

COUNCIL

Monday, 18 March 2019

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Geoffrey Watt) in the Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Tony Smith)

Councillors	RL Abbey	S Frost	D Mitchell
	T Anderson	A Gardner	B Mooney
	B Berry	P Gilchrist	C Muspratt
	J Bird	JE Green	T Norbury
	C Blakeley	EA Grey	C Povall
	A Brame	P Hackett	L Rennie
	P Brightmore	P Hayes	J Robinson
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Hodson	L Rowlands
	K Cannon	K Hodson	C Spriggs
	C Carubia	AER Jones	J Stapleton
	P Cleary	C Jones	P Stuart
	W Clements	S Jones	A Sykes
	T Cottier	T Jones	T Usher
	T Cox	M Jordan	J Walsh
	A Davies	S Kelly	S Whittingham
	G Davies	B Kenny	I Williams
	P Davies	A Leech	KJ Williams
	P Doughty	I Lewis	S Williams
	D Elderton	C Meaden	J Williamson
	G Ellis	M McLaughlin	
	S Foulkes	J McManus	

Apologies Councillors WJ Davies G Wood
M Sullivan

107 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At the invitation of the Civic Mayor, Councillor Tony Norbury addressed the Council on the 'Show Racism the Red Card' initiative which was currently touring primary schools to educate children about eradicating racism and hate crime.

Members of the Council were invited 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 the interest.

In relation to agenda item 10, and specifically Motion 3 (Future Pensions Fit for Purpose), the following Members declared a personal interest by virtue of either themselves or a close family member being a member of or being in receipt of a pension from the Merseyside Pension Fund: -

The Mayor and Councillors Ron Abbey, Jo Bird, Chris Blakeley, Angela Davies, George Davies, Phil Davies, Sam Frost, Tony Jones, Stuart Kelly, Anita Leech, Chris Meaden, Moira McLaughlin, Christina Muspratt, Tony Norbury, Cherry Povall, Les Rowlands and Steve Williams.

108 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor advised of an event "Into the Light" taking place on 25 March 2019 marking the second anniversary of the New Ferry explosion.

The Mayor announced that the Andy Day Memorial Cup, awarded to the backbench 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 David Elderton.

109 **PROCEDURAL ITEM**

By virtue of Standing Order 5, the Mayor advised that agenda item 9B (Council Procedure Rules - Standing Order Concerning Voting and Electronic Voting) would be taken immediately following the consideration of submitted minutes. Council was further advised that all votes taken up to the conclusion of agenda item 9B would be taken by general assent or a show of hands.

110 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Budget Council held on 4 March 2019 had been circulated to Members. On a motion by the Civic Mayor, seconded by Councillor Phil Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the minutes of the meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record.

111 **COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES - STANDING ORDER CONCERNING VOTING AND ELECTRONIC VOTING**

The Council gave consideration to a request to approve the recommendation of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee of 26 February 2019 that a revised Standing Order 18 of the Council Procedure Rules (Part 4(A) of the Constitution) be adopted (Minute 27 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Bernie Mooney, seconded by Councillor Angela Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the recommendation contained within Minute 27 of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, 26 February 2019, be approved.

112 **PETITIONS**

In accordance with Standing Order 21, the Mayor received three petitions submitted by –

Councillor Pat Hackett on behalf of 200 residents objecting to the location of a BT pole on the corner of Carlton Road and Field Road, Wallasey.

Councillor Allan Brame on behalf of 303 residents seeking improved bus services in the Townfield Lane area of Oxton.

Councillor Gerry Ellis on behalf of 95 residents objecting to a planning application concerning proposed lighting on Grange Hill, West Kirby.

Resolved – That the petitions be noted and referred to the appropriate Chief Officer in accordance with Standing Order 34.

In accordance with Standing Order 34, the Council received a petition of 3,053 signatures submitted by Mr Phil Spencer, on behalf of Bromborough Village Community Association, to stop re-development plans for Bromborough Car Park. Mr Spencer addressed the Council in respect of the petition.

Following a debate on the presented petition it was moved by Councillor Chris Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Phil Gilchrist that –

“To protect the amenity and the financial stability of Bromborough Shopping Area, Council requests that Cabinet and Council Officers remove the car park from the Local Plan.

