

Wirral Progressive Partnership

The Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups represented on Wirral Council have reached an agreement to form an administration.

We believe this will be a Progressive Partnership and that by working together we will provide the stability the Council requires to take Wirral through difficult times to better days ahead. The following points summarise the agreement between the two Groups in the Partnership.

1. The Partnership is committed to taking forward in Wirral the principles set out nationally by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties in their joint document *'The Coalition: our programme for government'*.
2. Both Groups in the Partnership support the Council's Corporate Plan and the existing five strategic objectives within that Plan, namely:
 - To create more jobs, achieve a prosperous economy and regenerate Wirral
 - To create a clean, pleasant, safe and sustainable environment
 - To improve health and well being for all ensuring people who require support are full participants in mainstream society
 - To help children and young people achieve their full potential
 - To create an excellent Council

Whilst some of the aims and priorities for improvement within the Corporate Plan may need to be refreshed, particularly in the light of the national economic situation, both Groups agree that these strategic objectives reflect the priorities for the Borough and that no fundamental change to the Plan is needed at least in the next 12 months.

3. Specifically, the Partnership is committed to:
 - ensuring that regeneration and job creation remains a top priority, and that the proposed regeneration of the dock areas through Wirral Waters is integrated into wider regeneration for Birkenhead and Wallasey.
 - building on the achievements of the Council in reducing its carbon footprint with improved recycling facilities and energy saving measures.
 - narrowing the inequalities gap between the more advantaged and most disadvantaged communities in the Borough.
 - bringing forward proposals to introduce community justice panels engaging local people in combating anti social behaviour.
4. Both Groups in the Partnership recognise that the national debt crisis will have a significant impact on local government finances and that we will need to balance the Council's budget, whilst protecting key frontline services. The Partnership is committed to doing both. Following the national emergency budget the Partnership will agree, with all the speed consistent with our values of inclusive and consultative governance, any necessary action to be taken.

5. The Partnership will also take immediate steps to identify where savings can be made whilst protecting key frontline services and will introduce an Every Pound Matters initiative. We recognise that every pound the Council spends in running itself is a pound not available to spend on front line services, and by way of example, Cabinet Members will agree to a 5% reduction in their Special Responsibility Allowances.
6. The Partnership will review the overall structure of the Council based on the overarching principles that duplication of services should be eliminated; frontline staff and managers should be given the responsibility and empowered to make decisions; subject to appropriate levels of accountability. We will also rationalise the Council's office accommodation as part of our Every Pound Matters initiative.
7. The Partnership will actively seek to secure shared services for the public sector across Wirral.
8. The Partnership will be inclusive in its decision making; committed to meaningful, open and transparent public consultation and to ensuring that no part of Wirral is ignored. Our approach to a more inclusive, open and consultative Council will build on the Notice of Motion passed by the Council on 15th February 2010. The Partnership is agreed that should we have to hold a local referendum both Groups will have to agree on the principle and wording of that referendum.
9. The Partnership is also committed to enhancing the role of all elected members of the Council and will seek mechanisms that will allow the delegation of significant amounts of executive authority to members and the local communities we all serve.
10. Whilst the Partnership will operate using the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, the Leader of the Council will agree not to make any significant changes to the Scheme of Delegation without first consulting Members from all political groups represented on the Council.
11. The Partnership will establish a Commission, open to all parties, to review the operation of the current scheme of delegation and to seek improvements. The Partnership will, as a matter of urgency, agree the terms of reference and reporting timescales for the Commission.
12. The Commission's terms of reference will have at their heart: learning from partnerships operating in other Councils; how all members of the Council can be involved in taking decisions on the most appropriate range of services that the Council provides in their area and that are currently the preserve of the Cabinet; consideration of how a committee system might be re-introduced and how communities and residents must be engaged and consulted by the Commission.
13. The Partnership will nominate Councillor Jeff Green (Leader of the Conservative Group) as Leader of Wirral Council and Councillor Simon Holbrook (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) as Deputy Leader of the Council.

14. The Cabinet will comprise the Leader and Deputy Leader plus eight other Councillors. There will be seven Conservative and three Liberal Democrat Cabinet Members. The Cabinet Portfolios will be as follows:

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| 1) Jeff Green | Leader (Finance and Best Value) |
| 2) Simon Holbrook | Corporate Resources |
| 3) Lesley Rennie | Streetscene and Transport Services |
| 4) Gill Gardiner | Environment |
| 5) Bob Moon | Social Care and Inclusion |
| 6) Chris Blakeley | Housing and Community Safety |
| 7) Sheila Clarke | Children's Services and Lifelong Learning |
| 8) David Elderton | Culture, Tourism and Leisure |
| 9) Andrew Hodson | Regeneration and Planning Strategy |
| 10) Ian Lewis | Community and Customer Engagement |

15. The Partnership proposes to allocate the Chairs of the 11 Regulatory and Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a proportionate basis: four Conservative; four Labour; and three Liberal Democrat. The Partnership will allocate the Labour Group the Chairs of four of the six Overview and Scrutiny Committees being:

- Children and Young People
- Economy and Regeneration
- Health and Wellbeing
- The Scrutiny Programme Board

16. The Partnership will be guided, in these and the other measures we will take by a commitment to openness, fairness and Responsibility. We will engage with the public, and all the Council's partners to produce an inclusive administration capable of providing the leadership needed to take Wirral through the difficult times ahead to a more prosperous future.



Councillor Jeff Green
Leader of the Conservative Group



Councillor Simon Holbrook
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group

24th May 2010