GJ Ellis, Mrs L Fraser, JE Green, J Hale, K Hayes, P Hayes, AC Hodson, PSC Johnson, J Keeley, DT Knowles, I Lewis, SR Mounthey, C Povall, A Pritchard, Mrs LA Rennie, SL Rowlands, S Taylor, GCJ Watt and S Williams.

Resolved (36:24) –

Council notes:

(a) The proposal to maintain the current baseline fee levels for care homes as an interim measure, pending the re-negotiation of new contracts for 2011, which will take account of the fact that fee levels in Wirral remain among the highest in the area, and which will also take account of the need to develop quality premiums within the contracts which properly reflect the standards of care within the homes and which lead to improved quality of life for residents.

(b) Council further notes that the recent Care Quality Commission's report on Wirral's Adult Social Services judged Wirral to be "performing well", and that Wirral's success in reducing the number of people being placed in care homes and the reduced fees levels contributed to that judgement, particularly when taken alongside the investment in services which are helping more people remain in their own homes for longer. These include enhanced Home Care, Home Re-ablement, Assistive Technology and the development of four Extra Care Housing Schemes, three of which are in Wallasey.

102 **MOTION: CALL FOR LIGHTER EVENINGS**

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith
Seconded by Councillor Chris Meaden

(1) Council expresses its concern over the safety implications of changing the clocks in October so that evenings are darker.

(2) Council notes that both ROSPA and Living Streets, reputable organisations concerned with safety, favour a system which does not create lighter mornings and darker evenings between October and March.

(3) Council notes that Living Streets estimate that 450 deaths are caused by the present system and, they argue, the most dangerous time on roads is between 3p.m. and 6p.m. as drivers and school children head home, and that children and the elderly are most susceptible to accidents at these times.

(4) Council further notes that the Department of Transport also estimate that 80 fewer fatal accidents would occur if evenings were lighter.

(5) Council recognises that altering the present system may cause problems in the north of Scotland where the reduction in daylight hours is more acute, but believes that, if the Scottish Parliament believes that special consideration was needed for Scotland, they would have the power to pass the necessary legislation.

(6) Council therefore agrees to add its voice to the growing clamour for the current system using British Summer Time to be rescinded and priority be given instead to maintaining lighter evenings as opposed to lighter mornings.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):

Proposed by Councillor Geoffrey Watt
Seconded by Councillor David Elderton

Delete all and replace with:

(1) Council notes that organisations concerned with road safety favour the abandonment of Greenwich Mean Time and its permanent replacement with Central European time in all or parts of the United Kingdom, believing that this would reduce road accidents.

(2) Council notes that in Wirral, this would mean the mid-winter sun does not rise until 9.28 am and yet still set as early as 4.53 pm.

(3) Council notes that mid-winter sunrise occurs 22 minutes earlier in London and 28 minutes later in northwest Scotland than in Wirral.

(4) Council notes that power to legislate on time zoning has not been devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

(5) Council notes that the estimated beneficial effects on road accident statistics are based upon adjusted data gathered forty years ago during the British Standard Time experiment.

(6) Council recalls the misery that was inflicted by prolonged dark mornings on the daily lives of people, including schoolchildren, living in Wirral and the great relief felt when that experiment was abandoned.

(7) Council therefore believes that Greenwich Mean Time should be retained throughout the United Kingdom in the months of November, December, January and February.

Following a debate the amendment was put and lost (27:31).

The motion was put and carried (30:28)

Resolved (30:28) –

(1) Council expresses its concern over the safety implications of changing the clocks in October so that evenings are darker.

(2) Council notes that both ROSPA and Living Streets, reputable organisations concerned with safety, favour a system which does not create lighter mornings and darker evenings between October and March.

(3) Council notes that Living Streets estimate that 450 deaths are caused by the present system and, they argue, the most dangerous time on roads is between 3p.m. and 6p.m. as drivers and school children head home, and that children and the elderly are most susceptible to accidents at these times.

(4) Council further notes that the Department of Transport also estimate that 80 fewer fatal accidents would occur if evenings were lighter.

