

COUNCIL

Monday, 15 October 2012

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Gerry Ellis) in the Chair
Deputy Mayor (Councillor Dave Mitchell)

Councillors	RL Abbey	T Harney	D Realey
	C Blakeley	P Hayes	L Rennie
	E Boulton	S Hodrien	D Roberts
	A Brighthouse	M Hornby	L Rowlands
	W Clements	M Johnston	J Salter
	A Cox	AER Jones	H Smith
	J Crabtree	C Jones	T Smith
	G Davies	P Kearney	W Smith
	P Davies	S Kelly	J Stapleton
	WJ Davies	B Kenny	M Sullivan
	D Dodd	A Leech	A Sykes
	P Doughty	D McCubbin	J Walsh
	D Elderton	AR McLachlan	G Watt
	S Foulkes	M McLaughlin	S Whittingham
	L Fraser	C Meaden	J Williamson
	P Gilchrist	B Mooney	I Williams
	P Glasman	S Mountney	KJ Williams
	JE Green	C Muspratt	P Williams
	R Gregson	S Niblock	S Williams
	P Hackett	T Norbury	
	J Hale	C Povall	

Apologies Councillors A Hodson A McArdle
P Johnson

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors A McLachlan, D Realey and H Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of their appointment to the Board of Beechwood and Ballantyne Community Housing Association.

Councillors R Abbey and A Leech declared a non-pecuniary interest, in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of their appointment to the Board of Leasowe Community Homes.

Councillors T Harney and S Whittingham declared a non-pecuniary interest, in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of their appointment to the Board of Wirral Partnership Homes.

Councillor G. Davies declared a non - pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of his appointment to the Wirral Partnership Homes – Community Fund Working Group.

Councillor D Mitchell declared a pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of him being in receipt of benefits and subsequently left the chamber during the vote on this matter.

Councillors D Dodd and S Niblock declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 7 (Cuts to Fire and Rescue Service) (see minute 61 post) by virtue of their appointment on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor M Sullivan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of him being a Friend of Pensby Library and a member of Pensby Reading Group.

Councillor W Clements declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of her being a Friend of Greasby Library.

Councillor L Fraser declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of her being a Friend of Wallasey Village Library.

Councillor M Hornby declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of him being a Friend of Irby and Greasby Libraries.

Councillor P Doughty declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 (c) (Cabinet Minute 92 (27/9/12) – Local Development Framework for Wirral – Core Strategy – Publication of Proposed Submission Draft) (see minutes 51 and 60 post) by virtue of his employment.

Councillors C Blakeley and M McLaughlin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 10 (Police Cuts) (see minute 64 post) by virtue of their appointment on the Merseyside Police Authority.

Councillor J Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of his appointment to the Board of Wirral Partnership Homes and a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of him being a Friend of Irby Library.

Councillor D McCubbin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of his appointment to the Board of Wirral Partnership Homes and a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 16 (Libraries as Centres of their Communities) (see minute 70 post) by virtue of him being a Friend of Pensby and Irby Libraries.

Councillor D Roberts declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 4 (Welfare Benefit Cuts) (see minute 59 post) by virtue of her appointment to the Board of Wirral Partnership Homes and a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 7 (Cuts to Fire and Rescue Service) (see minute 61 post) by virtue of her appointment on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor L Rennie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 7 (Cuts to Fire and Rescue Service) (see minute 61 post) by virtue of her appointment on the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority and a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 10 (Police Cuts) (see minute 64 post) by virtue of her husband's employment and her being in receipt of a police pension.

Councillor S Williams declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Motion 10 (Police Cuts) (see minute 64 post) by virtue of his previous employment and subsequently left the chamber during the vote on this matter.

Councillor C Muspratt declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Motion 10 (Police Cuts) (see minute 64 post) as notified to the Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management and subsequently left the chamber during the vote on this matter.

47 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor's Chaplain, Revd Dr David Chester, led the Council in prayers.

The Mayor congratulated Councillors Phil Davies, Steve Foulkes, Chris Meaden and Harry Smith on their 21 years service to the Council.

The Mayor asked that the Council join him in sending the best wishes of the Council to Councillor Peter Johnson, who was unwell in Arrowe Park Hospital.

The Mayor thanked everybody who had supported the Mayor's Ball.

The Mayor introduced Stephen Gerrard, Interim Head of Legal and Member Services, who would be with the Council for the next six months.

48 **PETITIONS**

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

Councillor B Kenny on behalf of 168 signatories requesting residents' parking on Rodney Street and Vincent Norton Court, Birkenhead.

Councillor H Smith on behalf of 32 signatories requesting support for installing alley gates in Upper Brassey Street, Bidston.

Resolved - That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate chief officers in accordance with Standing Order 34.

49 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 July, 2012, had been circulated to members and it was –

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

50 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Phil Davies, addressed the Council on the following matters:

The Council had met the 'Investors in People' standard and had had its status renewed. Following two weeks on site and around 190 interviews with staff the assessors reported positive progress and noted that all areas for development they identified were already in the Council's Improvement Plan.

He thanked all staff involved in the Ricoh Women's Open Golf Championship at the Royal Liverpool Golf Club in September. The Council had received positive feedback from the organisers and national TV coverage helped to showcase the Borough.

The Leader thanked all Council staff who had helped deal with the impact of the flooding from the abnormal rainfall last month. With a particular thanks to the Council's Highways staff and staff from Adult Social Care who had helped residents in areas which were badly affected.

Wirral Council's Pest Control Team had been recognised by the Cabinet Office for providing the highest standards of customer care to the people of Wirral. The Leader congratulated all members of the team.

The Leader also congratulated the Merseyside Pension Fund which was named 'Winner' for its work in communications within public sector pension schemes at the 'Professional Pensions', Scheme of the Year Awards. Its success, at what were considered the premier pension industry awards, came in recognition of its innovative approach to communicating the Government's proposals for a new Local Government Pension Scheme from 2014, specifically its dedicated website and newsletter. The Fund's website on scheme reform had drawn interest from other funds and had been hailed as exemplary by the Local Government Association.

All 14 of the Borough's open spaces received Green Flag Awards in recognition of high standards of maintenance and management and excellent facilities. The Leader expressed his thanks to the Mayor who organised a celebration in recognition of the work that went into setting such high standards and particular thanks to the Council's staff and also the many volunteers and Friends Groups who had helped to look after the Borough's parks and open spaces.

The Leader announced that last month had seen a prestigious national conference held at the Floral Pavilion on the legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, with Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson as the key note speaker.

A number of members had attended an event recently to celebrate 10 years of the Get Into Reading initiative which had helped literally thousands of people in the Borough to improve their literacy levels, secure employment and improve their health.

The Leader was pleased to announce that Councillor Moira McLaughlin had been appointed Carers' Champion and that he was reviewing other 'Champions' and would make an announcement shortly. He would encourage all members to sign up to become 'Digital Champions' and help address the digital exclusion agenda.

The Leader was also pleased to announce that a new 'park & ride' service would open shortly at Bidston and Birkenhead North stations. He thanked all staff from the Council and Merseytravel who had worked hard to deliver this scheme.

The Leader announced that he would like to review the role of Full Council and would be discussing this with the other Party Leaders and the Improvement Board.

51 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL**

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

One matter from Cabinet on 27 September, 2012, minute 92 (Local Development Framework for Wirral – Core Strategy – Publication of Proposed Submission Draft) was submitted for approval but was the subject of an objection (see minute 60 post).

