

# Council – 20 March, 2023

## Amendments to Motions on Notice

The Council is requested to consider the following amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3.

### 1. LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

#### Amendment

**Proposed by Councillor Tracy Elzeiny**  
**Seconded by Councillor Mike Collins**

Council notes that the Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, a Government body, for examination and a date has now been set by the Planning Inspectorate for the 18th April 2023 to start the Local Plan hearings.

Council also notes that the Planning Committee's decision to refuse planning permission has been appealed by Leverhulme and is therefore dismayed and concerned that the Planning Inspectorate has made a decision to begin a public Inquiry on the Leverhulme appeals starting on the 16 May 2023 which will result in the Local Plan examination being paused.

This could potentially put at risk, all of the hard work to protect the greenbelt on Wirral and will cause unnecessary worry and distress to residents affected in Irby, Pensby, Barnston & Heswall.

The Leader of the Council seeks the support of members of the Council to write to the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate to urge them to delay the Leverhulme appeals, until such time as the Local Plan examination has been concluded. Council believes that such a step is necessary to reinforce the Council's commitment to protect Wirral's Greenbelt and its Local Plan, **which is one of the Council's key priorities and underpins Wirral's ambitious regeneration plans that are primarily focused on the east side of the Borough on brownfield sites.**

**Council wishes to take this opportunity to reassure residents and Green Belt campaigners that it will defend its position vigorously during both the Local Plan hearings and the Leverhulme appeals.**

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### 1. LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

#### Amendment

**Proposed by Councillor Stuart Kelly**  
**Seconded by Councillor Allan Brame**

Council notes that the Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, a Government body, for examination and a date has now been set by the Planning Inspectorate for the 18th April 2023 to start the Local Plan hearings.

Council also notes the **Council's** decision to refuse planning permission has been appealed by Leverhulme and is therefore dismayed and concerned that the Planning Inspectorate has made a decision to begin a public Inquiry on the Leverhulme appeals starting on the 16 May 2023 which will result in the Local Plan examination **sitting for three weeks from 18<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May before being paused until September** being paused.

~~This could potentially put at risk, all of the hard work to protect the greenbelt on Wirral and will cause unnecessary worry and distress to residents affected in Irby, Pensby, Barnston & Heswall.~~

**Council applauds all the hard work that has been done to protect the greenbelt on Wirral and regrets that PINS decision will cause unnecessary worry and distress to residents affected in Irby, Pensby, Barnston and Heswall in particular.**

**Council reaffirms its opposition to the Leverhulme applications for the reasons given in the relevant planning decision notices.**

**Council remains confident that the Leverhulme applications do not comply with the core planning principles within the NPPF (section 13) or the existing Unitary Development Plan and relevant policies of the emerging Wirral Local Plan.**

**Council further notes that the Planning Inspector has raised issues of prematurity and Council is of the view that prematurity is a strong reason to resist these applications.**

The Leader of the Council seeks the support of members of the Council to write to the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate to urge them to delay the Leverhulme appeals, until such time as the Local Plan examination has been concluded. Council believes that such a step is necessary to reinforce the Council's commitment to protect Wirral's Greenbelt and its Local Plan

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## **2. SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH THE COST OF LIVING**

### **Amendment**

**Proposed by Councillor Janette Williamson  
Seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart**

Council ~~welcomes~~ **acknowledges** the allocation of a further £6m for the Borough's Household Support Fund and the relaxation of some of the initial restrictions on how it can be used.

In total, this means that since the pandemic, ~~and~~ the global rise in prices, **and disastrous Kwarteng/Truss budget which added £30bn of debt to the UK, as quoted**

by the [Guardian Newspaper](#)<sup>1</sup>, Wirral Council will have received £15 million to support those households which are most exposed to rising costs for basic commodities and essentials.

Despite recent disparaging comments from some Conservative members, Council continues to thank all staff for their tireless work, and the voluntary, community and faith organisations that have delivered so much of this support and pledges to continue to work with them to ensure this latest tranche of funding reaches those most in need.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/12/revealed-the-30bn-cost-of-liz-truss-disastrous-mini-budget#:~:text=Liz%20Truss's%20disastrous%20mini%2Dbudget%20cost%20the%20country%20a%20staggering,tax%20rises%20and%20spending%20cuts>.