(5) Council recognises that altering the present system may cause problems in the north of Scotland where the reduction in daylight hours is more acute, but believes that, if the Scottish Parliament believes that special consideration was needed for Scotland, they would have the power to pass the necessary legislation.

(6) Council therefore agrees to add its voice to the growing clamour for the current system using British Summer Time to be rescinded and priority be given instead to maintaining lighter evenings as opposed to lighter mornings.

103 MOTION: ENGAGEMENT

Proposed by Councillor Simon Holbrook

Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Council notes that:

(1) The impending and unprecedented squeeze on public finance, estimated to leave a budget shortfall of £60 - £70m between 2011 and 2014, will place severe pressure on all areas of council spending.

(2) Whilst remaining fully committed to minimising costs through improved ways of working, the likely scale of government grant reductions will be such that spending on all front line services will come under pressure.

(3) To successfully meet these challenges, methods of service delivery will need to change and innovate in a way that ensures those services still meet residents' needs.

(4) To deliver broad public support for change in the way council services are delivered, a new approach is required to ensure the active engagement and support of local people.

(5) Statutory consultation processes (such as in planning or schools reorganisation) and non-statutory processes such as in the Strategic Asset Review can sometimes be insufficient to overcome the barriers to change that can occur by not sharing problems at an early stage and consulting only on preferred options. The Council's new Comprehensive Engagement Strategy is an important step forward, but more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council requests that:

The Director of Corporate Services bring forward proposals for enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken. Such proposals shall encompass a flexible system of engagement and consultation at appropriate points in the process in order to aid decision making, and should include:

- Sharing the problem or issue and developing broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions.
- Developing a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making.
- Developing the role of the area forums within any engagement process, to include more delegated budgets and decision making, empowerment of local residents and opportunities to influence policy change through local involvement.
- Improved use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads. This information will also be available through libraries and one-stop shops.
- Developing the role of full council to allow 'open debates' which will guide the development of policy.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Insert new paragraphs (1) & (2):

(1) Council agrees that the Sue Charteris Public Inquiry demonstrated the public appetite for meaningful consultation, but regrets that at no stage could the Administration convince the inquiry or Wirral residents that its consultation procedures, or its response to them, had been adequate or appropriate.

(2) Council notes that the junior partner in the Council's Administration has been listening to Wirral's Conservative Group and welcomes the death bed conversion contained in the motion below, to introduce genuine consultation arrangements and Direct Democracy even if it is a cynical and futile attempt by one half of the Administration to turn back the clock and atone for past mistakes brought about by its own arrogance.

Retain the remaining paragraphs and renumber:

(3) The impending and unprecedented squeeze on public finance, estimated to leave a budget shortfall of £60 - £70m between 2011 and 2014, will place severe pressure on all areas of council spending.

(4) Whilst remaining fully committed to minimising costs through improved ways of working, the likely scale of government grant reductions will be such that spending on all front line services will come under pressure.

(5) To successfully meet these challenges, methods of service delivery will need to change and innovate in a way that ensures those services still meet residents needs.

(6) To deliver broad public support for change in the way council services are delivered, a new approach is required to ensure the active engagement and support of local people.

Replace former paragraph (5) and insert new paragraph, now number (7):

(7) Statutory consultation processes (such as in planning or schools reorganisation) and non-statutory processes such as in the Strategic Asset Review can sometimes be insufficient to overcome the barriers to change that can occur by not sharing problems at an early stage and consulting only on preferred options as well as failing to consult local communities adequately to reflect a sense of place. The Council's new Comprehensive Engagement Strategy is an important step forward, but more needs to be done'.

Replace paragraph following 'Therefore, this Council requests that' with:

The Director of Corporate Services bring forward proposals for enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions and the overall strategic direction of the Council include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken, as well as having their implementation monitored. Such proposals shall encompass a flexible system of engagement and consultation at appropriate points in the process in order to aid decision making, and should include:

Retain bullet points and add new paragraph:

(8) Further, calls on the Council to instigate a full and open consultation on the strategic direction of Wirral Council to deliver a forward-plan that encompasses the aspirations of all Wirral's people and not just the preconceptions and prejudices of an out-of-touch Cabinet.