A report of the Director of Finance (Council Budget Decisions) was submitted for approval but was the subject of two amendments (see minutes 58 and 62 post).

In respect of minute 74 (Cabinet – 6/9/12), and in accordance with Standing Order 11 (2) (a), Councillor Phil Gilchrist had submitted a question to the Leader of the Council to which Councillor Phil Davies responded accordingly.

On a motion by Councillor P Davies and seconded by Councillor A McLachlan, it was –

Resolved – That the following matters be approved:

- (i). **Minute 74 (Cabinet – 6/9/12) - Revenue Monitoring 2012/2013 – Month 3 (June 2012)**
- (ii). **Minute 75 (Cabinet – 6/9/12) - Capital Monitoring Report 2012/2013 – Period 3 (June 2012)**
- (iii). **Minute 80 (Cabinet – 6/9/12) - Local Development Framework - Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton**
- (iv). **Minute 83 (Cabinet – 18/9/12) - Senior Management Restructure**
- (v). **Minute 90 (Cabinet – 27/9/12) - The Flood and Water Act 2010 - Ordinary Watercourse Consenting and Enforcement**
- (vi). **Minute 29 (Employment and Appointments Committee – 24/9/12) - Appeals Sub-Committee**
- (vii). **Report and recommendations of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances held on 23 July, 2012**

52 **QUESTIONS**

Mr J Brace, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 11, submitted a question on the introduction of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Councillor Ann McLachlan (Cabinet Member – Improvement and Governance) responded that the Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management had emailed a written response to Mr Brace and Councillor Jeff Green suggested that this response should be circulated to all Members.

53 **MATTERS FOR DEBATE**

The Leader of the Council suggested, and it was agreed that Motion 5 (Hillsborough Independent Panel Report) be considered as the first debate and the matters listed for debate in accordance with Standing Order 5(2)(m) were dealt with as indicated in minutes 54 to 71 below.

54 **MOTION: HILLSBOROUGH INDEPENDENT PANEL REPORT**

Proposed by Councillor Paul Hayes
Seconded by Councillor Jeff Green

- (1) This Council remembers the death of the 96 who lost their lives going to a football match in Sheffield's Hillsborough stadium on April 15 1989, including twelve citizens of this borough.
- (2) Council welcomes the full and unambiguous apology from the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government for the length of time it has taken to discover the truth of how those who should have protected our citizens actually behaved and commends the tenacity, dignity and courage of the friends and family of those who lost their lives. They have tirelessly pursued a campaign for truth and justice whilst the burden of grief lays heavy on their hearts, their bravery and determination serves as an example to us all.
- (3) Council welcomes the publication of the report by the Hillsborough Independent Panel, and on behalf of the people of Wirral, Council thanks all members of the Panel for finally succeeding in what previous enquiries have failed to do: uncovering the truth.
- (4) Council believes that after truth justice must follow. Council urges all prosecuting authorities to consider the findings of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and asks them to relentlessly pursue those culpable for the deaths of so many and the subsequent attempt to evade justice by repeated lies in a concerted attempt to lay the blame with brave survivors and fans.
- (5) Council again repudiates the views of those who have peddled lies about Liverpool fan's involvement in this tragedy. We hope those guilty of this horrendous slander are now silenced by their shame.
- (6) Council therefore resolves:

- (i). To ask that the Chief Executive, on behalf of the Council, writes to the Hillsborough Families Support Group, the Hillsborough Justice Campaign and Hope for Hillsborough to express our continued support for their campaigns for justice and thanking them for their steadfast examples of courage and dignity.
- (ii). To ask that the Acting Director of Children's Services, following the recent example of certain Liverpool Schools, seeks to facilitate a discussion between the Head Teachers of Wirral's Schools on how learning about the Hillsborough Stadium disaster can be incorporated into their school's curriculum; ensuring that all future generations know the truth of what happened on that day.

The Leader of the Council and Councillor Dave Mitchell associated their respective Groups with the remarks of Councillor Hayes in moving the motion and it was then –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the motion be approved.

55 **PROCEDURE**

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management advised the Council that in light of advice received from the Interim Director of Finance, Councillor Green's amendment to Motion 1 (Meeting Our Budget Challenge), Motion 12 (Regeneration Reserves Take a Hit), Motion 14 (Making Progress with 20MPH Zones Where They Are Requested, Needed and Accepted), Motion 17 (A Moral Contract Broken) and Amendment 3 (Report of the Interim Director of Finance – Council Budget Decisions) needed to be revised and amended wording was then circulated to all Members.

The Mayor then adjourned the meeting at 7.00pm to enable circulation and consideration of the amended wording.

The meeting reconvened at 7.20pm.

Council then resolved to accept the amended motions and amendments as circulated.

It was then agreed that Motions 1 (Meeting Our Budget Challenge) and 2 (Neighbourhood Funding Cuts) and Amendment 3 (Report of the Interim Director of Finance – Council Budget Decisions) be considered as one debate with separate votes taken on each.

56 **MOTION: MEETING OUR BUDGET CHALLENGE**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

- (1) This Council is facing a huge budgetary challenge with a potential overspend in 2012/2013 of £17million and the need to save around £100million over the next three years. This equates to around one-third of the net Council budget.

- (2) Council notes that achieving budget and financial stability is one of the key priorities in the Improvement Plan agreed between the Council and the Local Government Association.
- (3) Council welcomes the new approach to budget-setting which aims to introduce more rigour, openness and transparency into the process.
- (4) Council supports the measures which have been taken to address our budget challenge, i.e.
 - (a) A freeze on all non-essential services and recruitment and the moving of unallocated reserves to help bridge the gap in this year's budget.
 - (b) A review of the Capital Programme involving a pause on spending whilst each scheme is reviewed.
 - (c) Monthly budget monitoring reports produced by the Interim Director of Finance to ensure Members are fully informed as to progress in controlling the potential overspend.
 - (d) An urgent re-structuring of senior management by the Chief Executive with the aim of establishing a strong corporate management function and achieving significant savings.
 - (e) A major consultation initiative to inform the 2013/2015 budget linked to a new Corporate Plan, involving the public, key partners and elected members.
 - (f) The production of a clear budget timetable by the Interim Director of Finance including special Scrutiny Committee meetings before Cabinet reach its final decisions on next year's budget.
- (5) Council welcomes the responsible approach taken by all parties to this budget challenge and recognises the importance of ensuring that all members can contribute to the budget process. This will lead to greater transparency in decision-making and will help to improve the culture within the organisation.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) This Council is facing a huge budgetary challenge with a potential overspend in 2012/2013 of £17million and the need to save around £100million over the next three years. This equates to around one third of the net Council budget.
- (2) However Council notes that the saving of circa £100million is not required as a result of Government Cuts with two thirds of that total, i.e. With £67million needing to be found as a result of increased costs.

- (3) Council notes that achieving budget and financial stability is one of the key priorities in the Improvement Plan agreed between the Council and the Local Government Association.
- (4) Whilst Council supports many of the measures that have been taken to address our budget challenge. It does not support the withdrawal of Neighbourhood funding and asks for that to be reconsidered immediately.