Furthermore, Council wishes to reassure the petitioners that Bromborough is a highly valued district centre.

Council recognises the strength of feeling and concerns expressed by local people. Council believes that proper consultation should take place on any changes to the facilities valued by the community”.

The Motion was put and carried and it was therefore -

Resolved (60:0) (One abstention) – That the Motion be approved.

113 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Mark Farmer, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 10, submitted a question on the subject of Labour Councillors at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 25 February, 2019, not being able to cast their votes freely.

Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, responded accordingly.

Mr Farmer asked a supplementary question in accordance with Standing Order 10, and Councillor Davies responded accordingly.

Mr Neil Scott, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 10, submitted a question on the subject of Council run golf courses.

Councillor Phill Brightmore, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Recreation, responded accordingly.

Mr Scott asked a supplementary question in accordance with Standing Order 10, and Councillor Brightmore responded accordingly.

Mr Barry Davies, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 10, submitted a question on the subject of Brackenwood Golf Course and the open spaces review.

Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, responded accordingly.

Mr Keith Marsh, having given the appropriate notice in accordance with Standing Order 10, submitted a question on the subject of the Council's open space review.

Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, responded accordingly.

114 LEADER'S, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS' AND CHAIRS' REPORTS

The Mayor introduced the reports from the Leader, Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs and asked for questions on any of the reports.

Councillor Chris Blakeley asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, on whether she had had any concerns, when consulted by the Chief Executive, over the appointment of Stewart Halliday as an Interim Director. Councillor Davies responded that at the time she was consulted she had no concerns.

Councillor Steve Williams asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, regarding her report and that Moreton was mentioned only once with regard to the regeneration by the Wirral Growth Company compared to Birkenhead which was mentioned numerous times. Councillor Davies responded that the Wirral Growth Company would be involved in regeneration across the whole borough but that Birkenhead would form the first phase of this. Moreton was included in the plans with a whole series of work to be undertaken.

Councillor Dave Mitchell asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, regarding additional funding for highways and repairs to the A41. Councillor Whittingham responded that the extra £500,000 would be spent on improving the condition of the borough's unclassified roads and a Cabinet report would be published in due course on the roads to be repaired. The Cabinet report for 25 March meeting did include a report on the highway structural maintenance programme which included a list of roads to benefit from this programme and parts of the A41 were included on this list.

Councillor Pat Hackett asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, regarding the consultation process for the Wirral Growth Company / Muse proposed developments. Councillor Davies responded that residents, community groups and elected Members would all have an opportunity to take part in a consultation process and it was vital as many people as possible had their say. Consultation would start after the elections for 6 months with a series of drop-in events, workshops, postal survey and a consultation website.

The Director of Governance and Assurance intervened when Councillor Tom Anderson started to ask a question of Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health in respect of another Member and advised that the competence or otherwise of Members once elected, to sit on a committee was down to the group and not a matter that should be for discussion in the Chamber without having first gone through the Standards Committee or some other process. He reminded Members that this was a Chamber for debate of policy and for holding Cabinet Members to account for their formulation and implementation of that policy, not the personal character of a Member.

Councillor Lesley Rennie asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, regarding how many street lights remained unlit across the borough. Councillor Whittingham replied that he would respond in writing.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin asked a question of Councillor Stuart Whittingham, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, regarding how

many street lights remained unlit in Rock Ferry and for how long each one remained outstanding. Councillor Whittingham responded that he would make sure a response regarding lights in Rock Ferry was sent out. With regard to the CRM system for logging requests for repair, a brand new asset management system was being installed which would encompass all highways assets including roads and street lights providing improved information across the borough.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, regarding where the money realised from the sale of the Acre Lane site was 'disappearing' to. Councillor Williamson responded that she took issue with the use of the word 'disappearing' and that no decision had yet been taken on this.

Councillor David Burgess-Joyce asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding the position of a report on the funding and phasing of the proposed Hoylake Golf Resort. Councillor Davies responded that he would expect a report to be available in the next couple of months.

Councillor Sharon Jones asked a question of Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Councillor Williamson responded that the Council would be consulting on the scheme which would help 9,000 households in reducing their council tax bills.

