

Council – 18 October, 2021

Motions - with effect of proposed amendments incorporated

1. OPPOSE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEMS IN THE ENGLISH NHS

**Proposed by Councillor Brian Kenny
Seconded by Councillor Kate Cannon**

Council notes –

1. The NHS in England is rapidly being reorganised into 42 regional Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), while the Covid pandemic still rages. These ICSs may strengthen the role of private companies, including US health insurance corporations, in the health and care system.
2. Government is in the process of passing new legislation to make ICSs into statutory bodies.
3. ICSs are supposed to operate as partnerships between the NHS, local authorities and others, but the plans, which make ICS systems accountable nationally to the Secretary of State, may actually sideline local authorities, threatening the future integrity of social care and reducing local accountability. Meaning that health and care services in Wirral are controlled by Cheshire and Merseyside ICS
4. Despite claiming to 'integrate' health and social care services for the benefit of patients, ICSs are actually adapted from a model from the United States, which aims to reduce spending on health and care through increasing costs to people using the services
5. ICSs will operate with fixed annual budgets for a wide range of health and social care services, which could lead to a diminishing focus on place-based priorities for Wirral.
6. Some 83 corporations and businesses, including 22 from the US, are already getting heavily involved in developing ICSs and could even sit on their boards, thus putting profit making companies in a position to influence decisions on health and care at a Wirral and regional level.
7. ICSs will be accountable to the Secretary of State, and ICS plans will be binding. They could mean more private contracts, more down-skilling and outsourcing of NHS jobs, reduced services (partially replaced by 'digital' options and volunteers) and significant spending cuts.
8. **The Health and Care Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons with a substantial Conservative Majority on 14 July 2021 despite widespread concern over its contents.**

9. The contents of the proposals have been under critical examination at sittings of the Commons Health and Care Committee in order to understand its full impact, with sittings planned through to 2 November 2021.

Council believes –

1. There has been little opportunity for adequate consultation or explanation of this legislation and its consequences for Wirral residents
2. The introduction of Integrated Care Systems could threaten patient care, jobs, working conditions and the integrity of the NHS as a public service.
3. After 30 years of marketisation, it is time to restore the NHS to a fully accountable public service, which is provided free to all at the point of use.
4. Government should commit to a separate, collaborative, publicly funded Social Care Service.
5. Genuinely integrated services should take into account the wider determinants of health, such as housing, employment and environment. This would involve *more* input from local authorities.
6. that in August and September Councils, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and many bodies were sent guidance on *'the development of place based partnerships as part of statutory integrated care systems'*.

The latter specifically states that, *'where decision making affects communities, groups or specific services, these arrangements...should fully engage those affected, including populations, people who use services and carers across health and social care'*

This Council pledges to make sure that will be the case.

Council therefore resolves to –

- (1) request the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care and ask for an extended and meaningful consultation with the public, so that the residents of Wirral are fully aware of what the changes will mean;
- (2) request that the guidance *"working together at scale"* issued in August states that NHS Trusts, when seeking to *'reduce unwarranted variation'* and *'inequality in health outcomes'* is accompanied by clarity over the movement of resources;
- (3) request that Wirral is given a clear explanation of the implications of the plans to *'ensure that specialisation and consolidation occur where this will provide better outcomes and value'*;
- (4) request a financial forecast of the full context that Wirral will face as Edward Argar MP has stated *'local systems will be informed of their resource envelope at the start of the year and will be required to agree a plan that matches, or is within, that envelope'*, and demand an immediate halt to the rollout of ICSs until such a consultation and explanation has taken place; and

(5) promote the introduction of legislation to bring about universal, comprehensive and publicly provided NHS and a Social Care System fit for the 21st century.

(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP AMENDMENT)

2. SPARTINA ANGLICA RISKS TO THE NORTH WIRRAL FORESHORE

**Proposed by Councillor Tony Cox
Seconded by Councillor Andrew Gardner**

Council recognises the current condition of Hoylake beach, but also recognises that the *Spartina anglica*, once isolated from the rest of the North Wirral Foreshore, has now spread to Meols beach.

Council is concerned that with the current speed of the spread of this invasive species, it is soon likely to be seen in Moreton and then Leasowe.