However Council does support the following:

- (a) A freeze on all non-essential services and recruitment and the moving of unallocated reserves to help bridge the gap in this year's budget.
 - (b) A review of the Capital Programme involving a pause on spending whilst each scheme is reviewed.
 - (c) Monthly budget monitoring reports produced by the Interim Director of Finance to ensure Members are fully informed as to progress in controlling the potential overspend.
 - (d) An urgent re-structuring of senior management by the Chief Executive with the aim of establishing a strong corporate management function and achieving significant savings.
 - (e) A major consultation initiative to inform the 2013/2015 budget linked to a new Corporate Plan, involving the public, key partners and elected members.
 - (f) The production of a clear budget timetable by the Interim Director of Finance.
 - (g) Full scrutiny of Cabinet decisions by special Scrutiny Committee meetings after Cabinet reaches its final decisions on next year's budget
- (5) Council welcomes the responsible approach taken by all parties to this budget challenge and recognises the importance of ensuring that all members can contribute to the budget process. This will lead to greater transparency in decision-making and will help to improve the culture within the organisation.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Alan Brighthouse
Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Delete 4(a) and 4(b) and rebadge 4(c), (d), (e) and (f) as 4(a), (b), (c) and (d)

Following a combined debate (see minutes 57 and 58 post) and Councillor Phil Davies having replied, the amendment proposed by Councillor Green was put and lost (19:43) (One abstention).

The amendment proposed by Councillor Brighthouse was put and lost (7:55) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (36:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) This Council is facing a huge budgetary challenge with a potential overspend in 2012/2013 of £17million and the need to save around £100million over the next three years. This equates to around one-third of the net Council budget.**
- (2) Council notes that achieving budget and financial stability is one of the key priorities in the Improvement Plan agreed between the Council and the Local Government Association.**
- (3) Council welcomes the new approach to budget-setting which aims to introduce more rigour, openness and transparency into the process.**
- (4) Council supports the measures which have been taken to address our budget challenge, i.e.**
 - (a) A freeze on all non-essential services and recruitment and the moving of unallocated reserves to help bridge the gap in this year's budget.**
 - (b) A review of the Capital Programme involving a pause on spending whilst each scheme is reviewed.**
 - (c) Monthly budget monitoring reports produced by the Interim Director of Finance to ensure Members are fully informed as to progress in controlling the potential overspend.**
 - (d) An urgent re-structuring of senior management by the Chief Executive with the aim of establishing a strong corporate management function and achieving significant savings.**
 - (e) A major consultation initiative to inform the 2013/2015 budget linked to a new Corporate Plan, involving the public, key partners and elected members.**
 - (f) The production of a clear budget timetable by the Interim Director of Finance including special Scrutiny Committee meetings before Cabinet reach its final decisions on next year's budget.**
- (5) Council welcomes the responsible approach taken by all parties to this budget challenge and recognises the importance of ensuring that all members can contribute to the budget process. This will lead to greater transparency in decision-making and will help to improve the culture within the organisation.**

57 **MOTION: NEIGHBOURHOOD FUNDING CUTS**

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) Council notes the reported potential overspend for this financial year of £17million and believes the first act of the Labour Administration in May, to abolish the plans proposed by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups to establish all party Business Delivery and Strategic Change Programme Boards to ensure delivery of promised savings and service delivery performance, has been demonstrated to be particularly short sighted and foolish.
- (2) Council disagrees with the Labour Administration that supporting local communities to identify their own priorities and plan, with Council support, to achieve them is non essential spending, noting that this decision will impact directly on local communities priorities to
 - Improve road safety through 20 mph zones
 - Tackle fly tipping
 - Improve street cleanliness and reduce dog fouling
 - Improve community safety
 - Clean up children's play areas
 - Improve winter resilience through provision of additional grit bins
 - Improve pavements, provide drop kerbs and fix pot holes
 - Support to local organisations that do so much to develop and improve their communities
- (3) Council expresses its alarm that the decision to cut the resources intended for local community priorities was made by the Labour administration behind closed doors and does not believe that local communities should pay the price of the Labour administration's failure to control departmental spending or achieve the savings it agreed and placed in its own Special Cabinet A.O.B Strategic Change Programme.
- (4) In conclusion, Council believes that despite the complete lack of transparency regarding what or how the administration determine 'appeals' against the secret decisions it takes, if it believes there are the resources available to spend £200,000 on expanding its HR Dept and an extra £300,000 on new Executive Directors, the administration should take this opportunity to think again and reverse its decision to cut neighbourhood funding for local communities

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Delete everything and replace with the following:-

- (1) Council recognises that neighbourhood funding grants have been suspended, not cut. In taking this action the Administration has acted responsibly to

address a potential £17m overspend in 2012-13 and in the knowledge that the Council will need to achieve savings of £100million over the next 3 years, equivalent to one-third of our total budget.

- (2) The underlying cause of this budget shortfall is the austerity policy pursued by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government. Council believes this policy is fundamentally flawed and calls on the government to adopt measures which encourage growth.
- (3) The Council's financial position has been exacerbated by poor budgetary practices and inept decisions which have been inherited from the previous Tory/LibDem administration.
- (4) Council recognises the opportunities which the Administration has put in place to enable all-party discussions around the budget and other strategic issues, eg. the Leaders Board.
- (5) Council notes the transparent process which has been put in place to publish decisions about in-year expenditure, i.e. inclusion on agendas for Cabinet which can be called-in. Council is furthermore surprised at the Conservative Group's negative comments on the senior management re-structuring and the re-structure of Human Resources and Organisational Development given that they agreed to both of these items at Employments & Appointments Committee.

Following a combined debate (see minutes 56 ante and 58 post) and Councillor Jeff Green having replied, the amendment was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (36:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council recognises that neighbourhood funding grants have been suspended, not cut. In taking this action the Administration has acted responsibly to address a potential £17m overspend in 2012-13 and in the knowledge that the Council will need to achieve savings of £100million over the next 3 years, equivalent to one-third of our total budget.**
- (2) The underlying cause of this budget shortfall is the austerity policy pursued by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government. Council believes this policy is fundamentally flawed and calls on the government to adopt measures which encourage growth.**
- (3) The Council's financial position has been exacerbated by poor budgetary practices and inept decisions which have been inherited from the previous Tory/LibDem administration.**
- (4) Council recognises the opportunities which the Administration has put in place to enable all-party discussions around the budget and other strategic issues, eg. the Leaders Board.**

- (5) Council notes the transparent process which has been put in place to publish decisions about in-year expenditure, i.e. inclusion on agendas for Cabinet which can be called-in. Council is furthermore surprised at the Conservative Group's negative comments on the senior management re-structuring and the re-structure of Human Resources and Organisational Development given that they agreed to both of these items at Employments & Appointments Committee.

58 **AMENDMENT:REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE - COUNCIL BUDGET DECISIONS**

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

Paragraph 12.1

Add to paragraph c

...and believes it should be allocated to its original purpose, the Working Neighbourhood Fund, and that officers draw up proposals to target the reserve to create and protect jobs, apprenticeships and opportunities for business within Wirral.

Delete paragraph d and insert

Officers be instructed to carry out a thorough review of all council balances, reserves and provisions currently standing at £86.2 million and identify, as a matter of urgency, those whose value is in excess of the risk involved. Particular attention should be paid to the Housing Benefit Reserve (£11.1m), the Insurance Fund (£9.6m) and Management of Other Risks (£32.5m).

Add to Paragraph e

..., except that Council believes that the spending freeze has impacted unfairly on a number of council budgets. Council therefore resolves that Cabinet reviews the following budget lines:

- the Neighbourhood Funding process involving the Neighbourhood Forums
- the implementation of 20mph zones in a phased programme
- payment of £250 to staff earning less than £21k

and to implement an open and transparent process to enable further budgets to be released after the revenue budget is brought back into balance.

Following a combined debate (see minutes 56 and 57 ante) and Councillor Phil Davies having replied, the amendment was put and lost (26:36) (One abstention).

