

Council – 4 December 2023

Amendments to Motions on Notice

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

1. MAXIMISING INCOME FROM BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES TO HELP ALLEVIATE POVERTY IN WIRRAL

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Helen Reymond

Insert additional wording into paragraph 4 *‘including the use of the “Low Income Family Tracker”*. *Council recognises that advice services have been provided by well developed arrangements through a number of organisations over the years’*.

Insert additional paragraph after paragraph 6,

‘Council notes that in September 2021, the Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASPH) Committee began a programme of work to provide a more accessible and comprehensive approach to benefits available to residents. Further progress was made by the ASC&PH Committee in November 22 (Minute 60 refers) and July 2023 (Minute 25 refers), with the aim of securing a new service. Council further notes that an officer decision notice is expected within this municipal year with the aim to secure an improved range of services to be in place by next April. The report to the ASC&PH Committee recognised that the work of the team and volunteers at ‘Ask Us Wirral’ had helped secure funds for our residents including £25.2million awarded to people through benefit claims’.

Insert additional wording at the end of section 2. After ‘income maximisation’ insert ‘Within the investigation, the Director of Finance is requested to examine the technical appendix and methodology set out in the Policy and Practice report, in particular the sections on ‘locally administered benefits’ and Council Tax Support to establish whether the suggestions and calculations can offer any steps that Wirral Council and its partners can take to assist claimants and,’

Insert additional wording at the end of section 3. After ‘March 2023’ insert ‘incorporating proposals that the Council already has in progress through work ongoing with Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board.’

2. JUSTICE FOR WIRRAL RESIDENTS

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Leslie Rennie

Insert 5 paragraphs before paragraph 1,

'Council notes the then Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced an independent public inquiry on a statutory basis with full powers, under the Inquiries Act of 2005, on 12th May 2021, he said it "would seek to scrutinise and learn lessons from all key aspects of the UK response to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Council further notes that the Rt Hon Baroness Heather Hallett DBE was appointed as the Chair of the public inquiry on 15th December 2021. Baroness Hallett is a former Court of Appeal judge and has previously conducted a range of high-profile and complex inquests, inquiries and reviews, including acting as coroner for the inquests into the deaths of the 52 victims of the 7 July 2005 London bombings and as chair of the Iraq Fatalities Investigations.

The inquiry's terms of reference, developed by Baroness Hallett and published in June 2022, set out a series of aims including:

- Examining the public health response to the pandemic;
- Examining the response to the pandemic by the health and care services
- Examining the economic response to the pandemic, including government interventions;

Council also notes that the Inquiry is yet to cover: the setting up of a Vaccination Task Force, the purchase, at risk, of vaccines and the tremendous vaccination rollout programme. Council further notes the incredible business and public support provided by the Government during the pandemic, including the world-beating Furlough Scheme, is still yet to be examined by the Inquiry.

Council recalls Wirral's businesses received £99.44 million of direct grant support from HM Government, passported through Wirral Council, to support them through the COVID 19 crisis'.

Insert two paragraphs after paragraph 7,

'Council also commends the outstanding work, in response to the COVID 19 crisis, by the Council's Senior Officers, all staff, Leader of the Council, Pat Hackett together with all Party Leaders, from the moment that British citizens were repatriated from Wuhan to Wirral in January 2020.

Council notes Pat Hackett stepped down from being a councillor and Leader of the Council in September 2020, and notes up to this point the officer and political leadership of the Council had been united in their non-partisan approach to the crisis'.

Insert 3 paragraphs and table after paragraph 8,

'Council would welcome clarification from the proposer of this motion, and Leader of Wirral Council from September 2020, as to whether she has sought to inform the Public Inquiry and detail when she publicly dissented with the Government's actions during the period of the pandemic and explain to the Inquiry how Wirral Council

spent £107.20 million of Coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency funding allocated to the Council from HM Government.

Council notes this funding was provided to enable local councils to fulfil a critical role during the pandemic, including: containing outbreaks; protecting the most vulnerable residents; maintaining vital services; and testing and protecting the population from COVID-19.