Further to correspondence with Natural England, Council understands that there has never been a moratorium on raking at the Hoylake beach location, rather that raking of ALL North Wirral Foreshore would not be supported, which is wholly different.

Furthermore, page 60 of Natural England's publication: *Spartina anglica and its management in estuarine Natura 2000 sites: an update of its status and monitoring future change in England (IPENS041)* contains a *Spartina anglica* management flowchart which should be followed when dealing with this species. Council is concerned that this guidance is not being adhered to.

Therefore, Council requests the Director of Neighbourhoods to engage with Natural England, as a matter of urgency, to ascertain whether the continued spread of *Spartina* grasses could jeopardise the SSSI status of the North Wirral Foreshore and to determine whether the spread of these invasive grasses could be detrimental to the wellbeing of migratory wading birds (as described in section 2.1 of *Spartina anglica and its management in estuarine Natura 2000 sites: an update of its status and monitoring future change in England (IPENS041)*).

Council instructs the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee, as part of its work programme, to consider the findings from the discussions with Natural England regarding the impact of the spread of *Spartina* grasses as soon as practicably possible and certainly no later than the Committee's first meeting in 2022 (17th January 2022).

3. PROTECTING RESIDENTS FROM FLOOD RISK

Proposed by Councillor Allan Brame
Seconded by Councillor Jason Walsh

Council places on record its thanks to everyone involved in the response to 9 September 2021 flooding incident, including the emergency services, local businesses, Council officers and members of the community.

Council notes that work is currently underway by the Council to produce a Section 19 Flood Investigation Report as required by the Flood & Water Management Act 2010. Council appreciates that partners such as the Environment Agency, United Utilities and other agencies will have an important role in understanding why the flooding was so severe and what possible measures might be taken to ~~mitigate future flooding events~~ **improve flood risk management.**

Council recognises that the Flood Investigation Report will take time to prepare but seeks assurances from officers in particular with regard to:

- how lessons learned from the ~~2017~~ **2015 and subsequent** Flood Investigation reports ~~were~~ **have been** acted upon;
- the current schedules of gully and roadside drainage cleansing (~~Council and United Utilities maintained~~) and whether these need to be more proactive, especially in areas which may be ~~prone to~~ **at greater risk of** flooding;
- ~~the schedule of dredging and river maintenance by the Environment Agency to ensure the free flow of Wirral's various waterways;~~
- the steps needed to reduce the incidence of flooding on our key highway network;
- the provision, in partnership with other agencies, of practical advice and help, including hydrosacks and, where ~~necessary~~, **Government grants are available**, financial aid for businesses and residents to make their homes and premises more flood resilient;
- the way in which our roads are resurfaced and whether more appropriate methods need to be considered;
- the need to condition and enforce permeable/porous surfaces when homeowners are installing new driveways.

Council believes that Wirral's ~~flood defences and infrastructure should be~~ **was not** designed to cope with the much greater volumes of rainfall given the evidence of new volatility in weather conditions due to climate change. **Council notes that all new infrastructure should be as resilient as necessary to cope with expected future increased rainfall caused by climate change and that existing infrastructure should be improved wherever there is the means to do so, and that property owners should be reminded of their duties in this regard.**

Accordingly, Council requests a review of the capital programme **and any sources of outside funding available** by the Director of Resources to bring forward schemes to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee aimed at ~~improving drainage infrastructure and combatting climate change~~ **reducing flood risk and adapting to climate change.**

Council further requests that Planning and Communications officers review the need for greater levels of communication with and education of residents regarding the dangers of flooding and the precise requirements and recommendations regarding removal of front garden green spaces and extension/creation of driveways with a view to reducing the “urban creep” associated with this and the serious flood risk posed.

Council recognises that trees and green space should be at the heart of flood risk management and climate adaptation strategies and, therefore, commits to following current Government guidance on nature-based solutions to flood defence and restates its commitment to preserve our existing stock of healthy trees and for increased strategic tree planting as part of this infrastructure.

Accordingly, Council asks Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to set up a working group to look at how Wirral can better implement the Tree Strategy pledges on tree protection, working with the Tree Strategy Advisory Board and Wirral Initiative on Trees before the end of this calendar year and also to urge the Government to undertake a review of the whole TPO system to better protect all trees with a new system that assumes protection for all mature trees unless permission is granted for works or removal.