The report of the Interim Director of Finance was also subject to a further amendment (see minute 62 post).

It was then agreed unanimously that Standing Order 7(8) be applied.

59 **MOTION: WELFARE BENEFIT CUTS**

Proposed by Councillor George Davies
Seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes

This Council condemns the decision by the Conservative/LibDem Government to cut spending on welfare benefits by £7billion in 2014/2015 at the same time as cutting income tax for the very richest.

Cuts in benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit and Disability Living Allowance, and Crisis Loans will hit the poor the hardest.

Universal Credit, the flagship of the government's welfare reforms, according to former Welfare Reform Minister, Frank Field, is 'practically unachievable' and heading for disaster.

Furthermore, according to a leaked account of a briefing to senior civil servants, Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, is drawing up plans to announce up to £10bn of extra cuts in welfare spending next year.

In view of the fact that the government appears unwilling to reverse these disastrous reforms, it is incumbent on the Council to take steps to mitigate the impact of benefit cuts on Wirral residents.

One practical measure would be to assemble a team of officers with expertise in this area from the local authority and other partners such as Registered Social Landlords and the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice and guidance to local residents who are likely to be affected by these changes.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to report to Cabinet on this proposal together with any other practical measures which may assist benefit recipients and any adjustments which may be required to assist Council staff in One Stop Shops etc to deal with the impact of these changes.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Tom Harney

Delete paragraphs 1 – 4. Delete the words “In view of the fact that the government appears unwilling to reverse these disastrous reforms” in paragraph 5 and insert...

Council recognises that successive Governments have sought to reform Housing Benefit, to create the conditions for people to be better off in work, to support families with low incomes and to support people with disabilities.

Council recognises that the scale of the reforms required and the pressures on the national finances led the Coalition Government to plan the introduction of the Universal Credit and to make savings such that (*it is incumbent on the Council*)

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) (One abstention).

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

Resolved (36:25) (One abstention) –

This Council condemns the decision by the Conservative/LibDem Government to cut spending on welfare benefits by £7billion in 2014/2015 at the same time as cutting income tax for the very richest.

Cuts in benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit and Disability Living Allowance, and Crisis Loans will hit the poor the hardest.

Universal Credit, the flagship of the government's welfare reforms, according to former Welfare Reform Minister, Frank Field, is 'practically unachievable' and heading for disaster.

Furthermore, according to a leaked account of a briefing to senior civil servants, Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, is drawing up plans to announce up to £10bn of extra cuts in welfare spending next year.

In view of the fact that the government appears unwilling to reverse these disastrous reforms, it is incumbent on the Council to take steps to mitigate the impact of benefit cuts on Wirral residents.

One practical measure would be to assemble a team of officers with expertise in this area from the local authority and other partners such as Registered Social Landlords and the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice and guidance to local residents who are likely to be affected by these changes.

Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to report to Cabinet on this proposal together with any other practical measures which may assist benefit recipients and any adjustments which may be required to assist Council staff in One Stop Shops etc to deal with the impact of these changes.

60 **OBJECTION: CABINET MINUTE 92 (27/9/12) - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WIRRAL - CORE STRATEGY - PUBLICATION OF PROPOSED SUBMISSION DRAFT**

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Delete recommendations (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) and insert:

- (2) Council believes that the principles underpinning the interim housing policy for new housing development are needed more than ever in order to continue to ensure that housing development is properly focused and targeted within the former Housing Market Renewal Initiative boundary and regeneration priority areas.
- (3) Council believes that a relaxation of restrictions on development outside regeneration priority areas would have a detrimental affect on the attractiveness of existing, cleared sites within Wirral's former HMRI boundary

where the market for new housing is already weak. This would represent a major risk to the delivery of Wirral's new-build housing programme with Lovell and Keepmoat, with implications for the funding agreement with the HCA which is based on pre-agreed outputs for new-build starts and completions, and notes that this is the view expressed by the Council's Housing Strategy Team.

- (4) Council, therefore, requires that the LDF policies retain the principles and policies currently outlined within the current interim planning policy for new housing development for the purposes of development control and regeneration.
- (5) Following the changes outlined above (paragraphs (2) – (4)), the Proposed Submission Draft Core Strategy and its supporting documents contained within the Document Library are approved for publication for the purposes of further consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State; however, that their use as a material consideration for the purposes of development control is not approved during the consultation process, in order to protect the integrity of the consultation process.
- (6) Council notes the following documents contained within the Document Library; however, that their use as a material consideration for the purposes of development control is similarly not approved during the consultation process.
 - Wirral Employment Land and Premises Study Update (BE Group, 2012)
 - Wirral Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update 2012 (Wirral Council and A.P. Sheehan 2012)
 - Wirral Retail Strategy Update 2012 (GVA, March 2012)
 - Wirral Open Space Assessment (Wirral Council and Strategic Leisure, 2012)
 - Assessment of Wirral Core Strategy Transport Impacts (Mott MacDonald, July 2012)
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment Report
 - Statement of Consultation

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

The objection was put and lost (26:36) (One abstention)

Resolved – That Cabinet minute 92 (27/9/12) - Local Development Framework for Wirral – Core Strategy – Publication of Proposed Submission Draft, be thus approved.

61 **MOTION: CUTS TO FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Proposed by Councillor Darren Dodd
Seconded by Councillor Steve Niblock

Council notes that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have made tough choices in the past two years to freeze firefighters pay and reduce back office spending. This has made MFRS one of the most cost efficient fire authorities in the country.

Council notes that the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is bracing itself for 27% budget cuts for the financial years 2013-2015, one of the largest cuts for any fire authority in the country. Council also notes the words of the Merseyside Chief Fire Officer that 'The grant cut will lead to more fires, fire deaths and injuries on Merseyside. Reductions in stations, appliances and firefighters will have a significant impact on our frontline emergency response and prevention work'.

Council believes that these cuts will have a devastating effect on Wirral and will put lives at risk with the most vulnerable in society expected to be most at risk.

Council puts on record its thanks for firefighters in Wirral who put their lives at risk everyday to keep us safe.

Council condemns the cuts that will endanger lives here in Wirral and urges the Government to think again.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Lesley Rennie
Seconded by Councillor Wendy Clements

- (1) Council notes that the financial deficit of this Country, left by the last Labour Government will necessitate strong and decisive action by the Coalition Government to rebuild a stable economy for future generations.
- (2) Council further notes that all public services will face difficult challenges in relation to their future funding.
- (3) Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is recognised as an 'Excellent Authority', with strong financial governance, delivering an excellent service to the communities it serves and providing it's staff with the most up to date equipment, training and personal protection. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service sets the standards which all other Fire Services, nationally and internationally to aspire to.
- (4) This Council thanks the many brave men and women of MFRS who put their lives at risk in order to protect the people of Merseyside.
- (5) The financial settlement for MFRS in future years is as yet unknown and therefore it is premature to speculate as to what savings may have to be made. Council resists all attempts at 'scaremongering' and speculative outbursts in relation to future funding for the Service.
- (6) Council supports the 'All Party Lobby' of Government to secure a fair deal for Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.
- (7) Council further notes that the people of Wirral can be assured that they will always receive an excellent service from MFRS as protection for both public and Firefighters alike will always be the priority for the Service.

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

The amendment was put and lost (26:36) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (43:19) (One abstention).

Resolved (43:19) (One abstention) –

Council notes that Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service have made tough choices in the past two years to freeze firefighters pay and reduce back office spending. This has made MFRS one of the most cost efficient fire authorities in the country.