Following a debate the amendment was put and lost (25:36).

The motion was put and carried (61:0)

Resolved (61:0) –

Council notes that:

(1) The impending and unprecedented squeeze on public finance, estimated to leave a budget shortfall of £60 - £70m between 2011 and 2014, will place severe pressure on all areas of council spending.

(2) Whilst remaining fully committed to minimising costs through improved ways of working, the likely scale of government grant reductions will be such that spending on all front line services will come under pressure.

(3) To successfully meet these challenges, methods of service delivery will need to change and innovate in a way that ensures those services still meet residents' needs.

(4) To deliver broad public support for change in the way council services are delivered, a new approach is required to ensure the active engagement and support of local people.

(5) Statutory consultation processes (such as in planning or schools reorganisation) and non-statutory processes such as in the Strategic Asset Review can sometimes be insufficient to overcome the barriers to change that can occur by not sharing problems at an early stage and consulting only on preferred options. The Council's new Comprehensive Engagement Strategy is an important step forward, but more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council requests that:

The Director of Corporate Services bring forward proposals for enhanced community engagement to ensure that major policy decisions include more robust processes of public consultation, as appropriate, before decisions are taken. Such proposals shall encompass a flexible system of engagement and consultation at appropriate points in the process in order to aid decision making, and should include:

- Sharing the problem or issue and developing broad support on the need for change before progressing on to possible solutions.**
- Developing a 'green paper' approach to setting out options and possible solutions within the operational, policy and financial constraints with genuine opportunity for people to influence decision making.**
- Developing the role of the area forums within any engagement process, to include more delegated budgets and decision making, empowerment of local residents and opportunities to influence policy change through local involvement.**
- Improved use of the Council's website as a consultation portal, with a list of active consultations in progress and with the relevant supporting documents available as downloads. This information will also be available through libraries and one-stop shops.**
- Developing the role of full council to allow 'open debates' which will guide the development of policy.**

104 MOTION: GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

Proposed by Councillor Tom Anderson

Seconded by Councillor James Keeley

Council notes and congratulates the high proportion of Wirral's graduates. Council further notes that Wirral has a disproportionately high level of Wirral graduates seeking work outside the borough, due to a lack of graduate opportunities in Wirral.

Council believes that if we can encourage Wirral youngsters who have participated in higher education to stay in the locality this will enhance our attractiveness for inward investment and the local economy.

Being the largest employer on Wirral, Council therefore resolves to request the Chief Executive:

(1) To conduct a review of Departments were there may be a skills gap and were a graduate training scheme could be feasible.

(2) To investigate the possibilities of the Council establishing a Graduate Training Scheme as other Local Authorities have done in the North West.

(3) Contact the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), who specialise in Local Authority graduate training schemes, to explore how Wirral may participate.

(4) To report his findings to an early meeting of the Cabinet.

The following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2), was accepted as a friendly amendment by the movers of the motion.

Proposed by Councillor Simon Holbrook

Seconded by Councillor Sarah Quinn

Replace paragraphs (1) and (2) with:

(1) To develop a policy on graduate recruitment, training and development as part of the Council's Workforce Planning Strategy that will support skills development within the Council.

(2) Where appropriate, to work jointly with other local authorities and public sector partners in order to seek to share the costs of running such a scheme.

add to the end of paragraph (4):

and the Employment and Appointments Committee.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

The motion, as amended, was then put to the vote and it was –

Resolved (unanimously) –

Council notes and congratulates the high proportion of Wirral's graduates. Council further notes that Wirral has a disproportionately high level of Wirral graduates seeking work outside the borough, due to a lack of graduate opportunities in Wirral.

Council believes that if we can encourage Wirral youngsters who have participated in higher education to stay in the locality this will enhance our attractiveness for inward investment and the local economy.

Being the largest employer on Wirral, Council therefore resolves to request the Chief Executive:

(1) To develop a policy on graduate recruitment, training and development as part of the Council's Workforce Planning Strategy that will support skills development within the Council.

(2) Where appropriate, to work jointly with other local authorities and public sector partners in order to seek to share the costs of running such a scheme.

