

# COUNCIL

Monday, 20 March 2023

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Jeff Green) in the Chair  
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Jerry Williams)

Councillors	T Anderson	A Gardner	P Martin
	S Bennett	P Gilchrist	D Mitchell
	J Bird	H Gorman	S Mountney
	M Booth	N Graham	Y Nolan
	A Brame	K Greaney	C O'Hagan
	D Burgess- Joyce	EA Grey	A Onwuemene
	H Cameron	J Grier	O Osanlou
	I Camphor	P Hayes	S Percy
	C Carubia	A Hodson	C Povall
	P Cleary	K Hodson	L Rennie
	M Collins	J Hoey	J Robinson
	H Collinson	J Johnson	T Smith
	C Cooke	C Jones	P Stuart
	T Cox	T Jones	Jason Walsh
	A Davies	M Jordan	Joe Walsh
	C Davies	S Kelly	S Williams
	G Davies	B Kenny	J Williamson
	T Elzeiny	D Kenny	V Wilson
	L Fraser	J Laing	G Wood
		I Lewis	A Wright

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	S Foulkes	J McManus
		E Gleaves	S Powell-Wilde
		J McManus	

## 88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Civic Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and those watching the webcast. He then asked Members to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any matters to be determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

Councillor Naomi Graham declared a personal interest by virtue of her partners' employment.

89 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor announced that apologies had been received from Councillors Steve Foulkes, Emily Gleaves, Julie McManus, Sue Powell-Wilde and Joe Walsh.

The Civic Mayor noted that this was the last Council of the municipal year and that up until this week he had undertaken over 230 engagements and that he would comment further upon his year in office at the Annual Meeting in May.

The Civic Mayor announced that the Andy Day Cup, awarded to the Member of the Council who had shown dedication and selflessness during the Municipal Year in memory of the late Councillor Andy Day, was to be awarded to Councillor Ivan Camphor.

The Civic Mayor then announced that the Andy Corkhill Award, given to an individual, group, school or business that had done something demonstrably of benefit to the environment, was to be awarded to Wirral's Assistant Director for Parks and Environment, Colin Clayton.

The Civic Mayor also announced a new award for Public Servant of the Year, given to Council officers that have gone above and beyond the call of duty for their office, performed their duties to the upmost commitment, dedication and integrity and demonstrably improved outcomes for Wirral residents through their actions. The Public Servant of the Year was awarded to Assistant Chief Executive, David Armstrong.

The Civic Mayor announced that that a number of Members would not be seeking re-election this year and thanked them for their service to the Council and the Borough, Councillors Tom Anderson, Emily Gleaves, Paul Hayes, John Hoey, Chris Jones, David Mitchell, Tony Smith, Joe Walsh, Steve Williams and Alison Wright.

He then invited Councillors Janette Williamson, Tom Anderson, Pat Cleary and Phil Gilchrist to pay their tributes to those retiring Members as Leaders of each political group.

90 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of Council held on 5 December 2022, and 27 February 2023 had been circulated to Members.

The Civic Mayor noted that there were two minor corrections to the minutes of the 27 February 2023 meeting:

- **Minute 77** – the declaration of interest in respect to the receipt of a Pension from Merseyside Police should read Councillor Steve Williams and not Councillor Steve Foulkes.
- **Minute 81** – Councillor Jean Robinson was the seconder of the recommendations and not Councillor Yvonne Nolan.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings be approved and adopted as correct records, subject to the following amendments to the minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2023:**

1. **Minute 77 to read Councillor Steve Williams and not Councillor Steve Foulkes in respect of the declaration of interest regarding the receipt of a Pension from Merseyside Police.**
2. **Minute 81 to read that Councillor Jean Robinson and not Councillor Yvonne Nolan seconded the motion.**

## 91 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that six public questions had been received.

Mark Skillicorn asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Janette Williamson, what the government's reasons or motivations were for pausing Wirral's completed Local Plan hearing to hear Leverhulme's appeals first.

In response Councillor Williamson noted that she could not know what the government's motivations were but that Wirral was in the hands of the Planning Inspectorate who had chosen the dates of the Leverhulme appeals.