Council notes that the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service is bracing itself for 27% budget cuts for the financial years 2013-2015, one of the largest cuts for any fire authority in the country. Council also notes the words of the Merseyside Chief Fire Officer that ‘The grant cut will lead to more fires, fire deaths and injuries on Merseyside. Reductions in stations, appliances and firefighters will have a significant impact on our frontline emergency response and prevention work’.

Council believes that these cuts will have a devastating effect on Wirral and will put lives at risk with the most vulnerable in society expected to be most at risk.

Council puts on record its thanks for firefighters in Wirral who put their lives at risk everyday to keep us safe.

Council condemns the cuts that will endanger lives here in Wirral and urges the Government to think again.

62 **AMENDMENT: REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF FINANCE - COUNCIL BUDGET DECISIONS**

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Recommendations 12.1 That Council

Agree parts a, b, c and d

Delete e and replace with:

Agrees that before any decision is taken that a full report is presented to Council which shows what has been stopped, what has been approved and what process was adopted in determining these matters. Council believes that this will demonstrate complete openness and transparency in the decision making process.

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

The amendment was put and lost (26:36) (One abstention).

Resolved – That the recommendations in the Interim Director of Finance’s report be thus approved as follows:

- (1) **An increase in the 2012/13 revenue budget of £677,000.**
- (2) **That the provision of broadband improvements is being delivered by BT, through the upgrading of their infrastructure estate be noted.**
- (3) **That in the light of (2), the Broadband earmarked reserve of £7 million is no longer required for that purpose be noted.**
- (4) **The re-deployment of the Broadband earmarked reserve of £7 million to General Fund Balances.**
- (5) **Revenue savings resulting from the spending freeze will increase the level of General Fund Balances, in preparation for the rise in the level of risk in 2013/14.**

63 **MOTION: EXTENDING SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENTS**

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

- (1) Council notes that the Part One of the Health Act 2006 prohibits smoking in enclosed areas. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/28/part/1)
- (2) Council further notes that Section Four of the Act allows the Secretary of State to designate additional areas as smoke free places for the purposes of the Act. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/28/section/4)
- (3) Council therefore calls upon the Secretary of State for Health to use the powers available to him under Section Four of the Health Act 2006 to designate the areas near and around doorways and main entrances to the following public places as designated areas for the purposes of the Act;
 - Schools and other places of compulsory education
 - Children’s play areas
 - Sports and Leisure centres including swimming pools
 - Hospitals and buildings in the ownership of, or contracted, to provide NHS services.
- (4) The terms of this motion to be brought to the attention of Wirral’s Members of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Health, and their response to be reported back to the Council.

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.

64 **MOTION: POLICE CUTS**

Prior to moving this motion, Councillor Moira McLaughlin, asked, and it was agreed, that paragraph (3) of Councillor Blakeley's amendment be incorporated into her motion.

Proposed by Councillor Moira McLaughlin
Seconded by Councillor George Davies

This Council deplores the fact that more than 16,000 police officers in England and Wales are to be cut over the next four years. These job losses would be a consequence of cutting the police budget by a fifth by 2014/2015. Far from protecting frontline policing as David Cameron promised at the last election there will be 16,000 fewer police officers fighting crime, solving serious cases, or keeping our country safe. Cutting so fast and so deep into police budgets is crazy. It is completely out of touch with communities across the country, who want to keep bobbies on the beat.

On Merseyside, the Comprehensive Spending Review announced in 2010 presented Merseyside Police Authority with two very significant financial challenges, the estimated requirement of £61.4m of revenue savings over the review period 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 and the front loading of the savings requiring £38.5m to be saved over the initial two year period. By the end of 2012/2013 it is anticipated that the Force will have lost 624 Police Officers posts, and 178 Police Staff posts.

On Merseyside the police performance, between 2006-2011, showed 50% reduction in anti-social behaviour, vehicle crime down by 55%, household burglary down by 28%, robbery by 39% and all crime by 30%. In January, figures from the British Crime Survey showed that personal crime, including theft, robbery and violence, had gone up by 11% over the last year, the steepest increase for more than a decade.

Council condemns the depth of these cuts, and believes that without the officers to carry out foot patrols, the coalition's aims on policing cannot be realised.

Council also puts on record its deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone and asks that the Chief Executive writes to Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police to convey that message.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley
Seconded by Councillor Mike Hornby

Delete all and replace with:

This Council fully supports the coalition Governments Police reforms and whilst recognising the need to make savings notes that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has confirmed that the police are making the savings they need, while protecting the frontline, increasing neighbourhood policing and cutting crime.

Council recognises that we have the best police officers in the world. They do their work unarmed, they live in the communities they police, they operate with the consent of the public, and in recent days, we were reminded of the bravery of our police officers, when PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone were shot and killed while carrying out their day to day duties

But for the sake of police officers and the public, there are many things about policing that need to change. That is why the Government will:

- Free the police from bureaucracy to cut crime;
- Reward officers who develop skills;
- Reconnect the public and the police to ensure that they act according to local needs;
- Place a new emphasis on tackling serious and organised crime;
- Make sure the police are well-led by single-minded crime fighters; and
- Cut down on waste and inefficient spending

Council notes that Police officers join the force because they want to catch criminals and keep their communities safe. But for too long they have been hamstrung by red tape and form filling. That is why the Government are cutting police bureaucracy, which if fully implemented in every force could save up to 4.5 million police hours per year. That is the equivalent of putting over 2,100 police officers back on the streets. The Government has also restored police discretion over some charging decisions, saving up to 50,000 hours per year.

Council welcomes the latest crime statistics which shows that across England and Wales recorded crimes for the year ending March 2012 was - a year-on-year fall of 4.2% Homicides are now at their lowest level since 1983 Violence against the person is down 7.2% year-on-year, from 822,000 to 763,000 Offences against vehicles (includes car theft) also fell 7.2% year-on-year, to 417,444 Criminal damage decreased by 10% to 631,221

These national figures are replicated across Merseyside with crime and anti social behaviour recorded at one of the lowest levels ever.

Council welcomes the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and the abolition of the 43 Police Authorities and the savings that will bring that can be diverted into frontline policing. Council notes that in the case of the Merseyside Police Authority, over £1.5 million has been spent on Members Allowances and expenses since 2006.

Council notes that Police and Crime Commissioners will be powerful representatives of the public leading the fight against crime and ASB. They will ensure that:

- The public can better hold police forces and senior officers to account;
- There is greater public engagement in policing both in terms of priority setting and active citizenship;
- There is greater public – rather than Whitehall – ownership of force performance; and,
- The public have someone 'on their side' in the fight against crime and ASB.

Police and Crime Commissioners will ensure that the police are held to account democratically, not bureaucratically by Whitehall. This is part of the deal for the police: removing micro-management by central government in local policing, in return for much greater responsiveness to and engagement with the public.

The Commissioner will hold the Chief Constable to account for the full range of his or her current responsibilities. Police and Crime Commissioners will have five key roles as part of their mission to fight crime and ASB:

- Representing and engaging with all those who live and work in the communities in their force area and identifying their policing needs;
 - Setting priorities that meet those needs by agreeing a local strategic plan for the force;
 - Holding the Chief Constable to account for achieving these priorities as efficiently and effectively as possible, and playing a role in wider questions of community safety;
 - Setting the force budget and setting the precept. Our intention is to make precept raising subject to referendum. Further detail will be set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government (in England) and the Welsh Assembly Government (in Wales); and,
 - Appointing - and, where necessary, removing - the Chief Constable.
- (1) Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to contact at the earliest opportunity following the PCC elections on November 15, 2012 the newly elected Police Crime Commissioner and invite them to address all Council Members.
 - (2) Council puts on record its thanks to the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police and all officers, past and present for the excellent work they have done and continue to do in driving down crime, with crime levels across Merseyside at the lowest levels they have been for many years.
 - (3) Council also puts on record its deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone and asks that the Chief Executive writes to Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police to convey that message.

