

Council – 20 March, 2017

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 7(1) and are listed in accordance with Standing Order 7(2).

1. GOVERNMENT CUTS IN SCHOOL FUNDING *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Tony Smith

Seconded by Councillor Warren Ward

Council is opposed to the government's imposition of real term funding cuts on schools by freezing per-pupil funding while inflation and the cost of employer pension and national insurance contributions increase. This affects all schools and academies alike. Without further funding, schools will lose £3bn in real terms by 2020.

This Council does not want children in this country to miss out on a decent education, supplied by dedicated teachers and support staff with sufficient resources. The average primary school cut is £87,000 or £339 per pupil. The average secondary cut is £405,000 or £477 per pupil. Wirral schools could lose up to £15,696,153. That is 421 teachers or 872 support staff.

Council agrees to write to the Secretary of State for Education to demand that these damaging cuts be reversed.

2. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Ian Lewis

Seconded by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Council notes the Planning Committee's unanimous refusal of an application to create a 10-occupant house of multiple occupation in Laird Street, Birkenhead and congratulates those residents, supported by their Ward Councillors, who opposed this application.

Council wishes to promote the need for quality, affordable homes in Wirral that raise the quality of life for all residents, regardless of tenure.

Council therefore welcomes the recent consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government on proposals to extend mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, including:

- the extension of the scope of the definition of a HMO, which will enable the quality of potentially 200,000 more properties to be improved

- the introduction of a national minimum room size, in order to ensure no HMO falls below the overcrowding standard established in the 1985 Housing Act
- tougher standards for licensees, including potential DBS checks, and the increase and extension of fines imposed on licensees in breach of these standards

Council urges the DCLG to listen to the views expressed by authorities such as Wirral during the consultation and to introduce legislation in Parliament to secure these objectives.

3. KEEPING LARGE LORRIES ON THE RIGHT ROAD *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

This Council supports the initiative taken by the Local Government Association in seeking the use of the most appropriate satellite navigation devices being used in lorries as opposed to those designed for motor cars.

Council believes this is necessary to reduce the damage caused to the highway infrastructure arising from vehicles being misdirected to roads that are too narrow or bridges that have weight or height restrictions, aimed at keeping the largest or heaviest vehicles off that route.

Council recognises that a number of incidents have taken place in Wirral, involving damage to both railway and road bridges, necessitating expensive repairs and highly visible markings to warn of height restrictions. Whilst these have been few in number, the introduction of better navigation systems could well minimise the possibility of future incidents.

Council considers that the cost of the most appropriate devices is not excessive. Council understands that the road haulage industry considers that good practice and common sense should prevail and lead with the use of the devices that give due warning of height and weight restrictions. However, Council believes that the Local Government Association is right to seek legislation aimed at ensuring and enforcing the use of proper systems, resolves to advise them accordingly and advise Wirral's Members of Parliament of this opinion.

4. COUNT THEM IN *(to be debated)*

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council notes the Leader of the Council has pledged his support to The British Legion's 'Count Them In' Campaign to include questions concerning military service and membership of the Armed Forces community in the next 2021 census.

Council wishes to add its full support to this campaign as the data collected will provide essential information for the Council to accurately map the profile and needs of our Armed Forces Community in Wirral.

Council notes the UK Statistics Authority is responsible for coordinating the census arrangements across the UK but it is for the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and Northern Ireland Assembly to determine what questions feature in the final census documents.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Borough's four Members of Parliament and to Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, confirming Council's full support for the 'Count Them In' campaign.

5. GREEN BELT *(the Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*

Proposed by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Seconded by Councillor Adam Sykes

Council welcomes and supports the Leader of the Council's resolute commitment to protect Wirral Green Belt when he stated, "I am not prepared to allow our green belt land to be built on. I am resolute about that commitment. It is the jewel in Wirral's crown and greatly valued by our residents."

Council recognises the valuable part green belt provides in halting urban sprawl and protecting our much loved green spaces, including Council owned land in Saughall Massie which is under attack from the Fire Service, and the land in Hoylake and West Kirby earmarked for housing and a golf resort.

Council therefore resolves to confirm its unconditional guarantee to protect Wirral's green belt and further resolves that it will not release or allow Council owned green belt land to be developed under any circumstances.

Council also looks forward to the Housing Bill, giving extra protection to Green Belt as outlined in the Housing White Paper.

6. PAVILIONS IN SPORTS GROUNDS *(the Civic Mayor to refer to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee)*

Proposed by Councillor Paul Hayes

Seconded by Councillor Bruce Berry

Council notes that, among the 2020 Pledges, is a commitment to ensure 'leisure and cultural opportunities for all'.

Council is therefore concerned with the poor condition of many of the sports pavilions and changing rooms within our parks, sports grounds and open spaces.

Council requests that a review of provision be undertaken by the Environment Scrutiny Committee, including visits to sites and evidence from sports clubs, football teams and other users, to enable a full assessment of the condition to take place and to explore opportunities for attracting external funding for refurbishment and repair.