Council recognises that investment to prevent flooding in the first place is a better use of taxpayers’ money than the huge financial and human costs involved in dealing with the aftermath of flooding.

(DELETIONS AND INSERTIONS – LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT)

4. EQUAL PAVEMENTS PLEDGE

**Proposed by Councillor Harry Gorman
Seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary**

This Council notes:

- the campaign of Transport for All calling on councils and transport authorities to sign an Equal Pavements Pledge.
- the majority of disabled people polled recently by Transport for All are worried that streets remain inaccessible with many lacking dropped kerbs to enable level access along pavements or to cross the street.
- disabled people are concerned at the risk of further barriers being presented – either from the way in which changes to streets are delivered, or from al-fresco dining being delivered without consideration for the need for clear access on pavements.
- Wirral continues to need investment and progress in making pavements fully accessible

that the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge outlines a need to:

- listen to disabled people, and act
- keep pavements clear

- reduce pavement clutter
- acknowledge and act to reduce the impact of waste removal on pavements
- audit pavements and install dropped kerbs where they are missing
- protect blue badge parking, with relocation kept to a minimum
- work with disabled experts, committing to co-production of schemes

Council therefore resolves to:

- support the Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge
- request the Leader of the Council writes to Transport for All to convey the Council's support **and outline what is already happening in Wirral, for example, working with disability campaigners such as Ellis Palmer, to make real improvements to access for disabled residents and visitors to footpaths and cycle-paths across the borough.**
- ask the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to add this matter to its work programme to help determine how the Council can deliver on the Equal Pavements Pledge **as part of a wider, co-produced programme to improve disabled access to all Council resources and services and how the Council could reduce pavement clutter and make them accessible.**
- engage directly with organisations representing people with accessibility requirements.
- call on Central Government to better fund our efforts to make Wirral's pavements people friendly

(ADDITIONAL WORDING – LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT)

5. FUNDING CARING SERVICES TO MEET WIRRAL'S NEEDS

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist

Seconded by Councillor Dave Mitchell

Council notes that the Government has published 'Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care' and has also committed to publishing a new Adult Social Care white paper by the end of the year.

Council observes that funding is expected to come from a new 1.25% Health and Social Care levy based on National Insurance contributions. This will be paid by Wirral's residents and businesses who earn above the various thresholds.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has questioned the adequacy of the Levy to fund all of the Plan's Adult Social Care commitments. It is anxious to know what proportion of the Levy will reach Adult Social Care beyond the three-year period covered in the Plan.

The briefing issued by the LGA on 17 September 2021 says:

- it is '*alarmed*' that the Government's solution for tackling social care's core pressures appears to be the use of council tax, the social care precept and

long-term efficiencies; later considering this ‘*deeply troubling*’ and ‘*wholly unrealistic*’

- it is ‘*concerned*’ that ‘while the NHS is receiving funding to sort out the challenges it has here and now as well as in the future, *there is no funding from the Levy to address the current issues facing social care.*’
- it has ‘*serious concerns*’ about what will happen to the funding beyond the three-year period’ and asks how ‘*likely and realistic*’ it is that funding for the NHS will be diverted to social care in future years.

Council, seeking the best long term solution for Wirral, endorses these concerns, observing that the Government’s plan states:

“The Government will ensure local authorities have access to sustainable funding for core budgets at the Spending Review. We expect demographic and unit cost pressures will be met through council tax, social care precept, and long-term efficiencies; the overall level of local government funding, including council tax and social care precept, will be determined in the round at the Spending Review in the normal way.” (paragraph 36)

Council tax (and therefore the precept) raises different amounts in different parts of the country and the banding of properties for Council Tax in Wirral limits the resources that can be raised by the social care precept.

Council recognises and appreciates that the LGA has concluded that:

‘The Spending Review must inject genuinely new funding, direct to local government, to both stabilise the system in the short-term and enable progress to be made in tackling unmet and under-met need, investing more in prevention, improving care worker pay and better supporting unpaid carers’.

In full recognition of all these issues, Council requests that the Group Leaders write to the Chairman of the Local Government Association to support the concerns expressed and that Wirral’s Members of Parliament are made aware of this stance.