Councillor Cherry Povall asked a question of Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member for Environment, regarding the cancellation of the Kingdom Environmental Enforcement contract and how much was owed to the Council from cancelled and unpaid fines. Councillor Leech responded that fines were cancelled for a reason, such as if it was later found out that the recipient of the fine was underage or numerous other reasons. With regard to unpaid fines she would provide a written response on this matter.

Councillor David Elderton asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, regarding the results of the green belt consultation. Councillor Davies responded that the results had been published in February, 2019.

Councillor Paul Hayes asked a question of Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member for Environment, regarding what action would be taken if a Member or member of the public submitted a request for action in respect of dog fouling. Councillor Leech responded that having terminated the Kingdom enforcement contract the Council did not currently have any enforcement team in operation. A report would be taken back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the best way forward. In the meantime, the street cleansing team would cleanse the streets as they normally did in terms of dog fouling.

Councillor Ian Lewis asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, regarding when negotiations with Vue Cinemas would be concluded to release them from their lease on the land and how much this would cost in addition to the £7m spent on the cinema. Councillor Davies responded that she would have to come back with regard to the specific negotiations but did state that the acquisition was an important part of the ambitious plans for the regeneration of Birkenhead town centre.

Councillor Tony Cox asked a question of Councillor Phil Davies, Leader, regarding the proposed Hoylake Golf Resort and who would be funding the by-pass road as the Niklaus Joint Venture Group had stated that no more public money would be required for the scheme. Councillor Davies responded that all the issues relating to the Golf Resort would be covered in the report which would be published once the officers had had a chance to analyse the funding proposals brought forward by the developers and there would be ample opportunity for scrutiny of the proposals.

Councillor Andrew Gardner asked a question of Councillor Angela Davies, Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, regarding the £7m purchase of the Vue cinema and the valuation method and independent valuer who advised the Council. Councillor Davies agreed to provide a written response.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor Anita Leech, Cabinet Member for Environment, regarding the staff working for Kingdom on the Environmental Enforcement contract. Councillor Leech responded that until a review had been carried out, the Council would not be undertaking any enforcement, once the review had been completed then a decision would be taken as to how enforcement would operate. The 'Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations' would apply if enforcement was brought back in-house but currently it did not apply.

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of Councillor George Davies, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, on whether bringing empty homes back into use counted towards any local plan targets. Councillor Davies responded that it did not.

Councillor Paul Stuart asked a question of Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, regarding the improvements in Children's Services, the progress made towards having more Social Workers employed by the Council rather than agency staff and what was expected from the forthcoming Ofsted report. Councillor Mooney responded by thanking all the Members for the extra £20m made available to Children's Services. She also thanked the Improvement Board, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and all the staff for their commitment in turning the service around. The re-inspection by Ofsted was likely to take place in early May and she was very

hopeful of a much better outcome. Councillor Mooney then reported on a whole host of achievements made in the service.

115 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Councillor Stuart Kelly asked a question of the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Recreation concerning the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy. Councillor Phill Brightmore responded accordingly.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist asked a question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in relation to faulty street lights. Councillor Stuart Whittingham responded accordingly and agreed that the response would be circulated.

116 **VACANCIES**

The Council was invited to consider making appointments to a number of vacancies.

Resolved: That

(1) Mr Ray Allan be re-appointed as a member of the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances; and

(2) nominations be forwarded to the Director of Governance and Assurance in respect of two vacancies on West Kirby Charities, and the Director be authorised to confirm the appointments.

117 **MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL**

In accordance with Standing Order 5(2) a number of matters had been submitted for approval or consideration by the Council (see minutes 118 to 120 post).

118 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/20**

The first matter requiring consideration was in relation to adoption of the calendar of meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year, as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 February 2019 (minute 59 refers).

Councillor Phil Davies moved and Councillor George Davies seconded the adoption of the calendar of meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year, as recommended by the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 February 2019.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Chris Carubia seconded an amendment such that –

“Council believes that the ‘Portfolio Summary Reports’ presented by Cabinet Members should contain far more than references and links and references to press reports.

Council considers it essential that an additional opportunity is taken to hold the new Cabinet to account.

Accordingly, an additional Council meeting should be added to the Calendar on Monday 9 September 2019 for which Cabinet Members will be expected to provide meaningful details and accounts of their activities.”

The amendment was put and lost (26:34) (One abstention).

The motion was put and it was -

Resolved (34:28) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 59 of Cabinet, 25 February 2019 be approved.

