

Council – 12 October, 2015

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. **OPEN GOVERNMENT** (*the Civic Mayor to refer to the Transformation and Resources Policy and Performance Committee*)

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia

This Council recognises that the Information Commissioner's Office, as the independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest and to promote openness by public bodies, upheld 13 complaints against Wirral Council in the past year.

Of the 18 notices issued between 29 September 2014 and 24 August 2015, the majority (72%) of complaints were upheld.

Council believes that this is a matter for concern, requiring an explanation to its Members. Council requests that lessons should be learned and applied from these decisions and questions whether Officers have been excessively cautious or defensive in their interpretation of the legislation.

Council, therefore, requests that the legislation is approached with greater regard to the 'public interest test' so that the risk of further reputational damage to Wirral can be reduced.

2. **BETTER PLANNING TO FACILITATE CYCLING** (*the Civic Mayor to refer to the Planning Committee*)

Proposed by Councillor Pat Cleary

Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

This Council supports the development of facilities for cycling in the interests of improved health, reduced air pollution, less congestion, and more economical travel. In particular, Council recognises that secure cycle parking/storage facilities are fundamental in facilitating the bicycle as a practical mode of transport for Wirral residents.

Council recognises that efforts to update Wirral's cycle parking standards have been ongoing for some time and looks forward to their implementation.

In the meantime, Council requests that officers reporting to the Head of Regeneration and Planning and the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment adopt a robust approach in requiring all relevant planning applications to identify, on submitted plans, the provision of cycle-parking facilities at homes and

destinations which comply with the approved Council Cycle-Parking standards contained in Supplementary Planning Guidance 42 (Cycle Parking), and supplementary Planning Guidance Document 2 (Designing for Self-contained Flat Development and Conversions).

3. DEVOLUTION *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council welcomes the submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2015 of the Potential Devolution of Powers for the City Region following the Combined Authority meeting held on 2nd September 2015.

Council is therefore somewhat perplexed that the Leader of the Council and 40 of his Labour colleagues voted against the Conservative Notice of Motion 'The Northern Powerhouse' at the Council meeting held on 6th July 2015.

Council notes within The Northern Powerhouse Notice of Motion it was recommended that "the Leader of the Council advises the next meeting of the Combined Authority to engage enthusiastically in the development of the Northern Powerhouse; provide clarity to this Council about the details of any devolution of power and budget it is seeking from the Government and confirm its support for a directly elected Metro Mayor."

Council is unsure what caused such a rapid turnaround by the Leader of the Council and his Labour colleagues but expresses its support for this change of direction and endorsement of Conservative Government Policy.

4. FLOODING IN MORETON *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Seconded by Councillor Steve Williams

This Council:

- Recognises the seriousness of the recent flooding to many homes of residents in Moreton and Saughall Massie and to a lesser extent other areas of Wirral.
- Recognises that homes have been damaged due to these flood waters and debris.
- Recognises that people look to this council to work with other agencies to minimise the risk from flood waters and accumulation of debris.
- Thanks those agencies that worked to mitigate the effect of the floods for residents.

Council resolves:

- To establish a Working Group including all relevant agencies, including the Environment Agency, United Utilities, Meteorological Office, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Registered Social Landlords, Merseyside Police and Senior Officers to bring forward a co-ordinated approach to flood risk, flood defence, flood conveyance and flood prevention.
- To task the Working Group to review current plans, procedures and strategies to ensure that is future proofed and aligned with existing and planned regeneration, flood defence and flood conveyance measures.
- To ensure a clear and transparent plan, accessible to all, for dealing with floods.

5. SUPPORTING WIRRAL'S PART IN OUR NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES *(the Civic Mayor to refer to the Regeneration and Environment Policy and Performance Committee)*

Proposed by Councillor Steve Williams

Seconded by Councillor Wendy Clements

Council notes many Wirral residents work in our major nuclear power and defence industries, both directly (in companies such as Urenco, Cammell Laird and CNS) and indirectly, in the supply chain.

Council believes these highly-skilled, well paid advanced engineering jobs offer opportunities for residents and welcomes the skills and apprenticeship training at Wirral Metropolitan College for young people entering the industry.

Council agrees with the Leader of the Council that Wirral has a strong track record in manufacturing for the nuclear industry and calls on the Administration to play an even greater part in providing students with the skills required to play a full part in future manufacturing and production.

6. WIRRAL'S SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council notes the following key national growth statistics:

- GDP growth: 0.7 per cent in Quarter 2 2015. Growth in Q1 2015 was 0.4 per cent.
- Employment up 354,000 on the year. There are now 31.03 million people in work.

Council realises that a growing economy means more businesses, creating more good jobs – which means more families with the security of a regular pay packet.

With Britain growing faster than any other major advanced economy, and wages rising at the fastest rate since 2007, it's clear that the Government's economic plan is delivering security for families across Britain.

Council further notes that many Wirral businesses are benefitting from the improving economic outlook and reporting growth and expansion. These include:

- Apollo Care, a care company set up by a former Council employee who took early voluntary redundancy in 2011. With initial guidance from Invest Wirral in just 4 years Apollo Care has franchised and employs over 50 people.
- Sovex, the Prenton-based materials handling specialist is the fastest growing company on Merseyside and was listed number 82 in the 2014 Virgin Sunday Times Fast Track Top 100. It recently announced it was expanding into the American market.
- Recruit Right, an industrial and commercial recruitment agency, who have seen their highest ever numbers of temp placements rise from 260 to 409 per week in September. The company started in 2012 and has recently announced a further 4 permanent employees have joined their team.
- Daisy and Jake Nurseries who will be opening their fifth nursery at a new site in Woodchurch shortly following the successes of their operations in Spital, Moreton, Irby and Prenton.
- Park Group plc announced at its AGM in September that sales are 15% ahead of the same period last year.
- Progress to Excellence, who recently moved its HQ operation into the newly refurbished Pacific Road Business Hub, has acquired Education and Youth Services Ltd to extend their training offer across the spectrum of lifelong learning.
- The Contact Company who will be expanding their operation into the Tower Wharf building, a development made possible by Homes and Communities Agency funding.
- Elegant Steps, which has grown from operating from the owner's house, to a small village shop in Oxtan, to an international company with a large warehouse shipping all over the world.

Council acknowledges that this is just a small snapshot of the commercial successes in Wirral and wishes to place on record its thanks and admiration for all Wirral's workers, entrepreneurs and business owners for their contribution to growing the British economy,

Furthermore the whole Council welcomes the success of the Government's economic plan and calls on the Leader of the Council to ensure effective co-operation with Her Majesty's Government to lock in and increase Wirral residents' prosperity.

7. SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Phil Davies

Seconded by Councillor Ann McLachlan

Whilst Council welcomes a national response to the placement of Syrian refugees and will work with authorities across the Liverpool City Region to respond to this humanitarian crisis, we call on the Government to fully fund the costs of resettlement in the long term and not just for one year. Further, that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to ensure that already over-stretched and under-funded Council services can deliver a proper resettlement programme to ensure that refugees and their families can integrate into our Communities with the enabling support they will require.