Julienne McGeough asked a question to the Leader of the Council regarding trains not stopping at Green Lane and requested an update on any progress in getting trains to stop there.

Councillor Janette Williamson stated that she was continuing to make representations to the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotheram, around the services to Green Lane station.

Charlotte Smith asked a question to the Leader of the Council regarding access to Hoylake Beach for disabled people.

The Leader thanked Charlotte Smith for her question and asked Councillor Liz Grey as Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to respond. Councillor Liz Grey stated that Charlotte Smith had asked similar questions on access at a number of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees where the answer to the question had previously been provided.

Charlotte Smith then ask a supplementary question on whether an equality impact assessment would be undertaken regarding access to Hoylake Beach. Councillor Liz Grey responded that any final beach management plan would include an equality impact assessment.

Neil Smith asked a question of the Leader of the Council regarding acting positively for the people of Wirral, particularly those affected by the West Kirby Flood Wall and Hoylake beach.

Councillor Janette Williamson stated that officers have been working closely with the businesses of West Kirby to alleviate concerns regarding lack of parking provision due to the construction of the Flood Wall. With regard to Hoylake beach, she noted that the Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, Liz Grey, had been advocating for a compromise on how the beach was to be managed and had asked officers to develop further options as part of the desire to reach a compromise.

Neil Smith asked a supplementary question on what image Hoylake beach would give to the world when it was shown on television during the Open Golf tournament. Councillor Williamson noted that there were as many people that supported leaving Hoylake beach alone as there were that want it cleared of vegetation.

The Monitoring Officer read out a question on behalf of Nicola Verkade to the Leader of the Council which related to public consultation on Hoylake beach and the council not meeting its deadline to present its findings on Phase one and two of the consultations.

Councillor Janette Williamson explained that work undertaken to determine the Natural Capital Value under 2 extreme climate change scenarios took longer than programmed. The options put forward for Phase 2 at Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in November 2022 were not approved, leading to further work to develop alternative options.

The Monitoring Officer read out a question on behalf of Frank McArdle to the Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee asking her to defend taking part in an alleged illegal mass gathering on Hoylake shore in 2022.

Councillor Liz Grey responded that the event was in no way illegal as the beach was a public space and none of the attendees had damaged any protected habitat.

**STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that notice of one public statement had been received from Phil Simpson in relation to motion 1 – “Local Plan Examination”. Phil Simpson was in attendance and spoke in relation to the Planning Inspectorate’s decision to delay the Local Plan Examination in order to hear Leverhulme’s appeals against the Planning Committee’s decision to refuse planning permission for a number of applications for development.

Phil Simpson submitted a petition with 695 signatures against pausing the Local Plan examination in order to hold the Leverhulme Planning Appeal hearings.

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that a petition had been received from Councillor Mary Jordan in relation to a dangerous junction at Spital Cross Roads. Councillor Jordan presented the petition with 590 signatures, asking that a safer road crossing be installed at Spiral Cross Road.

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that a petition had been received from Councillor Karl Greaney regarding the cycle lane initiative at Fender Lane, Moreton. Councillor Greaney presented the petition with 1200 signatures, seeking the Council to re-assess the practicality of the cycle lanes at this location.

Councillor Andrew Hodson presented a petition with 196 signatures against planning applications submitted by Levehulme Estates for green belt developments in Heswall, Gayton and Barnston.

Councillor Lesley Rennie presented a petition with 143 signatures requesting additional measures to prevent illegal access and encampments at The Dips in New Brighton.

Councillor Pat Cleary presented a petition with 84 signatures against planning application APP/22/02189.

Councillor Pat Cleary presented a second petition with 154 signatures requesting additional measure to deal with anti-social behaviour taking place outside St Werburgh’s Church in Birkenhead.

Councillor Mike Collins presented a petition with 89 signatures requesting additional measures to improve road safety when crossing the road to access Pensby Primary School.

Councillor Vida Wilson presented a petition with 81 signatures calling for the Council to use CCTV equipment to tackle fly tipping near Carr Lane.

Councillor Ian Lewis presented a petition with 272 signatures requesting additional measures to install lifts at Wallasey Village Station.