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

The amendment was put and lost (25:35) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (42:18) (One abstention).

Resolved (42:18) (One abstention) –

This Council deplores the fact that more than 16,000 police officers in England and Wales are to be cut over the next four years. These job losses would be a consequence of cutting the police budget by a fifth by 2014/2015. Far from protecting frontline policing as David Cameron promised at the last election there will be 16,000 fewer police officers fighting crime, solving serious cases,

or keeping our country safe. Cutting so fast and so deep into police budgets is crazy. It is completely out of touch with communities across the country, who want to keep bobbies on the beat.

On Merseyside, the Comprehensive Spending Review announced in 2010 presented Merseyside Police Authority with two very significant financial challenges, the estimated requirement of £61.4m of revenue savings over the review period 2011/2012 to 2014/2015 and the front loading of the savings requiring £38.5m to be saved over the initial two year period. By the end of 2012/2013 it is anticipated that the Force will have lost 624 Police Officers posts, and 178 Police Staff posts.

On Merseyside the police performance, between 2006-2011, showed 50% reduction in anti-social behaviour, vehicle crime down by 55%, household burglary down by 28%, robbery by 39% and all crime by 30%. In January, figures from the British Crime Survey showed that personal crime, including theft, robbery and violence, had gone up by 11% over the last year, the steepest increase for more than a decade.

Council condemns the depth of these cuts, and believes that without the officers to carry out foot patrols, the coalition's aims on policing cannot be realised.

Council also puts on record its deepest sympathy and condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of PCs Nicola Hughes and Fiona Bone and asks that the Chief Executive writes to Sir Peter Fahy, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police to convey that message.

65 **MOTION: MAKING WORK PAY AND REFORMING WELFARE**

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

- (1) Council believes British people are overwhelmingly in favour of having a welfare state. Opinion polls for BBC News and the British Attitudes Survey confirm that more than 90% agreed there was a need for a benefits system that provides a safety net for everyone who needs it.
- (2) Council notes that, on housing benefit alone, the UK now spends £114billion and that the Coalition is implementing changes that will cut £7bn from welfare spending, including changes to housing benefit, through the Welfare Reform Act.
- (3) In particular, Council welcomes the overall cap on a family's benefits of £26,000 so that, from April 2013, this limit will be put on the amount of benefit that people aged 16 to 64 can get. The benefit cap means that people should not get more in benefit payments than the average wage paid to people in work.
- (4) The benefit cap will limit the total income a claimant can receive from benefits including Housing Benefit, Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance.

- (5) The cap does not, however, apply if a person qualifies for Working Tax Credit, or receives Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment (from April 2013), Attendance Allowance, Industrial Injuries Benefits or War Widow's or War Widower's Pension.
- (6) Council does however, have concern, that the Labour Party's response to the cap on benefits is, at best, confused. Council notes that the Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions, Liam Byrne, has welcomed a cap on benefits but wants the level to be regionalised but Council is concerned that this would not be possible without also regionalising levels of the benefits listed above.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor George Davies
Seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Delete everything after paragraph 1 and add the following:

Council condemns the hypocrisy of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government for supporting vicious cuts in welfare benefits while awarding tax cuts to millionaires. Clearly, we are not all in this together.

Council calls for the government to abandon their regressive policy on benefit cuts and agrees that Labour is the only party with genuine one-nation policies which can bring people together and rebuild Britain.

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

The amendment was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (36:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council believes British people are overwhelmingly in favour of having a welfare state. Opinion polls for BBC News and the British Attitudes Survey confirm that more than 90% agreed there was a need for a benefits system that provides a safety net for everyone who needs it.**
- (2) Council condemns the hypocrisy of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government for supporting vicious cuts in welfare benefits while awarding tax cuts to millionaires. Clearly, we are not all in this together.**
- (3) Council calls for the government to abandon their regressive policy on benefit cuts and agrees that Labour is the only party with genuine one-nation policies which can bring people together and rebuild Britain.**

66 **MOTION: REGENERATION RESERVES TAKE A HIT**

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

- (1) Council recognises we live in unprecedented times given UK and global financial pressures. Council is fully aware that significant spending cuts are a reality and that Council services will need to adapt.
- (2) Council welcomes the fact that in the “What really matters to Wirral” consultation documents, the Leadership of Council has identified three key areas of priority of service delivery:
 - protecting our vulnerable adults and children
 - tackling poverty and inequalities in health
 - creating jobs and attracting investment.
- (3) Council welcomes the forthcoming round of public consultation and Members involvement in helping debate and discuss budget implications. Given the Council is committing to consultation, it seems ironic that Cabinet have recently made a decision to raid £7million of regeneration funding from the Working Neighbourhood Fund to prop up a “potential” over spend of £17million. Council question the wisdom of a transfer of reserves from such a critical area of priority.
- (4) Sensible stewardship would dictate that transfers of reserves should take place as the financial picture is confirmed. The next half of the year will see remedial actions and stronger financial reporting. Therefore Council would request that any significant reserve transfers must be subject to review if the financial position improves.
- (5) Sensible stewardship would also dictate that a balance is struck between a reserve committed to one of the three key pillar areas of Council delivery and the budget position. Regenerating our communities, job creation and job security all have a huge impact and affect on child poverty, crime, health, inward investment, benefit dependence, future wealth creation and almost every other sphere of our resident’s living standards.
- (6) Council therefore asks the Cabinet’s decision to raid £7million of critical regeneration funding be referred back to Cabinet.
- (7) Council also asks Cabinet to consider how a £7million regeneration funding could be used for regeneration and employment projects, taking account of the public consultation process and hearing the views of the Economy and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Ideas for consideration should include:

- Additional funding for apprenticeships
- Renovation of the Council’s commercial stock and incentives for new rentals
- Using funding to kick start a First Time Buyers Mortgage scheme preferably linked to a stalled housing scheme in the East of the Borough.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Delete everything after paragraph 2 and replace with the following:-

- (3) In the light of the potential £17million overspend, Council agrees with the decision of Cabinet on the 6 September to use the £7million of reserves within the Director of Regeneration, Planning and Housing's budget to help balance the books. This money was originally earmarked to deliver super fast broadband into our business areas, however, BT has recently announced that it will be upgrading their exchanges in Wirral and this funding is therefore no longer required for this purpose.
- (4) Council believes that sensible stewardship of the budget requires urgent action to be taken now to deal with the overspend rather than wait until the end of the financial year.
- (5) Council notes the ideas proposed for additional expenditure, many of which are already Council policy and requests that members exercise responsibility in relation to the budget and in particular refrain from proposing growth in the Council's budget unless they can identify how this can be paid for.

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

The amendment was put and carried (55:7) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (55:7) (One abstention).

