

Council – 17 March 2025

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 13.1 and are listed in accordance with Standing Order 13.2.

1. SPEEDIER AND MEANINGFUL SOCIAL CARE REFORM

Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Helen Raymond

Council places on record its appreciation of the considerable work undertaken by officers in social care and public health, providers of care services and our local NHS in tackling and meeting the unprecedented demands on our NHS over recent months.

Recent statistics show that Wirral Council is playing a key role in securing and overseeing over 1900 places for residential and nursing care, supporting over 2200 people with care packages in their own homes, and developing a range of services in settings appropriate to their needs.

Organisations across the sector seek to secure a sustainable market position with sufficient funding to invest in the transformation and prevention of services that face increasing demand and higher national insurance costs. That challenge is not just felt here in Wirral but is well documented by the Nuffield Trust and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). ¹

Council welcomes the fact that the Health and Social Care Secretary, Wes Streeting, announced on 3rd January 2025, that Baroness Louise Casey had been appointed to chair an independent commission into adult social care. ²

Council is anxious that the report on social care should be produced and acted upon as quickly as possible, an issue highlighted by Sir Andrew Dilnot in his evidence to the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee 8th January 2025. ³

Council is convinced that it is imperative that actions are taken based on interim recommendations from Baroness Casey's work within the next 12 months. Unless there is urgency and timely progress in addressing the difficult issues within social care the NHS will be unable to achieve the targets they're being set and as a result the pressures both on the NHS and social care will escalate as will the costs involved.

Council notes that the Local Government Association welcomed this year's funding with the 'Recovery Grant' but raised funding issues concerns in their all party Letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. ⁴

Council therefore resolves to:

1. endorse the sentiments in relation to social care reform and action plan as outlined within the Local Government Association's Letter to the Chancellor and;
2. request that all Group Leaders write to all Wirral Members of Parliament to ask that the issues addressed by the Local Government Association, especially with regard to Adult Social Care be taken on board.

References:

- 1 [20250209-ADASS-Spending-review-submission-2025-FINAL.pdf](#)
 - 2 [New reforms and independent commission to transform social care - GOV.UK](#)
 - 3 [8 January 2025 - Adult Social Care Reform: The Cost of Inaction - Oral evidence - Committees - UK Parliament](#)
 - 4 [Spending Review 2025 submission: Letter to the Chancellor | Local Government Association](#)
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2. GETTING THE NHS BACK ON ITS FEET

**Proposed by Councillor Julie McManus
Seconded by Councillor Angie Davies**

This Council welcomes the Government's plans to cut NHS waiting times to 18 weeks.

At the end of December 2024, there were 47,379¹ waiting for what is called "non urgent elective operations or treatment" at Arrowse Park Hospital, part of more than seven and half million across the country – and Council considers that this is far too many.

Council notes that every single person on those waiting lists represents a life put on hold, stuck waiting for care often in pain, worry or in fear.

Council welcomes the creation of millions more appointments to get people the treatment they need more quickly. Across the country, up to half a million more appointments will be provided each year thanks to some new access to Community Diagnostic Centres and new or expanded surgical hubs. Also, greater patient choice over follow-up care will open up a million appointments alongside better use of technology and other action to save another million missed appointments.

As a borough we need to boost opportunities for our residents to enjoy exercise and healthy lifestyles and working with government, GPs, hospitals and other health leaders to ensure we work together to fix our health service as part of the wider plan to fix the foundations of the NHS and get Britain back on track.

Council notes that the new Labour Government inherited an NHS that was broken, with too many waiting for treatment, people waiting too long for an ambulance even in the most serious of circumstances, and waiting in A&E. These delays have cost and ruined lives.

Council commits to working with the government and the Wirral health & care system to help get our NHS back on its feet by providing the highest possible quality care, addressing poor health and health inequalities in our communities.

Council resolves that the Leader of Wirral Council writes to the Place Director (Wirral), NHS Cheshire and Merseyside to pass on our thanks to local residents, patients, and NHS staff who have taken part in the government's Change NHS consultation which has ensured that Wirral's voice has been heard to help shape the future of our health service.

References:

1 [Statistics » Consultant-led Referral to Treatment Waiting Times Data 2024-25](https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/02/Download-Waiting-Times-by-Hospital-Trust-Dec24-XLS-10M-69130.xls)
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/02/Download-Waiting-Times-by-Hospital-Trust-Dec24-XLS-10M-69130.xls>

3. DOWNGRADING OF DEMENTIA IN THE NHS

Proposed by Councillor Mary Jordan
Seconded by Councillor Vida Wilson

Council notes there are currently estimated to be 982,000 people living with dementia in the UK and this is projected to rise to 1.4 million in 2040.

The scale and the need to prevent, diagnose, support, live and die well with dementia will only become greater.

Data shows that 23,448 people, aged 65 or above, have received a recorded NHS diagnosis of dementia in Cheshire and Merseyside.

