

Council – 19 March, 2018

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. CUTS TO MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY AND THE IMPACT ON DELIVERING PUBLIC SAFETY

Proposed by Councillor Brian Kenny
Seconded by Councillor Janette Williamson

Council recognises the excellent work undertaken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) in delivering community safety and prevention initiatives across Liverpool City Region, including Wirral.

Council appreciates that MFRS has to deal with a wide range of incidents, both speedily and effectively, and therefore requires diverse and appropriate resources. MFRS also supports National Resilience and is required to respond to incidents regionally, nationally and internationally, such as terrorist threats, severe weather, flooding and any incident that may have an impact on critical infrastructure.

MFRS delivers interventions that meet the needs of our communities including: 'Safe and Well' visits that target our most vulnerable residents. This Service is held in very high regard and gains access to over 50,000 homes annually, to deliver community safety interventions.

Council believes that the Government should recognise the Fire and Rescue Service is a unique public body that plans for 'risk,' not 'demand,' and therefore should fund it accordingly.

Council is concerned that MFRS has experienced the worst budget reductions in the whole of the Country. The number of stations, engines and firefighters have all been cut drastically, thereby increasing the risk to the communities that the service works so hard to protect.

The impact of the cuts to MFRS are as follows:

	2010	2017	2020	% Reduction
Appliances (engines)	42	26	22	Minus 48%
Stations	26	25	22	Minus 15%
Fire Fighters	927	646	580	Minus 37%
Support/Control staff	507	349	309	Minus 34%

Council therefore calls on the Government to:

- 1.Cease any further cuts to the MFRS budget
2. Fund a real increase in firefighters' pay
- 3.Undertake a full evaluation of the impact of these cuts to date

Council wishes to place on record its wholehearted thanks and appreciation for the work undertaken by MFRS, firefighters and support staff for their dedication, commitment and continuing professionalism, in keeping our communities safe.

2. LABOUR NEC INTERFERENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Proposed by Councillor David Burgess-Joyce

Seconded by Councillor Tom Anderson

Council is concerned that the Leader of Wirral Council is currently unduly influenced in decision-making that directly impacts on the communities he serves.

Council is aware the Leader, along with other Labour council leaders across the country, has written to his party headquarters to voice his concern about National Executive Committee interference in local decisions.

Clearly involvement by a non-elected body such as the Labour Party NEC into Wirral Council workings is anathema to the very tenet of democracy and all right-thinking councillors of every party would feel it wrong.

To this end Council would ask the Leader of the Council to reiterate his disdain for such actions by the NEC and confirm to Council that no actions or decisions he or his Cabinet have made since his letter to the NEC have, or will be, altered as a result.

3. CAR PARKING CHARGES AND SUPPORTING LOCAL COMMERCE

Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly
Seconded by Councillor Alan Brighthouse

This Council is concerned that the retail offer in Wirral's main retailing centres, with the range and variety of businesses, needs to be better placed to withstand the impact of online retailing and the challenges facing well know multiple chains.

Council recognises that the warning signs, evidenced in the 2014 review of charges, are becoming yet more relevant.

Council notes that the September 2014 Scrutiny Review into car parking charges at shopping centre (<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50021835/Car%20Parking%20Scrutiny%20Review.pdf>) considered that car parking charges should follow the following Policy Objectives:-

- P01 To support the long-term economic viability of the Borough's shopping and commercial centres.
- P02 To ensure that the price for car parking is fair and not detrimental to the economic well-being of shopping and commercial centres.

Council considers these objectives are not being met and that car parking charges are now used as a 'cash cow' to augment Council income rather than to aid local business and support centre viability.

Council notes that car parking charges make a 'profit' of in excess of £800,000.

Council therefore requests Cabinet to instruct officers to work with retail organisations to develop a scheme of car parking charges that meets these objectives first identified in **2014**.

The new scheme should include an offer of a refund of £1 on a ticket where validation by participating retailers of spend of £5 or more has taken place in the shopping retail centres of Birkenhead, Liscard, Heswall and West Kirby.

4. ZERO TOLERANCE OF LITTER

Proposed by Councillor Phill Brightmore

Seconded by Councillor Phil Davies

This Council reaffirms its support for a zero tolerance approach towards litter in the Borough.

Council rejects criticism by the Green Party that our approach towards people who drop litter in Birkenhead is 'heavy-handed and ineffective' and that smokers are being targeted.

This Labour Administration makes no apology for clamping down on people who drop litter. In the last six months 1,800 litter Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued in the Birkenhead area. This is approximately half of all litter FPNs issued in the Borough. Although 93.6% of these were for cigarette litter, this simply represents the most common form of littering rather than any attempt to target smokers.

Council believes that the Green Party's stance of being soft on litter louts is not shared by the vast majority of residents who are pleased with the priority the Council is giving to tackling this issue. This Council will not tolerate littering and rejects Green party calls to do so within Birkenhead.