(3) Contact the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP), who specialise in Local Authority graduate training schemes, to explore how Wirral may participate.

(4) To report his findings to an early meeting of the Cabinet and the Employment and Appointments Committee.

105 MOTION: ELECTED MAYOR FOR LIVERPOOL

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

(1) This Council condemns the Conservative Party plans to impose an elected Mayor on the city of Liverpool if they win the next general election.

(2) Council further condemns the fact that the Mayor, who will be elected only by the people of Liverpool, will be given executive responsibility for travel across Merseyside, and potentially for other matters affecting Wirral, which means that the people of Wirral will have no say in matters that directly affect them.

(3) Wirral is an equal partner in City Region Governance. This would be undermined if the Mayor of Liverpool has executive powers as indicated.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (36:25) – That the motion be approved.

106 MOTION: MID WIRRAL LINE

Proposed by Councillor Jean Quinn

Seconded by Councillor Frank Doyle

(1) Council notes that the long hoped for electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham line has not progressed much beyond the feasibility study stage.

(2) The scale of the project has resulted in Merseytravel, Central Government and the Welsh Assembly Government being unable to secure the funding necessary.

(3) Council believes that development and electrification of the Borderlands line has become even more vital during the current economic crisis and subsequent period of

recovery. In the short term, it would provide immediate opportunities for employment of construction workers.

(4) Development and electrification of the Borderlands line would create improved links to an area of economic opportunity for some of our more deprived neighbourhoods in North Birkenhead in need of access to jobs and the financial stability and self-esteem that come from employment.

(5) Studies show that the provision of new stations at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) would attract the most people to use the line.

(6) Council believes that for the project to have any chance of being completed it will have to be delivered in affordable stages.

(7) Therefore, Council resolves to support the upgrading of the Borderlands railway in stages, starting with the provision of new stations on the existing diesel line at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) in the short term followed by electrification to Woodchurch in the medium term and further electrification along the route as required.

(8) The Council Chief Executive is asked to convey the terms of this motion to Merseytravel and request that the Chief Executive, Director General of Merseytravel presents a report on progress to an appropriate meeting of Cabinet.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley
Seconded by Councillor Ian Lewis

Delete all text and replace with:

(1) Council recognises and applauds the enormous amount of work, time and money that Merseytravel, the Welsh Assembly Government and other stakeholders have put in to the proposals for the electrification of the Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) line.

(2) Council recognises that linking the line into the Merseyrail Electrics network will bring significant economic benefits to Wirral, Liverpool city region and North Wales, with the obvious environmental benefits.

(3) Council recognises that electrification of the Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) line is, and remains a Merseytravel policy.

(4) Council is dismayed that the Network Rail assessment of costs for the proposed Bidston-Wrexham (Borderlands) electrification programme, were significantly inflated at £207 million pounds, compared to independent assessments, and have acted as a significant barrier to deliver the electrification programme.

(5) Council believes by integrating management of the infrastructure with service delivery, greater efficiencies and investment can be secured for the benefit of local people. Therefore Council further supports the efforts made by Merseytravel to take control of the track of the Merseyrail Network from Network Rail, and welcomes the

support of a future Conservative Government for such a pilot scheme on the Merseyrail network.

- (a) Therefore, Council requests that Merseytravel, working with all other relevant stakeholders, continue to explore all options that may be available to them to deliver electrification of the Bidston Wrexham Line (Borderlands), either in stages, or in its totality, in a format that they believe will be the most cost effective, while bringing the most beneficial results to Wirral, and the wider Merseyside communities.
- (b) Council also resolves to support any further changes that will make Network Rail more accountable and responsive to its customers, and to local and regional circumstances and priorities.
- (c) Council is asked to convey the terms of this motion to Merseytravel, and invites the Chief Executive, Director General of Merseytravel to attend a future Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, (to which all elected Members be invited to attend), to give an update on the proposals for the electrification of the Bidston Wrexham Line, and the way forward.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (25:36).

The motion was put and carried (36:25).

Resolved (36:25) –

(1) Council notes that the long hoped for electrification of the Bidston to Wrexham line has not progressed much beyond the feasibility study stage.