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#### 4. GREATER INSULATION PROGRAMME NEEDED FOR WIRRAL'S HOUSING

##### Amendment

**Proposed by Councillor Naomi Graham**  
**Seconded by Councillor Harry Gorman**

Council notes that the creation of the *'Department for Energy Security and Net Zero'* was announced by the Prime Minister on 7 February 2023. The 'Priority Outcomes' set out at its launch included actions to:

*'Improve the energy efficiency of UK homes, businesses and public sector buildings to meet the 15% demand reduction ambition.'*

*'Deliver current schemes to support energy consumers with their bills and develop options for long-term reform to improve how the electricity market works for families and businesses.'*

Council recognises that this renamed Department replaced the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. This body had the key role in funding substantial programmes for home insulation schemes and projects throughout the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Council observes that Wirral residents have benefitted through the projects established to retrofit local homes considered by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority at its meetings of 21 January 2022 (Item 110, Housing Retrofit Funding) with the potential for further funding discussed on 20 January 2023 (Item 100, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund). These relied on funds channelled through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and depended on bids submitted.

Council believes that it is essential that the energy efficiency of homes is improved in Wirral so that residents are able to live in well insulated properties, reduce their carbon footprint, meet their household bills and avoid being plunged into fuel poverty. In order to secure this, the creation and training of an appropriately skilled

workforce is essential along with funding streams that are sufficient to enable sustained progress.

Accordingly, Council requests that the Director of Regeneration and Place provides a briefing paper on what is currently known about the energy efficiency of Wirral's housing stock with a view to supporting all future bids by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for funding to enable Wirral's housing stock to become more energy efficient. The briefing should be drawn up in cooperation with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and circulated to Wirral's MPs.

**Council also requests:**

- The Director of Regeneration and Place to circulate to all members of the Council and publish on the Council's website, the existing report on Decarbonising Residential Buildings in Wirral, written by the Energy Saving Trust in March 2021 for Wirral Council and summarised by officers in a report to Housing in November 2021.

- The Director of Regeneration and Place report to the next meeting of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee regarding the motion passed by Council on 10th October 2022 in order to provide an update.

In order for the Council to respond to future initiatives in a timely matter the arrangements be made for relevant spokespersons of all groups, and the Director of Regeneration and Place to liaise with officers of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and its relevant Portfolio Holder to enable these to be progressed.

In the event that funds are released by central government that enable this Council to take them up directly the issue be discussed with the relevant spokespersons and reported to the relevant Policy and Service Committee and Policy and Resources committee as required.

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## 5. REQUEST FOR FURTHER SUPPORT FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

### Amendment

**Proposed by Councillor Kathy Hodson**

**Seconded by Councillor Cherry Povall**

This Wirral Council notes the recent survey published by "Together Through This Crisis" initiative. The research from the coalition of organisations including Save the Children, Shelter and 38 Degrees, published recently, found that 24% of people are regularly unable to pay for basics, while nearly 40% of people end the month with no money left.

Council is concerned that thousands of Wirral residents are struggling during the current Cost of Living Crisis, **with Britain's economy shocked by Coronavirus and then impacted by Putin's war in Ukraine.**

~~Council believes that the reason why so many Wirral residents are struggling, is due to the last 13 years of Tory Government economic mismanagement.~~

Council believes that politics is all about choices and welcomes the £6 million extension to the Household Support Fund so that Wirral Council can direct Tory Government funding to help those who need it most. ~~that the Tory Government have consistently shown that they have made the wrong ones, so far as Wirral residents are concerned.~~

Council maintains that the cost-of-living crisis means families and children across Wirral are in desperate need of additional support from the Tory Government.

Council believes that in the sixth richest Country in the world, including Wirral, children and adults should not be going hungry, and that the energy bill ticking timebomb should be ended, as a matter of urgency.

Mindful that the Spring statement is forthcoming, the Chief Executive and Council Leader are requested to write to both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, calling for the government to take several steps to respond to the crisis, including ~~introducing~~ extending universal free school meals and unfreezing housing benefit, together with any other appropriate steps, to protect Wirral residents.