

Council – 10 March 2014

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 7(1) and are listed in the order received.

1. 'NO' TO NUISANCE CALLS

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

Council notes:

- (a) the success and popularity of 'No Cold Caller Zones' which have been introduced across Wirral by Trading Standards officers, with support from residents and the Police, and that this work has resulted in the creation of 46 'Neighbourhood/No Cold Calling Zones', which now cover some 900 households;
- (b) that "nuisance" marketing calls and text messages to landlines and mobiles are a growing problem despite the existence of the Telephone Preference Service (TPS), with more than 650 million so-called "silent calls" made every year. These are causing inconvenience and distress, particularly to elderly and vulnerable people.

Council welcomes the 'No to Nuisance Calls' <http://www.no2nuisancecalls.net/about> campaign for more effective regulation of this problem, which seeks to enhance the Information Commissioner's powers to encompass all forms of unsolicited telemarketing contact, increase enforcement activity against transgressors and for there to be a single, simple point of contact for any individual wishing to protect their privacy from unwanted telemarketing calls, texts, and emails.

Council resolves to support the 'No To Nuisance Calls' campaign, to take appropriate steps to promote this campaign via the Trading Standards service and publicity and libraries and other Council buildings and to write to local MPs encouraging them to support the Private Members' Communications (Unsolicited Telephone Calls and Texts) Bill.

2. THE EUROPEAN UNION – #WhylamIN

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

That this Council notes:

- the #WhylamIN social media campaign supporting membership of the European Union which was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg MP;
- that the campaign gained support from Sir Richard Branson, among others, who commented "*It should go without saying that being a part of the European Union is better for all countries involved*" <http://www.virgin.com/richard-branson/why-i-am-in>

- that Michael Sherwood, co-chief executive of Goldman Sachs International has said that, in the event Britain leaves the EU "*In all likelihood we would transfer a substantial part of our European business from London to a eurozone location*" and Stephen Odell, chief executive of Ford in Europe stated that withdrawal "*would be devastating for the UK economy.*";
- a recent CBI poll found that nearly 80% of UK businesses supported membership. <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/09/8-out-of-10-firms-say-uk-must-stay-in-eu-cbi-yougov-survey/>

Council believes that remaining part of the European Union is vital to the long term security of Wirral and LCR businesses and to building a strong local economy.

Council endorses the sentiment expressed by Frank Field MP that "*Our aim should be to change the EU. And change it by staying in*".

Council, therefore, calls upon local businesses, public sector organisations and political parties represented on this Council to highlight the importance of remaining within the European Union in the run-up to the 2014 European Parliament elections.

3. MERSEY TUNNEL TOLLS

Proposed by Councillor Les Rowlands

Seconded by Councillor Andrew Hodson

- (1) Council regrets the recent tunnel toll increases for all toll classes forced through by the Labour-led Integrated Transport Authority.
- (2) Council notes that since the introduction of the 2004 Mersey Tunnels Act, sponsored by former Labour MP Claire Curtis-Thomas and supported by Labour Members throughout its passage through Parliament, Merseytravel has accrued over £40 million in surpluses which have been used on their pet transport schemes and vanity projects.
- (3) Council also notes that Merseytravel have squandered large amounts of money as can be evidenced by the £70 million failed tram scheme colloquially known as 'Line 1 to Nowhere' and its extravagance in occupying a half empty building at No 1 Mann Island.

Therefore Council believes

- (a) The consistent increases year on year is damaging Wirral's economy putting further pressure on motorists and businesses.
- (b) Council recognises such increases place a greater strain on tunnel users who have to travel to and from work placing an unfair tax burden on Wirral residents
- (c) Council recognises discount toll schemes/free crossings for local residents already exist in other parts of the country and while recognising that fast tag users benefit from a discount, Council believes that regular users should be rewarded with a local discount scheme over and above that afforded by use of the fast tag such as that announced for the Mersey Gateway Bridge of a "local user discount scheme" with up to 300 free journeys per year.

Council therefore requests the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive/Director General of Merseytravel requesting an urgent meeting to discuss: if and how the Mersey Tunnels can be reinstated back into the national road network and Tunnel Tolls abolished.

If that is not possible how a 'local user discount scheme' over and above that which already exists through the Fast Tag can be implemented to ease the burden on hard the pressed motorists of Wirral.

4. LABOUR'S EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Council congratulates the Labour Administration on its prudent financial management of the Council which has enabled Council Tax to be frozen for the next 2 years.

At the same time, Labour has delivered a new house-building programme, help for the unemployed through the Reachout programme and financial assistance for community groups under the 'Love Wirral' initiative together with many other progressive policies.

This has been achieved despite the Government's draconian cuts to Wirral's budget.

5. STORM DAMAGE

Proposed by Councillor Brian Kenny

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

Council is disappointed that despite a recent pledge from David Cameron that 'money is no object' in the repair of damage caused by the recent extreme weather, Wirral is only set to receive a measly £20,000 for our suffering businesses and not one penny for infrastructure damage or the North Wirral coastline.

Wirral will instead have to fund the cost of the damage, some £250,000, from an under-spend in the 2013/14 budget. This is money that could have been used to protect front-line services from further Tory-Lib Dem cuts.

Cabinet instructs the Chief Executive to write to the government seeking equal and fair treatment for Wirral.