(2) The scale of the project has resulted in Merseytravel, Central Government and the Welsh Assembly Government being unable to secure the funding necessary.

(3) Council believes that development and electrification of the Borderlands line has become even more vital during the current economic crisis and subsequent period of recovery. In the short term, it would provide immediate opportunities for employment of construction workers.

(4) Development and electrification of the Borderlands line would create improved links to an area of economic opportunity for some of our more deprived neighbourhoods in North Birkenhead in need of access to jobs and the financial stability and self-esteem that come from employment.

(5) Studies show that the provision of new stations at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) would attract the most people to use the line.

(6) Council believes that for the project to have any chance of being completed it will have to be delivered in affordable stages.

(7) Therefore, Council resolves to support the upgrading of the Borderlands railway in stages, starting with the provision of new stations on the existing diesel line at Prenton (Woodchurch Road) and Beechwood (Fender Way) in the short term followed by electrification to Woodchurch in the medium term and further electrification along the route as required.

(8) The Council Chief Executive is asked to convey the terms of this motion to Merseytravel and request that the Chief Executive, Director General of Merseytravel presents a report on progress to an appropriate meeting of Cabinet.

107 **MOTION: THE BIG LUNCH**

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser
Seconded by Councillor Les Rowlands

(1) This Council recognises the benefits community interaction: reduction in street crime, shared transport, increase support of local businesses, physical improvements to neighbourhoods etc.

(2) This Council notes that whilst 9.6million regularly use social networking sites, 97% of UK communities have become more fragmented in the last 30 years.

(3) Council believes that innovative projects, such as The Big Lunch, encourage a sense of community, sparking new, sustainable networks of value for people.

(4) Council therefore resolves to ask officers to investigate ways of helping communities to organise a Big Lunch event in their neighbourhood and to reduce the cost of requesting a road closure for this event.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (unanimously) – That the motion be approved.

108 **MOTION: PROSTATE CANCER IN WALLASEY AND MORETON**

(Councillor S Quinn, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the chamber during the vote on this item).

Proposed by Councillor Leah Fraser
Seconded by Councillor Steve Williams

(1) Council is concerned to note that Wallasey has the fifth highest rate of prostate cancer in England (out of 529 constituencies) for deaths from prostate cancer – 44 deaths per 100,000, 77% higher than the average for England.

(2) Council notes that one of the main factors affecting a man's chances of survival is the length of time between the first symptoms and diagnosis. It welcomes the recent public health campaigns by Macmillan and the ongoing work by organisations such as the North West Cancer Research Fund.

(3) Council also welcomes the initial response of the Primary Care Trust to these alarming figures and requests a report on the issues be brought to the Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):

Proposed by Councillor Chris Teggin
Seconded by Councillor Ann Bridson

Replace (1) with:

(1) Although the number of deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral is about the same as would be expected when compared to the rate of death in England as a whole, Council is concerned to note that the latest available data shows that between 2002 and 2008 there were 407 deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral.

Replace (3) with:

(3) Council welcomes the initial response of NHS Wirral to these figures, calls for a Wirral wide education campaign encouraging men to be screened for this condition and requests a report on the issue is brought to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and carried unanimously.

Resolved –

(1) Although the number of deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral is about the same as would be expected when compared to the rate of death in England as a whole, Council is concerned to note that the latest available data shows that between 2002 and 2008 there were 407 deaths from prostate cancer in Wirral.

(2) Council notes that one of the main factors affecting a man's chances of survival is the length of time between the first symptoms and diagnosis. It welcomes the recent public health campaigns by Macmillan and the ongoing work by organisations such as the North West Cancer Research Fund.

(3) Council welcomes the initial response of NHS Wirral to these figures, calls for a Wirral wide education campaign encouraging men to be screened for this condition and requests a report on the issue is brought to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

109 **MOTION: EMPTY RATES**

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

(1) This Council welcomes the Chancellor's announcement of a temporary, one year, increase in the threshold exempting empty commercial properties up to £18000 rateable value from business rates.