119 **REVISION OF MEMBERS' ICT POLICY**

The second matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the recommendation of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee of 26 February 2019 that the Members' Information and ICT Acceptable Use Policy be approved (minute 26 refers).

On a motion by Councillor Bernie Mooney, seconded by Councillor Angela Davies, it was –

Resolved (62:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 26 of the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee, 26 February 2019, be approved.

120 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20**

The third matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to approve the recommendation of the Employment and Appointments Committee of 5 March 2019 that the Pay Policy Statement 2019/20 be approved. (Minute 25 refers).

Councillor Lesley Rennie sought clarification on the issue of pay multiples, which had been discussed at the meeting. The Director of Governance and Assurance referred to the final paragraph of minute 25, which stated that the Head of Human Resources would be bringing a report back to the Employment and Appointments Committee at the earliest opportunity on the subject of pay multiples and benchmarking with other local authorities.

On a motion by Councillor Adrian Jones, seconded by Councillor Angela Davies, it was –

Resolved (61:0) (One abstention) – That the recommendation contained within minute 25 of the Employment and Appointments Committee, 26 February 2019, be approved.

121 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION - EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUND PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND 2014-2020: WIRRAL WAYS TO WORK PROGRAMME**

The fourth matter requiring consideration was in relation to a request to note that call-in had been waived in respect of an Executive Member Decision relating to the European Structural and Investment Fund Programme for England 2014-2020: Wirral Ways to Work Programme on the grounds of urgency.

On a motion by Councillor Phil Davies, seconded by Councillor George Davies, it was –

Resolved (unanimously) – That the waiving of call-in on grounds of urgency relating to an Executive Member Decision in relation to the European Structural and Investment Fund Programme for England 2014-2020: Wirral Ways to Work Programme be noted.

122 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

Notices of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1) were reported to Council and determined as detailed in Minutes 123 to 125 below.

123 **MOTION - NO PLACE FOR ANTI-SEMITISM IN WIRRAL'S POLITICS**

Councillor Jeff Green moved and Councillor Wendy Clements seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7(1)

“Council reaffirms its adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism IN FULL and without AMENDMENT, as agreed in October 2017.

Furthermore, Council believes that there is no place in Wirral’s politics for anti-Semitism and believes that any Member, when acting in their role as a Member of the Council, found to have made anti-Semitic remarks should be referred to the Council’s Standards Committee, as well as any internal processes undertaken by their respective party”.

Amendment

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Allan Brame seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(9) such that the Motion be approved subject to the insertion after the second paragraph of the Motion –

“Council is aware that the January 2019 report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life entitled ‘Local Government Ethical Standards’ was placed before the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee on 26 February. The report

http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50055485/Local_Government_Ethical_Standards_Web_.pdf

provides advice on the current interpretation of the circumstances within which any Member acts in their capacity as a Councillor and makes a recommendation that Section 27 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to permit local authorities to presume councillors to be acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly-accessible social media, when deciding upon code of conduct breaches.

Council is also aware that the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee only recently adopted a revised procedure for dealing with complaints against Members set out in the document ‘Protocol – Arrangements for investigating and making decisions in relation to allegations made under the Members’ Code of Conduct’ and believes that any complaints made to the Monitoring Officer about Members’ conduct should be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the protocol”.

Following a debate, the amendment to the Motion was accepted by Councillor Jeff Green as mover of the Motion with the agreement of Council being given by general assent.

In accordance with Standing Order 12, a number of Members rose to request a ‘card vote’.

A recorded vote was then taken on the substantive Motion and the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (62): Councillors R Abbey, T Anderson, B Berry, J Bird, C Blakeley, A Brame, P Brightmore, D Burgess-Joyce, K Cannon, C Carubia, W Clements, T Cottier, T Cox, A Davies, G Davies, P Davies, P Doughty, D Elderton, G Ellis, S Foulkes, S Frost, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, J Green, E Grey, P Hackett, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, AER Jones, C Jones, S Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, A Leech, I Lewis, M McLaughlin, J McManus, C Meaden, D Mitchell, B Mooney, C Muspratt, T Norbury, C Povall,

L Rennie, J Robinson, L Rowlands, PA (Tony) Smith, C Spriggs, J Stapleton, P Stuart, A Sykes, T Usher, J Walsh, S Whittingham, I Williams, KJ Williams, S Williams, J Williamson and The Mayor.

