

Council – 6 September, 2021

Motions – with effect of proposed amendments incorporated

1. PLANNING SYSTEM REFORM

Proposed by Councillor Steve Foulkes

Seconded by Councillor Brian Kenny

Wirral Council notes that the Government has published highly controversial proposals to reform the Planning system. One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents' right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood if the area is zoned for growth or renewal.

Council believes that the Planning system works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes. Wirral Council therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

Council notes that paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2021) states:

'Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.'

Council therefore urges developers to engage with local residents and amenity groups at the earliest possible opportunity as their plans develop and preferably before any formal planning application is submitted.

Council requests that Planning Committee gives consideration to amending the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Applications Sub-Committee for it to act as a forum to enable informal pre-application discussion between community groups, Ward Councillors, developers and officers to take place as plans are developed.

Council further considers that the Council's planning website pages should be made more user-friendly and requests the Director of Regeneration and Place to further develop the web pages and, as a start, to ensure that uploaded plans, drawings and documents are given readily understandable titles and that comments submitted by local residents are readily visible for interested parties to view

(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP AMENDMENT)

2. SCHOOLS NEED ADEQUATE FUNDING TO ENSURE OUR CHILDREN CATCH UP

**Proposed by Councillor Chris Carubia
Seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist**

Council congratulates Wirral's young people on their GCSE and A level results.

Council recognises, respects and appreciates that these results reflect the hard work put in by students, supported by their teachers, teaching assistants and parents, despite the considerable disruption to their education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council looks forward to better understanding how well Wirral's young people have been able to come through such difficult times and remains concerned that the crisis has had a severe impact on the mental health of young people.

Council recalls, in February 2021, that Sir Kevan Collins was appointed as Education Recovery Commissioner. It is noted that, at the time, the Prime Minister stated :-

"his experience and expertise will help ensure every young person is supported to catch up on their education and gain the skills and knowledge they need to be able to seize opportunities in future." (Press release, 03.02.21)

Council considers the fact that Sir Kevan felt he had little alternative but to resign in June 2021 is a warning sign that the clear long-term recovery programme he proposed is not likely to be forthcoming from the Government in the way he recommended or at the scale needed to undo the disruption caused by COVID-19.

Council strongly supports the view expressed by Sir Kevan in his resignation letter to the Prime Minister in which he stated:-

"I hope that you are able to allocate the additional resources that are likely to be needed for a successful recovery through the forthcoming Spending Review."

Council, therefore, asks that the Group Leaders and Spokespersons for Children, Young People & Education sign a letter to the Secretary of State for Education endorsing Sir Kevan's views and calling for adequate resources for catch-up programmes, designed for all age groups, that will enable Wirral's young people to recover this lost ground.

3. INQUIRY INTO THE NICKLAUS JOINT VENTURE GROUP (NJVG) DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Proposed by Councillor Tom Anderson
Seconded by Councillor Kathy Hodson

Council seeks confirmation of the full extent of the agreement with Nicklaus Joint Venture Group to develop a 'Hoylake Golf Resort', including risks and associated costs to date.

Council therefore requests the Audit and Risk Management Committee to investigate the governance and financial arrangements associated with this project, including evidence from those involved in the original decision; a timeline of key points; a full breakdown of costs and who authorised those costs [and scrutiny of relevant and significant events, both political and financial, up to, and including the date of settlement.](#)

Further, Council seeks assurances that any other similar agreements which may have been entered into are assessed for risk exposure.

(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT)

4. CREATING LOW TRAFFIC STREETS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACROSS WIRRAL

Proposed by Councillor Harry Gorman
Seconded by Councillor Chris Cooke

Council notes:

the negative effects of air pollution on public health and the widespread problems associated with 'rat-running' on minor roads.

the benefits of active travel both in reducing carbon emissions and improving health.

the effectiveness of modal filters, chicanes and other traffic calming measures in creating low traffic neighbourhoods by removing through traffic from residential areas and from outside schools. This enables local people to take more and safer journeys on foot, bike or by other active modes.

that there are successful modal filters already installed in Wirral (e.g. Highcroft Avenue, Bebington and Lansdowne Road, Birkenhead).

the greater affordability and versatility of wooden planters compared with other modal filter and chicane designs and the benefits that more plants can bring to a street scene. These can be upgraded with more permanent structures when funding allows.

best practice case studies that have created high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars using design features such as modal filters, school streets, footway improvements, seating, tree planting, pocket parks, cycle parking and signage and waymarking.

low traffic neighbourhoods deter traffic from cutting through residential side streets to avoid main roads whilst still allowing vehicle access for residents. Scheme outcomes can be a reduction in travel speeds and the creation of safer environments for those walking, cycling or using mobility scooters.

the council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency and safer streets and support by all parties for a residential 20mph speed limit.

that 20mph limits are often ignored without physical traffic calming measures being in place.

that speed enforcement is dependent on police resource and can't be present on all streets, all the time.

Council instructs:

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee as part of its work programme:

- To undertake an assessment of the suitability of streets for planter-based traffic calming solutions to help quickly create low traffic neighbourhoods throughout Wirral.
- To work with stakeholders to identify issues and co-develop effective solutions in order to assess the feasibility of delivering a low traffic neighbourhood.
- To seek to ensure traffic calming measures are always considered whenever a road is up for resurfacing.
- To consider the wider use of environmental weight restrictions where appropriate to deter Heavy Goods Vehicles from using residential roads as short cuts.

(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP AMENDMENT)