In Wirral, communities with the highest levels of diagnosed dementia include:

- Claughton and Noctorum
- New Brighton
- Upton
- West Kirby

Council agrees with the Wirral Dementia Strategy for 2019-22 which stated that:

'We want to see more people being diagnosed early and less people diagnosed at a time of crisis; a crisis that might have been avoided if the diagnosis had been made earlier.'

Council welcomes the work by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICS, working with charities, community and voluntary groups, to achieve the target set at that time whereby 66.7% of people living with dementia in England should have a diagnosis.

Council is therefore alarmed to learn that the dementia diagnosis rate target has now been removed from the NHS Operational Plan for 2025-6, by the Secretary of State for Health, without prior notice or consultation.

Council shares the concerns of the Alzheimer's Society:

'Alzheimer's Society is shocked to learn that dementia, including a dementia diagnosis target, has been removed from the NHS Operational Planning Guidance. This glaring omission is unacceptable and sends the message that dementia does not matter, and is not considered one of England's healthcare priorities. It highlights a staggering lack of focus on a devastating condition that affects nearly a million people in the UK and contradicts the UK Government's stated ambition to improve diagnosis rates.'

Council believes that understanding the scale of dementia within Wirral is paramount for providing high quality local services that serve the whole community, and that:

- Late diagnosis is devastating for those affected – late treatment and mitigations means months or years of worry and distress.
- Late diagnosis means more adults with dementia will be presenting at NHS and other services without support
- Late diagnosis adds to the costs of treatment for the NHS and has significant impact on adult social care budgets.

Council is gravely concerned that the removal of this target risks lessening the focus on this issue by NHS Cheshire & Merseyside as they seek to achieve the remaining targets and outcomes in the Government's Operational Plan for the NHS.

Council therefore requests the Chair of Wirral's Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee to:

1. Publicly object to the Government's removal of the dementia diagnosis target rate and reassure residents that dementia remains a priority for Council
2. Write to Wirral's four Members of Parliament asking for their support for this target to be reinstated
3. Write to the Secretary of State for Health outlining the views of council and requesting he reconsider this matter

Council requests the Chair to provide updates on these actions with all members of the Council and that the Director of Adults Social Care updates members at the Dementia Workshop, listed on the Committee's Work Programme for June 2025.

4. ENSURING WIRRAL IS IN POLE POSITION FOR HOUSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING

Proposed by Councillor Gail Jenkinson

Seconded by Councillor Ed Lamb

Wirral Council acknowledges the importance of great design in our regenerated towns and that of the greenbelt which provides the green lungs of our peninsula and many biodiverse habitats. To meet the challenge of delivering 1602 new homes per annum, as set out in the latest development framework, while protecting the greenbelt, the Council must ensure that Wirral is in the strongest possible position to access government funding and support for housing and regeneration. ¹

Recent funding opportunities have demonstrated the importance of early engagement, transparency, and cross-party collaboration to ensure Wirral does not miss out on vital investment. By not pursuing New Town status, future funding opportunities are now even more critical.

Members may recall how a Member question was asked at Council on 2nd December 2024 with reference to a public question raised at Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee in September 2024 (minute 102 refers) regarding the potential for a New Town status application. In response to this question, it was disappointing to hear only on the day of the deadline (13th December) that an application was not pursued. It is understood this decision was taken following advice from a Director at the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). However, by announcing at this late stage, members were denied any input to this far-reaching decision. An application, even if unsuccessful, would have signalled a willingness to engage and could have been adapted for future funding rounds.

This Council understands that further conversations will take place with the MHCLG to raise the profile of the Wirral and align to their pipeline of programmes and looks forward to the outcomes of such discussions.

The Council also recognises that working collaboratively across parties is essential to achieve the best outcomes for Wirral residents, and it is vital that members of all parties are consulted at all stages of major funding bids, rather than being informed only after decisions have been made. A shared, strategic approach will put Wirral in the best possible position to succeed.

To ensure Wirral is “in it to win it” for future funding and investment opportunities, Members of this Council resolve to:

1. Recognise the scale of the challenge in delivering over 30,000 homes over the next 20 years and ensure that all plans align with the needs of Wirral’s communities.
2. Requests that the Director of Regeneration and Place commits to identifying and applying for all relevant government and grant funding opportunities to support regeneration and sustainable development.

3. Requests that the Director of Regeneration and Place ensures that members from all parties are engaged at an early stage in any major funding opportunities, bids or applications to promote transparency and cross-party collaboration.
4. Reaffirm the importance of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework as a key strategy for regeneration, ensuring that it remains a priority in all future discussions on housing and investment. ²

By taking this approach, Wirral Council can be ready to maximise opportunities for investment and regeneration, delivering the high-quality, sustainable housing that local people need while securing the resources to make it happen.

References:

1 [Local Development Scheme for Wirral](#)

2 [Birkenhead 2040 Framework](#)