Against the motion (0)

Abstentions (1): Councillor Pat Cleary.

It was therefore –

Resolved (62:0) (One abstention) – That

Council reaffirms its adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of anti-Semitism IN FULL and without AMENDMENT, as agreed in October 2017.

Furthermore, Council believes that there is no place in Wirral's politics for anti-Semitism and believes that any Member, when acting in their role as a Member of the Council, found to have made anti-Semitic remarks should be referred to the Council's Standards Committee, as well as any internal processes undertaken by their respective party.

Council is aware that the January 2019 report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life entitled 'Local Government Ethical Standards' was placed before the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee on 26 February. The report

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Council is also aware that the Standards and Constitutional Oversight Committee only recently adopted a revised procedure for dealing with complaints against Members set out in the document 'Protocol – Arrangements for investigating and making decisions in relation to allegations made under the Members' Code of Conduct' and believes that any complaints made to the Monitoring Officer about Members' conduct should be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and the protocol.

124 **MOTION - TIME TO INVEST IN GREEN ENERGY**

Councillor Allan Brame moved and Councillor Dave Mitchell seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 -

“Council welcomes the Liverpool City Region’s Year of the Environment initiative and the launch of the Borough’s environment plan in New Brighton last month.

Council notes that the Year of the Environment will also help raise awareness of issues and areas that demand action and attention, including the need to shift towards more sustainable use of energy and welcomes the plans for a new £10 million Green Investment Fund announced by the Metro Mayor.

Council also notes the decision by Warrington Borough Council to invest in a solar farm in Yorkshire, which will meet 100% of its energy demands, reducing its annual energy bills by up to £2m in the process, and, once fully operational, will generate enough clean power to supply more than 18,000 homes and mitigate the emission of 25,000 tonnes of carbon every year.

This initiative follows moves by other local authorities in England and Wales to build solar farms.

Council believes that development of such a supply of clean energy would be a significant contribution to the battle against global warming and calls on Cabinet to:

1. explore the possibility of building its own solar farm, either in the Borough or elsewhere.
2. undertake investigations into the viability of such a scheme, the investment costs and potential returns and to identify potential locations”.

Amendment

Councillor Anita Leech moved and Councillor Stuart Whittingham seconded an amendment submitted in accordance with Standing order 12(1) such that the Motion be approved subject to the addition of the following words -

“Council reaffirms its commitment to Green Energy which is supported in our Climate Change Strategy and the authority’s history of investing in green energy.

Council notes the work which is being undertaken through the ‘Cool Wirral’ partnership.

Council also notes that the authority has installed solar panels on Council buildings under a spend to save initiative and that there are currently 25

Council buildings that have the panels installed. An example can be seen at Guinea Gap leisure centre.

Council further notes that:

- Local schools have been engaged in looking at solar opportunities and at least three schools have signed up to the 'Solar for Schools' initiative which, if their applications are successful, will see the installation of solar panels on their buildings. A number of other schools are also considering taking up this opportunity.
- Discussions have commenced with regard to replacing the authority's current energy supply with solar energy.
- Cabinet is also tackling fuel poverty, an issue that affects a large number of Wirral residents, by considering an energy supply service which will enable residents to obtain cheaper gas and electricity.
- Work is ongoing on a range of other green energy initiatives which will be brought to members during the next municipal year.

On a procedural motion by Councillor Ron Abbey, seconded by Councillor Phil Davies, it was –

Resolved – That only the movers and seconders be heard in respect of this motion and amendment.

Following speeches by the movers and seconders, the amendment to the Motion was accepted by Councillor Allan Brame as mover of the Motion with the agreement of Council being given by general assent.

The substantive motion was put and carried. It was therefore –

Resolved (62:0) (One abstention) – That

Council welcomes the Liverpool City Region's Year of the Environment initiative and the launch of the Borough's environment plan in New Brighton last month.

Council notes that the Year of the Environment will also help raise awareness of issues and areas that demand action and attention, including the need to shift towards more sustainable use of energy and welcomes the plans for a new £10 million Green Investment Fund announced by the Metro Mayor.