Funding Source	Year	Department
COVID-19 emergency unringfenced funding for LAs (Tranches 1-4)	2020/21	DLUHC
Additional 2021/22 unringfenced funding for LAs	2021/22	DLUHC
Test and Trace Service Support Grant	2020/21	DHSC
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	2020/21 and 2021/22	DHSC
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (including Extension)	2020/21	DHSC
Adult Social Care Workplace Capacity Fund	2020/21	DHSC
Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	2020/21	DHSC
Adult Social Care Infection Control and Testing Fund (including Extension)	2021/22	DHSC
ASC Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund	2021/22	DHSC
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support Funding	2020/21	DLUHC
Community Champions Fund	2020/21	DLUHC/ DHSC
Compliance and Enforcement Grant	2020/21 and 2021/22	DLUHC
Fire Covid-19 Contingency Fund	2020/21 and 2021/22	HO
Welcome Back Fund (formerly Reopening High Streets Safely Fund)	2020/21 and 2021/22	DLUHC

Provisional Rough Sleeping Emergency Funding	2020/21	DLUHC
Next Steps Accommodation Programme	2020/21	DLUHC
Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	2020/21	DEFRA
Additional Home to School Transport Funding	2020/21 and 21/22	DfT
DWP Covid Winter Support Grant Scheme (including Easter Extension and Top-up)	2020/21 and 2021/22	DWP
Omicron Support Fund	2021/22	DHSC
Protect and Vaccinate Scheme	2021/22	DLUHC
National Leisure Recovery Fund	2020/21	DCMS (Sport England)
Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation Scheme	2020/21 and 2021/22	DLUHC
Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22	2021/22	DLUHC
Tax Income Guarantee Scheme 2021/22	2021/22	DLUHC
Total Coronavirus (COVID-19): emergency funding for Wirral Council in 2020 to 2021 and additional support in 2021 to 2022	£107.20 million	
Coronavirus business grant funding to Wirral businesses	£99.44 million	

Finally, Council asserts its belief that it is good practice to allow any Inquiry to hear all the evidence and publish its findings before jumping to conclusions and seeking to apportion blame.

3. PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

**Proposed by Councillor Paul Stuart
Seconded by Councillor Tony Jones**

Remove wording in paragraph 4 'Council welcomes this funding as a means to protect some of our most vulnerable residents' and insert penultimate paragraph,

'Council also notes:

Across Wirral, 3,142 households are due to re-mortgage their homes between now and May 2024. For those families coming off fixed term mortgages they will face an extra average monthly repayment of £220. This could lead to an increase in the number of households threatened with homelessness.

In Wirral 1,225 households are owed a prevention or relief duty with homeless relief duty owed to 218 households in December 2022, rising up to 784 in November 2023. A 260% increase.

The estimated number of deaths among homeless people has increased by 53.7% between 2013 and 2021

Since the Government promised to ban Section 21 notices in April 2019, 419 households in Wirral have been put at risk of homelessness after being issued with a no-fault eviction.

That whilst the funding for drug and alcohol treatment programmes is welcome, it is insufficient and will not make up for cuts to services since 2010 due to central Government funding to Wirral Council falling by 24.9%'

Nationally, funding for drug and alcohol treatment across England was cut by 16% between 2013 and 2017 following funding changes brought in by the Health and Social Care Act, leading to a 23% increase in overall drug use between 2013-2020, and drug-related deaths in England and Wales increasing by 87.1% between 2012 and 2021'

Insert 'Council' before 'wishes to place on record' in paragraph 4 which now becomes the final paragraph.

3. PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

**Proposed by Councillor Jo Bird
Seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary**

After paragraph 4, insert 2 final paragraphs,

'Council further recognises that, "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including housing", as stated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Council therefore requests that Director of Regeneration brings a report to the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee within this municipal year providing information and making recommendations to address:

1. the needs of all people on the Wirral who are homeless, rough sleeping or in temporary accommodation;
2. availability and planned construction of new council housing and socially rented homes on Wirral with secure tenures and affordable rents; and
3. protections available to social housing stock from the right to buy and right to acquire schemes'

MERSEY TIDAL POWER

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green
Seconded by Councillor Helen Cameron

After Paragraph 6 insert a final paragraph,

'Council notes that our membership contains valuable expertise in tidal energy, for example Councillor Graham Davies has worked in this field for 36 years, therefore in order to support the Director of Regeneration and Place, Council further directs the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee to establish a task and finish group, drawing on membership from across the Council and all political groups, to examine the potential benefits and risks of Mersey Tidal Power to Wirral and liaise with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.'