### 93 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that three Member questions had been received.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked the Chair of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, Councillor Liz Grey, a question regarding what steps had been taken to ensure that the published street sweeping schedules were correct.

Councillor Liz Grey responded that there had been some issues with the database system that held this information and that this system was being tested and corrections would be made as a result.

Councillor Pat Cleary asked the Chair of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, Councillor Liz Grey, a question regarding a new capital grants scheme from Natural England to enhance habitats that protect endangered species and asked whether Councillor Grey would request that officers submit a bid for this funding.

Councillor Liz Grey responded that she had already asked officers to apply for all available grants and therefore welcomed Cllr Pat Cleary's suggestion in requesting officers to submit a bid to Natural England for this funding.

Councillor Pat Cleary asked a supplementary question seeking clarification from Cllr Liz Grey that she expected a bid to be submitted. Cllr Grey responded that if it is possible then she would expect officers to make such a bid.

Councillor Allan Brame asked the Chair of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, Councillor Liz Grey, a question requesting a brief update on the development of an electric vehicle charging point strategy.

Councillor Liz Grey responded that consultants had recently been appointed to help the Council deliver an electric vehicle strategy over the next six months.

### 94 **REVISION TO THE APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES 2022/23**

The first matter requiring approval was the revision to the appointment of committees. This was due to the cessation of Paul Connolly as a Councillor and therefore required a change to the proportionality of political groups sitting on committees for the remainder of the municipal year.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That:**

- 1. The revised proportionality in the political composition of membership of ordinary committees of the Council as set out in Appendix A of the report be agreed; and**
- 2. The Director of Law and Governance be authorised to act on the instruction of the relevant Group Leaders in relation to the Committee Places to be made vacant.**

95 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/24 AND 2024/25**

The second matter for approval was in relation to the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 municipal years, as recommended by the Constitution and Standards Committee of 22 February 2023.

On a motion by Councillor Tony Cox, seconded by Councillor Paul Stuart, it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That the Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 municipal years be approved**

96 **AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

The third matter for approval was in relation to amendments to the Council procedure rules.

On a motion by Councillor Tony Cox, seconded by Councillor Amanda Onwuemene, it was –

**Resolved (38:21) (1 abstention) – That the following amendments to the Council Procedure be approved:**

- 1. Standing order 9.1 and 14 to read where 3.5 hours have elapsed.**
- 2. Standing order 13.1 that the number of motions be limited to 1 per group.**
- 3. Standing order 13.2 so that the first motion on notice listed be rotated so as to allow each political group the opportunity for their motion to be debated first (to be co-ordinated by the Director of Law and Governance), with motions thereafter to be listed in the order of political group size.**

97 **PAY POLICY 2023-2024**

The fourth matter requiring approval was in relation to the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/24 as referred to Council by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 15 February 2023.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2023/24 be approved.**

98 **DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

The Civic Mayor introduced the minutes of the various Committees which had met from 11 November 2022 to 24 February 2023 and asked for questions to Committee Chairs on any of the minutes being received.

Councillor Mary Jordan asked a question of Councillor Yvonne Nolan, in respect of minute 39 of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee held on 11 October 2022, regarding the recommendation made that Wirral was established as a place where people who are living with, or affected by, Dementia can truly 'live well', she asked if Councillor Nolan would work closely with the Chairs of Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, as well as people living with dementia to ensure a joined up approach to ensure that Wirral is dementia friendly. Councillor Yvonne Nolan agreed that the suggestion to work with those Chairs as well as those with dementia was something that she would continue to do.

Councillor George Davies asked a question of Councillor Helen Cameron in respect of minute 59 of the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee held on 2 February 2023, regarding library asset transfers for Pensby and Irby, he asked why she did not support all libraries as she had voted against the budget which saved them. Councillor Helen Cameron responded that she did not feel that the budget vote had anything to do with the library closures.

Councillor Brian Kenny asked a question of Councillor Kathy Hodson as Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee, in respect of a statement that she had read out from Councillor Ian Lewis at a meeting of the committee on 24 January 2023. This statement questioned the reality of potential savings for closing play schemes. Councillor Kenny asked why Cllr Hodson had voted against the budget which protected these play schemes. Councillor Kathy Hodson responded that she felt the closure of the three play services in question were never under threat and that they perform an outstanding service.