Council also notes the decision by Warrington Borough Council to invest in a solar farm in Yorkshire, which will meet 100% of its energy

demands, reducing its annual energy bills by up to £2m in the process, and, once fully operational, will generate enough clean power to supply more than 18,000 homes and mitigate the emission of 25,000 tonnes of carbon every year.

This initiative follows moves by other local authorities in England and Wales to build solar farms.

Council believes that development of such a supply of clean energy would be a significant contribution to the battle against global warming and calls on Cabinet to:

- 1. explore the possibility of building its own solar farm, either in the Borough or elsewhere.**
- 2. undertake investigations into the viability of such a scheme, the investment costs and potential returns and to identify potential locations**

Council reaffirms its commitment to Green Energy which is supported in our Climate Change Strategy and the authority's history of investing in green energy.

Council notes the work which is being undertaken through the 'Cool Wirral' partnership.

Council also notes that the authority has installed solar panels on Council buildings under a spend to save initiative and that there are currently 25 Council buildings that have the panels installed. An example can be seen at Guinea Gap leisure centre.

Council further notes that:

- Local schools have been engaged in looking at solar opportunities and at least three schools have signed up to the 'Solar for Schools' initiative which, if their applications are successful, will see the installation of solar panels on their buildings. A number of other schools are also considering taking up this opportunity.**
- Discussions have commenced with regard to replacing the authority's current energy supply with solar energy.**
- Cabinet is also tackling fuel poverty, an issue that affects a large number of Wirral residents, by considering an energy supply service which will enable residents to obtain cheaper gas and electricity.**
- Work is ongoing on a range of other green energy initiatives which will be brought to members during the next municipal year.**

125 MOTION - FUTURE PENSIONS FIT FOR PURPOSE

Councillor Jeff Green moved and Councillor Ron Abbey seconded a motion such that this item move straight to the vote without debate.

Upon being put to the vote this motion was carried (54:7) (Two abstentions).

Councillor Pat Cleary moved and Councillor Paul Doughty seconded the following Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order 7 -

“Council welcomes the success of the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) in expanding its membership to over 137,000 and raising its fund value to £8.6 billion.

Council believes,

- the MPF has an important role to play in securing the future success and quality of life of our region by providing a reliable source of income to our ageing population and through its ability to invest funds wisely in the local economy.
- that climate change represents a systemic threat to the future value of financial assets and, as the Governor of the Bank of England has warned, a carbon budget consistent with the 2°C target laid down in the Paris Climate Accord “would render the vast majority of {fossil fuel} reserves stranded”.

Council therefore welcomes,

- the mandate from the Pensions Committee that MPF’s investment strategy be brought into line with the goals of the 2015 Paris Accord
- the recent launch on the London Stock Exchange by MPF of the All World Climate Balanced Comprehensive Factor Index with an initial funding of £400 million
- and the goals of the Index to achieve reductions in risk to future pensions via substantial cuts in exposure to companies with high fossil fuel reserves and high carbon emissions and increased exposure to companies with high exposure to “green” revenues

Council congratulates MPF officers on their efforts to protect its members from climate-related financial risk and looks forward to further, sustained work to fully align its investments with the goals of the Paris Accord.”

Amendment

Councillor Phil Gilchrist moved and Councillor Allan Brame seconded the following amendment submitted in accordance with Standing Order 12(1)

such that the Motion be amended by the insertion of the following words after the final paragraph –

“Council observes that this initiative, along with the Liverpool City Region Year of the Environment, presents opportunities for this Council to refresh and update its policies. It should also provide the trigger for actions which have not been taken for some time or are now due for updating. These need reviewing in the light of the current environmental crisis affecting many species.

Council notes that the last Carbon Budget report was presented to Cabinet by Councillor Mooney on 10 February 2015:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50023323/Carbon%20Budget%20Report%202014-15.pdf>

The Agenda for Budget Cabinet on 22 February 2016 stated that the Carbon Budget was to be presented at the Council Meeting in July 2016. It did not appear and, since then, that reporting appears to have ceased.

Wirral’s Climate Change Strategy was developed for the period 2014-19 and is due for updating and renewal:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/climate%20change/Wirral%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy%202014-2019.pdf>

and that the most recent progress report was the 4th Annual Progress Report of 'Cool Wirral', published in July 2018:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/climate%20change/Cool%20Steps%20Wirral%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy%204th%20Annual%20Progress%20Report%20July%202018.pdf>

In this context, Members need to review this and the next report to ensure that Wirral Council can rise to the challenges.