Resolved (55:7) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council recognises we live in unprecedented times given UK and global financial pressures. Council is fully aware that significant spending cuts are a reality and that Council services will need to adapt.**
- (2) Council welcomes the fact that in the "What really matters to Wirral" consultation documents, the Leadership of Council has identified three key areas of priority of service delivery:**
 - **protecting our vulnerable adults and children**
 - **tackling poverty and inequalities in health**
 - **creating jobs and attracting investment.**
- (3) In the light of the potential £17million overspend, Council agrees with the decision of Cabinet on the 6 September to use the £7million of reserves within the Director of Regeneration, Planning and Housing's budget to help balance the books. This money was originally earmarked to deliver super fast broadband into our business areas, however, BT has recently announced that it will be upgrading their exchanges in Wirral and this funding is therefore no longer required for this purpose.**

- (4) Council believes that sensible stewardship of the budget requires urgent action to be taken now to deal with the overspend rather than wait until the end of the financial year.
- (5) Council notes the ideas proposed for additional expenditure, many of which are already Council policy and requests that members exercise responsibility in relation to the budget and in particular refrain from proposing growth in the Council's budget unless they can identify how this can be paid for.

67 **MOTION: PENSIONS**

Proposed by Councillor Adrian Jones
Seconded by Councillor Pat Glasman

Council notes with profound concern the deepening problems for retired people in Wirral under the Tory/LibDem Collaboration government's dogma-driven austerity burdens.

The TUC's tenth annual PensionsWatch survey has revealed that directors of the UK's top companies have built up pension pots worth an average of £4.3million. But most people who have worked for a life-time in low or middle-income occupations will experience increasing hardship during retirement.

TUC analysis of official labour market data reveals that for half a million people approaching state pension age, who are in any case because of disability or poor health too ill to work, the future is especially bleak. The research shows that employment rates for those approaching the current statutory pension age are low, with just 54 per cent of men aged 60-64 and 62 per cent of women aged 56-60 in work. Council is concerned that in Wirral the government's policy of accelerating the rise in the state pension age will simply push ever more of our citizens into poverty. This will drive many of Wirral's older people into a new "limbo zone" where those in their mid-60s will be too young for a pension, but too old to have any realistic chance of a job. With a benefits system that gets meaner and tougher each year, even 66 year olds who have worked for decades before stopping work, will be treated as work-shy scroungers.

Council calls on all Wirral MPs and councillors to recognise that protection for the rich, and poverty for the many, was not honestly stated in any party's election promises and to support this motion calling for an early general election.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Les Rowlands
Seconded by Councillor Simon Mountney

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes and condemns the fact that under Labour pensions and pensioners where treated disgracefully:

In 1997 Gordon Brown abolished the Dividend Tax Credit paid to pension funds and companies. This meant that pension funds were no longer able to claim a tax credit on the payment receipt of dividends. Independent experts have estimated that this cost pension funds up to £150 billion pounds, during this time Labour gave the over 80s 25p increase in the state pension.

Therefore:

This Council applauds the fact that this Government believes that people deserve dignity and respect in old age, and that they should be provided with the support they need.

Council notes that:

- This Government has delivered the biggest ever cash increase to the state pension – in April 2012, the state pension increased by £5.30 a week. This is thanks to the triple lock, which makes sure the basic state pension will always rise by the highest of average earnings, inflation, or 2.5 per cent.
- David Cameron was elected on a promise to protect universal benefits for pensioners and that is what he has done. Conservatives in Government have protected these benefits including: the winter fuel allowance, free TV licenses, free bus passes and free prescriptions.
- The Government is reforming the complex state pension system, so that there is a single-tier basic state pension. This will deliver a fair, sustainable, simple state pension.
- The Government has introduced automatic enrolment – so that most people in work are automatically included in a workplace pension scheme. This will boost the number of people saving for their pension, which plummeted under Labour.
- The Government has restored the link to earnings for the basic state pension, which is now uprated by the highest increase of earnings, inflation, or 2.5 per cent.

Council therefore embraces the coalition Governments approach in ensuring that all pensioners from whatever walk of life are treated fairly,

Council recognises Labours attempts to airbrush history due to the then labour government's disastrous policies on pensions.

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

The amendment was put and lost (26:36) (One abstention).

The motion was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (36:26) (One abstention) –

Council notes with profound concern the deepening problems for retired people in Wirral under the Tory/LibDem Collaboration government's dogma-driven austerity burdens.

The TUC's tenth annual PensionsWatch survey has revealed that directors of the UK's top companies have built up pension pots worth an average of £4.3million. But most people who have worked for a life-time in low or middle-income occupations will experience increasing hardship during retirement.

TUC analysis of official labour market data reveals that for half a million people approaching state pension age, who are in any case because of disability or poor health too ill to work, the future is especially bleak. The research shows that employment rates for those approaching the current statutory pension age are low, with just 54 per cent of men aged 60-64 and 62 per cent of women aged 56-60 in work. Council is concerned that in Wirral the government's policy of accelerating the rise in the state pension age will simply push ever more of our citizens into poverty. This will drive many of Wirral's older people into a new "limbo zone" where those in their mid-60s will be too young for a pension, but too old to have any realistic chance of a job. With a benefits system that gets meaner and tougher each year, even 66 year olds who have worked for decades before stopping work, will be treated as work-shy scroungers.

Council calls on all Wirral MPs and councillors to recognise that protection for the rich, and poverty for the many, was not honestly stated in any party's election promises and to support this motion calling for an early general election.

68 **MOTION: MAKING PROGRESS WITH 20MPH ZONES WHERE THEY ARE REQUESTED, NEEDED AND ACCEPTED**

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Tom Harney

Council welcomes the progress being made on the introduction of 20mph zones in Wirral.

This progress has included the budgetary provision first made in March 2010, the Council's clear instruction of July 2011 regarding the need for progress and the subsequent consultation process that took place with Neighbourhood Forums in the Summer of 2012.

Council is concerned that the detailed consultation work has not yet commenced. It is required to establish zones where they are requested, needed and accepted.

In order that as much progress can be made as possible with the programme, Council considers that resources should be released once the revenue budget has been balanced to enable the consultation process to proceed, for the results to be considered and for sufficient resources required for the 20mph schemes to be released.

Council believes that the Neighbourhood Forums are ideally placed to consider the results of this consultation process and move the schemes forward.

Council recognises that the delay in the consultation may require a re-phasing of the project but, for areas adversely affected by traffic and which have expressed a long-

standing desire for action, the original aims of increasing safety and reducing accidents remain as important here as in any other authority and that sufficient resources should be allocated to enable progress.

Therefore, Council resolves that:

- (1) each Neighbourhood Forum should be made aware of the considerations that emerge in the light of the consultation;
- (2) each Neighbourhood Forum should have an opportunity to ensure that the funding available for their area is used to maximum effect;
- (3) each Neighbourhood Forum should have the ability to recommend the transfer of funding associated with any zone where progress is not supported by residents into measures to improve road safety and reduce accidents in their area;
- (4) Neighbourhood Forums should be provided with sufficient information to assess the cost of 20mph areas and the power to vire the maximum possible money available to them to 20mph zones.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Harry Smith
Seconded by Councillor Jerry Williams

Delete everything after the second paragraph and insert the following:

Council notes the decision of Cabinet on the 6 September to freeze all expenditure in view of the potential £17m overspend on the 2012-13 budget.

Council notes the report to Cabinet on the 18 October by the Interim Director of Technical Services which highlights that Wirral has been awarded extra Local Sustainable Transport Funding to support the Council's LTP programme which includes £220,000 for use by Area Forums (i.e. £20k per Area Forum).

In view of the importance of improving road safety throughout the Borough Council instructs the Director to release this funding with immediate effect and to consult with each Area Forum with a view to using this allocation to implement 20mph schemes or other road safety schemes.

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

The amendment was put and carried (55:7) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (62:0) (One abstention).