Councillor Paul Martin asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in respect of minute 83 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 January 2023, regarding the report of the Independent Assurance Panel. Cllr Martin asked how Cllr Williamson felt about the second largest political group voting against a legal budget and whether she felt that this would set the Council back with the Panel. Councillor Janette Williamson stated that she hoped that the work that had been carried out since the Independent Assurance Panel had been overseeing the Council would not be detracted from in light of the budget.

Councillor Angie Davies asked a question of Councillor Kathy Hodson in respect of minute 57 of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, held on 24 January 2023, regarding the Budget Workshop Outcomes. Councillor Davies stated that Councillor Hodson had proposed a motion, which was unanimously passed, to oppose any attempts to close play schemes and centres, she asked what evidence Councillor Hodson had considered when voting against the budget. Councillor Kathy Hodson stated that she fully agreed with keeping the play schemes open and refuted the notion that by voting against the budget she had voted against keeping them open.

Councillor Simon Mountney asked a question of Councillor Yvonne Nolan, in respect of minute 71 of the Adult, Social Care and Public Health Committee held on 11 January 2023, regarding the Updated Position Regarding Social Care Delivery Review. Councillor Mountney asked for further information on the cost of this project. Councillor Yvonne Nolan noted that as she had not had notice of the question, she did not have the figures to hand and that a written response would be provided to Councillor Mountney.

Councillor Harry Gorman asked a question of Councillor Tony Jones in respect of minute 47 of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee held on 26 January 2023, regarding Utilisation of Procure Partnerships Framework. Cllr Gorman asked what assurances Councillor Jones could give that these projects would be delivered in a timely manner to ensure that the funding was not lost. Councillor Tony Jones responded that as he had not had notice of the question, he was not able to provide a full answer and a written response would be provided to Councillor Gorman.

Councillor Liz Grey asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson in respect of minute 84 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18 January 2023 regarding Council Tax 2023/23 (Tax Base, Discounts and Exemptions and Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme). Councillor Grey asked if the Conservatives had voted for the increase in Council Tax. Councillor Janette Williamson indicated that they had.

Councillor Helen Collinson asked a question of Councillor Kathy Hodson in respect of minute 57 of the Children, Young People and Education Committee held on 24 January 2023, regarding the Budget Workshop Outcomes. Councillor Collinson asked at what point Councillor Hodson decided that the play centres did not need to be kept open. Councillor Kathy Hodson responded that she did not vote to close any play centre or play scheme.

Councillor Stephen Bennett asked a question of Councillor Kathy Hodson in respect of minute 44 of the Children, Young People and Education Committee held on 6 December 2022, regarding the Update on Wirral School Improvement Strategy 2021-2024. Councillor Bennett asked Councillor Hodson how voting against the Schools' budget at Full Council would help Wirral schools and if she thought it made her position as Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee untenable. Councillor Kathy Hodson responded that she did not vote against the School's budget and she did not find her position untenable.

## 99 **MOTIONS ON NOTICE**

Six motions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.1, and were determined as detailed in minutes 100 to 105 below.

## 100 **MOTION - LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Jean Robinson seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

In moving the motion, Councillor Williamson confirmed that she was happy to accept the Conservative Group amendment, which was moved by Councillor Tracy Elzeiny and seconded by Councillor Mike Collins and read as follows:

*Insert at the end of the final paragraph:*

'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.'

Councillor Williamson also confirmed that she was happy to accept the Liberal Democrat Group amendment, which was moved by Councillor Stuart Kelly and seconded by Councillor Allan Brame and read as follows:

*Delete: 'Planning Committee' in second paragraph and insert instead: 'Council's'.*

*Delete: 'being paused' in second paragraph and insert instead:*

'sitting for three weeks from 18<sup>th</sup> April to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2023 before being paused until September.'

*Delete paragraph 3 and replace with:*

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

Council reaffirms I 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.'