(2) Council deplores the Government's decision to remove business rate relief on empty properties from April 2011 noting that:

- The tax is a heavy burden on small firms struggling with the recession. They tax individuals and companies on property assets that generate zero income.
- Buildings are empty because of a lack of demand. During a downturn, both rents and capital values fall, there is no reason for a Landlord to keep a building empty.
- Rates are a tax for provision of local services, empty buildings make little demand on local services.
- Speculative developments and regeneration projects are being shelved according to the Government's own regeneration experts. In the current economic climate, as occupier confidence wanes, it becomes more difficult to find commercial tenants.
- Older buildings are being demolished sooner than intended. Buildings nearing the end of their life might previously have been let at modest rents on a short term basis, before redevelopment. However, empty rates now make it cost effective to knock down a perfectly good building than to find a tenant. This will reduce the supply of affordable property. It also contradicts the Government's green policy.

(3) Council asks the Chief Executive writes to the Chancellor asking for the restoration of empty rate relief.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (43:18) – That the motion be approved.

110 MOTION: IMPACT OF BUSINESS RATE REVALUATION

(Councillor J Williams, having declared a prejudicial interest, left the chamber during the vote on this item).

Proposed by Councillor John Hale
Seconded by Councillor Leah Fraser

(1) Council notes the on going impact of the recession and the serious effect sudden and massive increases in business rates could have on job losses and business failures.

(2) Council as a matter of urgency, requests the Chief Executive to develop and present proposals to an early meeting of Wirral's Cabinet for a tax relief scheme to help the worst affected businesses in Wirral.

(3) Council believes that the scheme should be particularly focussed on the smaller Wirral businesses facing the biggest increases.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2):

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

Delete all after, '(1) Council notes' and Insert:

that the level of rates for local businesses is not set locally, but nationally and that business rates are then pooled nationally and re-distributed to local government as part of the overall local government settlement, affecting the amount of grant which the government gives to each local council.

(2) Council further notes that any local tax relief scheme would not be funded by the government, but would have to be funded in a discretionary manner by the local Council.

(3) Council recognises that the Conservative Party nationally has clearly stated its intent to impose major cuts in public spending in order to reduce the national budget deficit, and that, if past history is anything to go by, local government would face severe reductions in grant under a Conservative government, making discretionary payments difficult to meet.

(4) Council notes that, once again, this would, in effect, be a transfer of costs from national to local government.

(5) Council also recognises that the Conservative party have pledged to scrap inheritance tax on estates worth up to a million pounds, or two million pounds for a couple, benefiting many of their wealthy supporters.

(6) Council believes that the money spent on reducing inheritance tax would be better spent on supporting local businesses and calls on the Conservatives locally to demand that their national party changes their policies to include a nationally funded tax relief scheme for local businesses facing difficulties in the current recession.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

The amendment was put and lost (17:43).

The motion was put and carried (43:17).

Resolved (43:17) –

(1) Council notes the on going impact of the recession and the serious effect sudden and massive increases in business rates could have on job losses and business failures.

(2) Council as a matter of urgency, requests the Chief Executive to develop and present proposals to an early meeting of Wirral's Cabinet for a tax relief scheme to help the worst affected businesses in Wirral.

(3) Council believes that the scheme should be particularly focussed on the smaller Wirral businesses facing the biggest increases.

111 **MOTION: ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Proposed by Councillor Sheila Clarke
Seconded by Councillor Karen Hayes

(1) Council notes that anti social behaviour is one of the top issues for Wirral residents. Council believes that easily accessible and well-maintained services for young people are one of the most effective ways of providing positive alternatives for young people, most of whom are more likely to be victims of crime than the perpetrator.

(2) Council notes that participants in the Youth Parliament have previously raised issues of crime, anti social behaviour and provision of youth services with members and officers.

(3) Council notes that a review is being conducted on the provision of services for younger people and therefore requests officers ensure that young people and voluntary and community organisations be widely engaged in a meaningful consultation before a decision on the future shape of those services is made.

The following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2), was accepted as a friendly amendment by the movers of the motion.

Proposed by Councillor George Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Insert the following 3 paragraphs after paragraph 1 and re-number accordingly:

(2) Council welcomes the success of current schemes to tackle youth related crime which have seen recently reported incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people in Wirral, reducing by 21% and arrests of young people falling by 20%.