Resolved (62:0) (One abstention) –

- (1) **Council welcomes the progress being made on the introduction of 20mph zones in Wirral.**

- (2) This progress has included the budgetary provision first made in March 2010, the Council's clear instruction of July 2011 regarding the need for progress and the subsequent consultation process that took place with Neighbourhood Forums in the Summer of 2012.
- (3) Council notes the decision of Cabinet on the 6 September to freeze all expenditure in view of the potential £17m overspend on the 2012-13 budget.
- (4) Council notes the report to Cabinet on the 18 October by the Interim Director of Technical Services which highlights that Wirral has been awarded extra Local Sustainable Transport Funding to support the Council's LTP programme which includes £220,000 for use by Area Forums (i.e. £20k per Area Forum).
- (5) In view of the importance of improving road safety throughout the Borough Council instructs the Director to release this funding with immediate effect and to consult with each Area Forum with a view to using this allocation to implement 20mph schemes or other road safety schemes.

69 **MOTION: NEW BRIGHTON**

Proposed by Councillor Pat Glasman
Seconded by Councillor Harry Smith

This Council welcomes the successful work carried out by staff of the Waste Management section of Technical Services and the Biffa Contractors in New Brighton during the summer period 2012.

New Brighton brings a lot of visitors and spending to Wirral and following a period of adjustment we now have a system in place to cope with the large numbers of people and the ensuing waste which is generated as a result.

This Council thanks all the staff concerned who rose to the challenges in the press and other media.

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.

70 **MOTION: LIBRARIES AS CENTRES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES**

Proposed by Councillor Tom Harney
Seconded by Councillor Pat Williams

Council recognises the high regard in which libraries are held by the people of Wirral.

It believes that they are the centres of their communities, and believes this should be built upon.

It therefore resolves –

- (1) that each Neighbourhood Forum should be asked to work with the Library service to include in their area plan developments which will enhance the role of the library in their community.
- (2) that information about the contribution volunteers are making in libraries in various parts of the country should be made available to the Neighbourhood Forums.
- (3) that the Neighbourhood Forums need to be aware of the particular needs of various groups such as children, older people, people with special needs, and asked to investigate the ways in which their needs can be better catered for in the library.
- (4) that they be asked to ensure that all groups in the community have a chance to give their views.
- (5) that an action plan be drawn up with a timetable so that the results can be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and thence to Cabinet with concrete recommendations.

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.

71 MOTION: A MORAL CONTRACT BROKEN

Proposed by Councillor Mark Johnston

Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly

- (1) Council fully recognises the unprecedented financial challenge that Wirral faces and believes our energy and resource must be given to creating solutions and Council recognises that all Members, Officers and the Public are a valuable source of ideas.
- (2) Council recognises that the Labour Group has secured a majority of seats and, therefore, has a mandate to lead and that such times require sensible opposition, high levels of co-operation and political maturity from all three parties.
- (3) Council is rightly alarmed that a “potential” £17m deficit has been identified for this financial year and recognises that remedial action is required. Council is encouraged by the new style and energy of Officer leadership and is especially encouraged by new monthly finance reporting systems and senior officers now feeling accountable for budgets, aided by stronger information.

- (4) Whilst recognising the need for immediate action to remedy the “potential” deficit, Council calls on the Administration to immediately review its decision to freeze the Neighbourhood Fund grants of £735,350.
- (5) The Chief Executive has called for the “*urgent not to crowd out the important*”, an excellent value by which we should all measure our decision making. Council feels this last minute funding freeze to our vital and vibrant Voluntary & Faith Groups sector fails to meet this value test.
- (6) Council believes we entered a Moral Contract with our Communities when we offered this funding, started an application process and set a decision making process.
- (7) Council believes that breaking this Moral Contract carries with it a huge reputational risk – 181 vital community activities planned and ready to deliver that will now not take place.
- (8) We, therefore, call on Council to re-establish this vital community focused funding and, by doing so, support the community life of our Wards, encourage grassroots volunteering and stand by our vibrant and vital Voluntary Sector.

Amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(2)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Delete everything after paragraph 2 and replace with the following:

- (3) Council notes with regret that the moral contract between government and people is fundamentally breached by the withdrawal of circa £100 million from Wirral’s funding by the Tory-led national government. This has meant that urgent prioritisation has been necessary to protect front line services, in particular to those in our care.
- (4) Council notes that members have a responsibility to deliver a legal budget and therefore welcomes the remedial action taken by the Cabinet to deal with the potential overspend for 2012/13.
- (5) Council notes that the Neighbourhood Fund grants have been suspended pending a review of all items of expenditure to ensure that the Council can deliver a legal budget.
- (6) Council is encouraged by the professionalism, confidence, and dedication, of officer leadership and welcomes the new administration’s monthly finance reporting mechanism. Council notes with pleasure that senior officers now feel supported in their accountability for budgets, aided by stronger information, which is helping to improve the quality of budget-setting practices.

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

The amendment was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

The substantive motion was put and carried (36:26) (One abstention).

Resolved (36:26) (One abstention) –

- (1) Council fully recognises the unprecedented financial challenge that Wirral faces and believes our energy and resource must be given to creating solutions and Council recognises that all Members, Officers and the Public are a valuable source of ideas.**
- (2) Council recognises that the Labour Group has secured a majority of seats and, therefore, has a mandate to lead and that such times require sensible opposition, high levels of co-operation and political maturity from all three parties.**
- (3) Council notes with regret that the moral contract between government and people is fundamentally breached by the withdrawal of circa £100 million from Wirral's funding by the Tory-led national government. This has meant that urgent prioritisation has been necessary to protect front line services, in particular to those in our care.**
- (4) Council notes that members have a responsibility to deliver a legal budget and therefore welcomes the remedial action taken by the Cabinet to deal with the potential overspend for 2012/13.**
- (5) Council notes that the Neighbourhood Fund grants have been suspended pending a review of all items of expenditure to ensure that the Council can deliver a legal budget.**
- (6) Council is encouraged by the professionalism, confidence, and dedication, of officer leadership and welcomes the new administration's monthly finance reporting mechanism. Council notes with pleasure that senior officers now feel supported in their accountability for budgets, aided by stronger information, which is helping to improve the quality of budget-setting practices.**

72 **VACANCIES**

The Council was requested to deal with the following appointments:

Statutory Committees and Panels

Children's Services And Lifelong Learning

1. Fostering Panel

Councillor Tom Harney to replace Councillor Mark Johnston

Advisory Committees and Working Parties

Corporate Services

2. Members' Training Steering Group

Approve an increase in the membership from 1:1:1 to 2:1:1 and that:

Councillor Ann McLachlan to be appointed as additional member and as Chair.
Councillor Pat Glasman to replace Councillor Paul Doughty.

Outside Bodies

Housing And Community Safety

3. Wirral Partnership Homes – Board members

Approve membership of the Board to be changed from 2:2:1 to 3:2 and, Councillor Chris Jones to replace Councillor Tom Harney.

Regeneration And Planning Strategy

4. Chrysalis (General Partner) Limited - Director

Councillor Ann McLachlan to replace Councillor Phil Davies

Social Care And Inclusion

5. Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust - Governors

Note that representation on the WUTH Foundation Trust is being reduced to two Members and that consequently membership will be 1:1 as follows:

Councillor Jeff Green)
Councillor Irene Williams) Appointed for 3 years until 16 September 2013

Deputy: Director of Adult Social Services

Resolved – That the amendments to membership and appointments listed above, be approved.