

Council – 20 October 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. HOMES THAT MEET OUR FUTURE NEEDS

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

This Council welcomes the publication of 'Housing in later life' by Age UK.

Council notes that the report called on the Government to ensure that all new homes are built to the 'lifetime standard' so that they can be easily adapted as people age, with standards that allow older people with different care needs to live independently, for as long as possible.

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/lack-of-suitable-housing-costing-the-nhs-millions-every-year/>

Council notes that the document contained a number of observations and recommendations about re-ablement services, assessments of properties and commissioning strategies and future investment in extra care housing.

Council also recognises that the Government has introduced five core standards for housing.

These include new optional building regulations for accessible and adaptable mainstream housing to meet the needs of older and disabled people.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/housing-standards-review-technical-consultation>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/354091/02_140731_HSR_Supporting_Doc1_Access.pdf

Council requests that appropriate officers and Cabinet Members:

- (1) Review these publications and respond to the consultation.
- (2) Establish how the Council's current and emerging policies can reflect these suggestions, requests and changes.
- (3) Consider how new building projects in the Borough can be provided with hallways and doorways that enable adequate access in line with the outcome of the consultation and legislation.
- (4) Report back on their findings and on which matters they can take forward.

2. TOWNMEADOW STATION

Proposed by Councillor Steve Williams

Seconded by Councillor Bruce Berry

- (1) Council notes the investment in our railways, notably the £400 million for electrifying lines in the North West, including £160 million to electrify the line between Liverpool and Manchester.
- (2) Council welcomes the Long Term Rail Strategy, developed by Merseytravel and Network Rail, which outlines further ways in which investment in the local rail network can help to deliver additional benefits for the economy and local commuters, including:
 - Service improvements on the Bidston - Wrexham line, electrification and new stations.
 - New stations, including Townmeadow, on the Wirral Line
- (3) Council instructs the Chief Executive to make available all evidence held by the Council that can be used to support the business case for these improvements, including data on jobs, investment, travel and population in the areas affected.

3. 44 COUNCILLORS

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Leah Fraser

Council notes the recent decision taken by Knowsley Council to begin consulting its residents over reducing the number of councillors from 63 to 45.

This Council believes that instead of presenting the public with petty, vindictive, rehashed and previously rejected budget options including:

- pulling the plug on school crossing patrols
- introducing car parking charges at Wirral's Country Parks
- not filling grit bins
- removing Council Tax over 70s discount
- closing public conveniences
- increasing fees and charges for football pitches, allotments, bowling greens, burials and cremations

The Leader of the Council should be consulting the public over reducing the number of councillors.

In the absence of the Leader of the Council's willingness to act Council requests the Boundary Commission for England commence an inquiry into the number of councillors, and the electoral cycle, in Wirral, on Council's wish to reduce the number of councillors to 44.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to invite the Boundary Commission for England to meet with representatives of all parties represented on the Council and agree a timetable for the inquiry.

4. SUPPORT FOR HS2

Proposed by Councillor Paul Hayes

Seconded by Councillor Tom Anderson

This Council, in recognising that High Speed Rail will do much to ensure that Wirral continues to benefit from our nation's growing economy, resolves to:

- (1) Fully support the '20 Miles More' campaign and the Liverpool Echo's 'Linking Liverpool' campaign which seeks to ensure that Liverpool is directly linked to the proposed High Speed Rail network.
- (2) Asks the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing this Council's determined support for the campaign for Liverpool to have a direct connection to HS2 and furthermore our support for any HS3 East – West route to begin with Liverpool.

5. LABOUR'S FINANCIAL MISMANAGEMENT

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council is extremely disappointed to note the reported £260,000 spent with the V4 consultancy firm and believes this is yet another demonstration of Labour's lack of grasp of economic realities.

In addition, the Labour Administration has overseen –

£150,000 spent on 'illegal' vehicles

£100,000 spent on the old Town Hall lift

£26,000 spent on a new carpet for Wallasey Town Hall

£20,000 spent on upgrading toilets in Wallasey Town Hall

£1,000,000 spent on the so called 'Downtown Abbey' staircases

These warped financial decisions means the public is now faced with choosing whether to stop funding school crossing patrols and closing libraries in the latest budget consultation.

Council believes that hardworking Wirral residents have the absolute right to know exactly where their hard earned cash goes and therefore Council requests the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee urgently review the current scheme of delegation with a view to recommending that the scheme be altered so that all consultancy spend in excess of £50,000 is reported to Cabinet prior to authorisation being given.

6. DEVOLUTION TO CITY REGIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

This Council welcomes the result of the Scottish referendum and is pleased that the people of Scotland voted to stay within the United Kingdom.

Council notes that the coalition government has agreed to produce legislation by January 2015 to devolve additional powers and responsibilities to Scotland and the other constituent parts of the United Kingdom.

Council supports the principle that decisions on the needs of Wirral and the Liverpool City Region are best made by locally elected members rather than ministers and civil servants in Whitehall.

Council therefore believes that a key part of the proposed legislation should include measures to devolve more powers and funding from Whitehall to City Regions and local authorities in England.

Council urges the government to refuse to pander to right-wing Tory backbenchers who wish to use the result of the Scottish referendum for party political advantage.

Council therefore agrees to lobby the government for greater devolution to Wirral Council and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and to write to the four Wirral MPs to request them to support this stance.