(3) Council notes that at the centre of the range of initiatives is the multi-agency Challenge and Support Project which makes contact with all young people who are identified as engaging in anti-social behaviour or at risk of doing so, and both challenges their behaviour and looks at ways of providing support or intervention to deal with underlying problems. Council welcomes the fact that this has seen a significant improvement in behaviour in over half the young people referred and has seen a notable reduction in the number of ABCs and ASBOs issued against young people.

(4) Council also welcomes the fact that Youth Crime Action Plan funding has also resulted in increased engagement with young people on the streets and at the end of the school day; increased reparation by young people engaged in crime and antisocial behaviour and multi-agency operations targeting and improving the safety of young people engaged in behaviour that is a risk to themselves and/or others.

The following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2), was also accepted as a friendly amendment by the movers of the motion.

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones
Seconded by Councillor John Salter

Add final paragraph:

Council notes that Seacombe's Allandale Youth Club has for many decades been a centre of beneficial youth engagement of the kind discussed in earlier paragraphs. Council applauds its management committee and volunteers for bringing the club to a high standard of excellence for the young people of our locality. However, with no permanent funding base such charitable trusts risk facing an income hiatus from time to time. Council therefore also applauds the timely response of our professional officers, and those of Wirral Biz, who responded to a request to provide guidance towards a strengthened management structure and a medium/long term business plan. Council further applauds local pubs and clubs for agreeing to stage discrete fund raising events to assist the Allandale in the short term thereby demonstrating a high degree of community support.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 7(8), the Council did not debate this matter.

Resolved (unanimously) –

(1) Council notes that anti social behaviour is one of the top issues for Wirral residents. Council believes that easily accessible and well-maintained services for young people are one of the most effective ways of providing positive alternatives for young people, most of whom are more likely to be victims of crime than the perpetrator.

(2) Council welcomes the success of current schemes to tackle youth related crime which have seen recently reported incidents of anti-social behaviour involving young people in Wirral, reducing by 21% and arrests of young people falling by 20%.

(3) Council notes that at the centre of the range of initiatives is the multi-agency Challenge and Support Project which makes contact with all young people who are identified as engaging in anti-social behaviour or at risk of doing so, and both challenges their behaviour and looks at ways of providing support or intervention to deal with underlying problems. Council welcomes the fact that this has seen a significant improvement in behaviour in over half the young people referred and has seen a notable reduction in the number of ABCs and ASBOs issued against young people.

(4) Council also welcomes the fact that Youth Crime Action Plan funding has also resulted in increased engagement with young people on the streets and at the end of the school day; increased reparation by young people engaged in crime and antisocial behaviour and multi-agency operations targeting and improving the safety of young people engaged in behaviour that is a risk to themselves and/or others.

(5) Council notes that participants in the Youth Parliament have previously raised issues of crime, anti social behaviour and provision of youth services with members and officers.

(6) Council notes that a review is being conducted on the provision of services for younger people and therefore requests officers ensure that young people

and voluntary and community organisations be widely engaged in a meaningful consultation before a decision on the future shape of those services is made.

(7) Council notes that Seacombe's Allandale Youth Club has for many decades been a centre of beneficial youth engagement of the kind discussed in earlier paragraphs. Council applauds its management committee and volunteers for bringing the club to a high standard of excellence for the young people of our locality. However, with no permanent funding base such charitable trusts risk facing an income hiatus from time to time. Council therefore also applauds the timely response of our professional officers, and those of Wirral Biz, who responded to a request to provide guidance towards a strengthened management structure and a medium/long term business plan. Council further applauds local pubs and clubs for agreeing to stage discrete fund raising events to assist the Allandale in the short term thereby demonstrating a high degree of community support.

112 **VACANCIES**

The Council was requested to deal with the following appointments:

Statutory Committees and Panels

Social Care and Inclusion

(i) Discharge from Guardianship by Wirral Council under the Mental Health Act 1983 Panel (1:1:1) (Established by Cabinet 26/11/09 – members to be appointed from membership of Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor A Bridson
Councillor D Roberts
Councillor G Watt

Resolved – That the appointments be approved.