Furthermore, the Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in 2013 could usefully be re-examined and updated

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/planning%20and%20building/Local%20plans%20and%20planning%20policy/Local%20Planning%20Evidence%20Base%20and%20Research/Wirral%20Documents/Wirral%20BAP%20FINAL%20February%202003%20for%20Web%20site.pdf>

Council asks that these issues are taken on board by the current Cabinet Member and any successors to ensure they are followed up”.

As resolved above, Council proceeded to the vote without debate.

The amendment was put and carried (60:2) (One abstention).

The substantive motion, as amended, was put and carried and it was therefore -

Resolved (61:1) (One abstention) That

Council welcomes the success of the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) in expanding its membership to over 137,000 and raising its fund value to £8.6 billion.

Council believes,

- **the MPF has an important role to play in securing the future success and quality of life of our region by providing a reliable source of income to our ageing population and through its ability to invest funds wisely in the local economy.**
- **that climate change represents a systemic threat to the future value of financial assets and, as the Governor of the Bank of England has warned, a carbon budget consistent with the 2°C target laid down in the Paris Climate Accord “would render the vast majority of {fossil fuel} reserves stranded”.**

Council therefore welcomes,

- **the mandate from the Pensions Committee that MPF’s investment strategy be brought into line with the goals of the 2015 Paris Accord**
- **the recent launch on the London Stock Exchange by MPF of the All World Climate Balanced Comprehensive Factor Index with an initial funding of £400 million**
- **and the goals of the Index to achieve reductions in risk to future pensions via substantial cuts in exposure to companies with high fossil fuel reserves and high carbon emissions and increased exposure to companies with high exposure to “green” revenues**

Council congratulates MPF officers on their efforts to protect its members from climate-related financial risk and looks forward to further, sustained work to fully align its investments with the goals of the Paris Accord.

Council observes that this initiative, along with the Liverpool City Region Year of the Environment, presents opportunities for this Council to refresh and update its policies. It should also provide the trigger for actions which have not been taken for some time or are now due for updating. These need reviewing in the light of the current environmental crisis affecting many species.

Council notes that the last Carbon Budget report was presented to Cabinet by Councillor Mooney on 10 February 2015:

<http://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50023323/Carbon%20Budget%20Report%202014-15.pdf>

The Agenda for Budget Cabinet on 22 February 2016 stated that the Carbon Budget was to be presented at the Council Meeting in July 2016. It did not appear and, since then, that reporting appears to have ceased.

Wirral's Climate Change Strategy was developed for the period 2014-19 and is due for updating and renewal:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/climate%20change/Wirral%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy%202014-2019.pdf>

and that the most recent progress report was the 4th Annual Progress Report of 'Cool Wirral', published in July 2018:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/About%20the%20council/climate%20change/Cool%20Steps%20Wirral%20Climate%20Change%20Strategy%204th%20Annual%20Progress%20Report%20July%202018.pdf>

In this context, Members need to review this and the next report to ensure that Wirral Council can rise to the challenges.

Furthermore, the Wirral Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in 2013 could usefully be re-examined and updated

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/planning%20and%20building/Local%20plans%20and%20planning%20policy/Local%20Planning%20Evidence%20Base%20and%20Research/Wirral%20Documents/Wirral%20BAP%20FINAL%20February%202003%20for%20Web%20site.pdf>

Council asks that these issues are taken on board by the current Cabinet Member and any successors to ensure they are followed up.

126 THANKS AND APPRECIATION

The Civic Mayor thanked all those Members who would not be standing at the forthcoming local elections including Councillors Ron Abbey, David Elderton, Gerry Ellis, Paul Doughty, Bernie Mooney, Adam Sykes and Phil Davies.

Many Members joined in paying tribute to retiring Councillors and those Members standing down also thanked all their colleagues for their kind words.

Councillor Phil Davies thanked everyone for their warm wishes expressed to him as Leader of the Council. He then paid tribute to the Civic Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Geoffrey Watt and Mrs Watt for their exemplary service as first citizens of the Borough over the past year.

The Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups joined with the Leader of the Council in paying tribute to the Civic Mayor and Mayoress.