5. SCRAP WIRRAL VIEW

Proposed by Councillor Wendy Clements

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council is concerned that the Wirral View newspaper continues to be beset with problems – including patchy distribution and low levels of external advertising.

Council believes that £254,000 spent to date, and the further £140,000 planned for 2018/19, is a waste of money and therefore calls on Cabinet to put the publication out of its misery.

6. SECURING SAFE ENERGY SUPPLIES

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Council recalls that, at its meeting of 18 July 2011 (Minute 28), Council unanimously approved a Notice of Motion proposed by Cllr Mark Johnston and seconded by Cllr Dave Mitchell.

The Motion responded to and set out this Council's response to public concerns at that time. These concerns remain as shown by the strong opposition to developments in Lancashire and in North Yorkshire.

As part of the motion, it was resolved that Council:

- (a) states its opposition to any application by IGas or other companies to carry out shale gas or coal gas methane testing or extraction in Wirral until such time as the Council is satisfied as to the safety of the process and that the risk of adverse environmental impacts have been fully addressed.
- (b) requests the appropriate chief officer prepare a report for the Planning Committee, the Economy and Regeneration and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees to aid members in better understanding the Council's responsibility and regulatory role in relation to gas exploration.
- (c) further requests the Economy and Regeneration OSC to include a study of the potential economic impacts of shale gas exploration and exploitation in Wirral in its workplan, including whether the impact of a proliferation of shale gas drilling on the Liverpool City Region will adversely impact on it becoming a leading area for the manufacture of low carbon technologies and development of a green economy.

Since the compilation of this Motion, there have been a number of developments:

- i. The Prime Minister has spoken of her intention that the UK should have a secure and safe supply of energy in the future (18 October 2017). This includes the continued development of shale gas fields.
- ii. The Oil and Gas Authority issued 'Consolidated onshore guidance' in December 2017 https://www.ogauthority.co.uk/media/4622/160218_consolidated-onshore-guidance-compendium_vfinal.pdf
Within this document, Chapter 7 contains paragraphs 27 and 32 which may have a bearing on our local geology.
- iii. The Planning Committee of our neighbouring Council, Cheshire West and Chester, refused application 17/03213/MIN on 25 January 2018, the Committee report and Minute being set out here:

<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/s56155/1703213MIN%20-%20Final.pdf>

<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=42393>

The Committee felt that the application did not *"mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, ensuring the development makes the best use of opportunities for renewable energy use and generation."*

- iv. The recent comments from the Liverpool City Region Mayor, Steve Rotheram, that there is no need or justification for shale gas extraction in the City Region given the abundance of alternative sustainable energy sources.

In the light of these developments and continuing public concern, Council requests that officers examine the guidance from the Oil and Gas Authority, the decision of Cheshire West and Chester's Planning Committee, along with the views of the LCR Mayor, and report further on how this Council can best maintain a robust policy and stance on this controversial process.

7. ISS FACILITIES MANAGEMENT LIMITED AT THE ROYAL LIVERPOOL & BROADGREEN UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Proposed by Councillor Matthew Patrick

Seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny

Council notes that staff employed by ISS Facilities Management Limited (ISS) provide vital services at the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust (RLBUHT), cleaning hospital wards, transporting patients around hospital departments and cooking for patients, visitors and staff.

Council notes the changes that ISS have made to the sick pay scheme for facilities management workers at RLBUHT and a couple of other NHS Trusts in the country, which has reduced sick pay to 12 days. Council notes that this means that staff who are the most seriously ill and most in need of time away from work, workers suffering from illnesses like cancer, heart problems or physical injuries, are the people who are faced with the difficult decision of either working when medically unfit to do so or facing severe financial difficulties due to not being paid.

Council further notes the collective grievance containing over 270 names submitted by Unite the Union to ISS management calling for the full sick pay scheme to be reinstated, which has so far been repeatedly ignored by ISS management.

Council therefore calls on ISS to negotiate with Unite with a view to reinstating the full sick pay regime so that ISS facilities management staff at RLBUHT have access to a fair sick pay scheme on the same basis available to NHS workers and ISS worker at other NHS Trusts and also calls on the RLBUHT Board and management to put pressure on ISS to make this happen.

Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chief Executives of ISS and RLBUHT outlining the terms of this motion.

8. SUPPORT FOR NEW TRAINS ON THE MERSEYRAIL NETWORK

Proposed by Councillor Les Rowlands

Seconded by Councillor Chris Blakeley

Council welcomes the decision by all members of Merseytravel Transport Committee to support the introduction of new trains on the network.

Council believes the new carriages, replacing rolling stock that is 40 years old, will improve the quality of service for all rail users and, in particular, improve access for disabled passengers.