Following a debate, and Councillor Williamson having replied, the motion was put and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That:**

**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.**

**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, 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.**

**101 MOTION - SUPPORTING FAMILIES WITH THE COST OF LIVING**

Councillor Tom Anderson moved and Councillor Kathy Hodson seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Janette Williamson moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded the following amendment, submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

*In the first paragraph delete 'welcomes' and replace with acknowledges'.*

*In the second paragraph, insert a comma after the word pandemic and delete 'and'*

*In the second paragraph, insert after 'global rise in prices':*

*'and disastrous Kwarteng/Truss budget which added £30bn of debt to the UK, as quoted by the Guardian Newspaper'*

*In the third paragraph, insert at the start:*

*'Despite recent disparaging comments from some Conservative members, Council continues to thank all staff for their tireless work.'*

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate the matter, the amendment was put and agreed (37:22) (1 abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was then put and it was –

**Resolved (59:0) (1 abstention) – That:**

**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, 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.**

## 102 **MOTION - WIRRAL: A FAIR TAX COUNCIL**

Councillor Harry Gorman moved and Councillor Judith Grier seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate the matter, and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That:**

**Council notes:**

- **The pressure on organisations to pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time has never been stronger.**
- **Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.**
- **Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement**

- **Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.**
- **It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profitshifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.**
- **The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by organisations with a combined annual income of £50bn and more than 6,500 outlets and premises, including many social enterprises and co-operatives.**

**Council believes:**

- **Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be.**
- **Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, road safety measures and the promotion of biodiversity. It also fosters social justice by redistributing wealth.**
- **As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.**
- **Where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned -e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.**
- **More action is needed, however current law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.**
- **UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.**

**Council resolves to request that the Director of Finance investigates the following issues, with a report to be presented to a future meeting of Policy and Resources Committee:**

- **Approval of the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration;**
- **leading by example and demonstrating good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities;**
- **ensuring contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes;**

- not using offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty;
- conducting due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates;
- demanding clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position;
- promoting Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due;
- supporting Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride; and
- supporting calls for urgent reform of UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies

103 **MOTION - GREATER INSULATION PROGRAMME NEEDED FOR WIRRAL'S HOUSING**

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Orod Osanlou seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

In moving the motion, Councillor Gilchrist confirmed he was happy to accept the Green Group amendment, which was moved by Councillor Naomi Graham and seconded by Councillor Harry Gorman and read as follows:

*Insert after the sixth paragraph:*

‘Council also requests:

- The Director of Regeneration and Place to circulate to all Member 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 Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee regarding the motion passed by Council on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in order to provide an update’

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate the matter, and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That**

**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.**

104 **MOTION - REQUEST FOR FURTHER SUPPORT FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT**

Councillor Brian Kenny moved and Councillor Paul Stuart seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Councillor Kathy Hodson moved and Councillor Cherry Povall seconded the following amendment in accordance with Standing Order 13.3:

*Insert at the end of paragraph two:*

‘with Britain’s economy shocked by Coronavirus and then impacted by Putin’s war in Ukraine.’

*Delete paragraph three.*

*In paragraph 4, delete ‘that the Tory Government have consistently shown that they have made the wrong ones, so far as Wirral residents are concerned.’ and replace with:*

‘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.’

*In paragraph 7, delete ‘introducing’ and replace with ‘extending’.*

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate the matter, the amendment was put and lost (23:36) (1 abstention).

The substantive motion was then put, and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That**

**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.**

**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 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 universal free school meals and unfreezing housing benefit, together with any other appropriate steps, to protect Wirral residents.**

## 105 **MOTION - PARENTAL LEAVE FOR MEMBERS**

Councillor Daisy Kenny moved and Councillor Janette Williamson seconded a motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.

Having applied the guillotine in accordance with Standing Order 9.1, the Council did not debate the matter, and it was –

**Resolved (unanimously) – That**

**This Council believes that to ensure in so far as possible Members are able to take parental leave at the time of birth or adoption, that reasonable and appropriate arrangements are in place to provide cover during any period of leave taken.**

**Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority members. It will also assist with retaining experienced members and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.**

**Therefore, this Council resolves that Constitution and Standards Committee be requested to explore the development of a Parental Leave Policy for Members and report back to Council with a recommendation by October.**