



Extraordinary Council

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held at **6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 28 October 2026** in the Council Chamber, within the Town Hall, Wallasey, to take into consideration and determine the following subjects:

Contact Officer: Anna Perrett
Tel: 0151 691 8564
e-mail: annaperret@wirral.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

Please note that public seating is limited therefore members of the public are asked to register their attendance in advance by emailing committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk

Wirral Council is fully committed to equalities and our obligations under The Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. If you have any adjustments that would help you attend or participate at this meeting, please let us know as soon as possible and we would be happy to facilitate where possible. Please contact committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk

This meeting will be webcast at
<https://wirral.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Council are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any matter to be debated or determined at this meeting and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

2. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive the Civic Mayor's announcements and any apologies for absence.

3. GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION FOR PLANNING

DECISIONS

A. Requisition Notice (Pages 1 - 6)

B. Motion on Notice (Pages 7 - 10)

Full Council Responsibility for Functions

The full responsibility of functions for Full Council can be found at the end of this agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JG', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jason Gooding, Director of Corporate Services

TIMINGS AND GUILLOTINE

Under Standing Order 9 of the Council Procedure Rules:

In the case of an extraordinary meeting of Council when two hours have elapsed since commencement of the meeting the Mayor shall interrupt the meeting and the Member speaking must immediately cease doing so and sit down. The meeting shall then dispose of the item then under consideration as if the motion '*That the question be now put*' had been carried (i.e. the debate shall be concluded by the seconder and by the Member who has the right of reply and the vote will then be taken without any further discussion). This rule will not apply to meetings of a quasi-judicial or regulatory nature.

Audio/Visual Recording of Meetings

Everyone is welcome to record meetings of the Council and its Committees using non-disruptive methods. For particular meetings we may identify a 'designated area' for you to record from. If you have any questions about this please contact Committee and Civic Services (members of the press please contact the Press Office). Please note that the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to halt any recording for a number of reasons, including disruption caused by the filming or the nature of the business being conducted.

Persons making recordings are requested not to put undue restrictions on the material produced so that it can be reused and edited by all local people and organisations on a non-commercial basis.

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By Email
6th October 2026

Dear Madam Mayor,

REQUEST TO REQUISITION AN EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Please find below the signatures of 13 Members of the Council requisitioning an Extraordinary Meeting of Wirral Council to debate the Government's proposed implementation of the National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Decisions, with effect from 31 October 2026, and its implications for democratic accountability, public participation and the ability of elected Members to represent their communities in the planning process.

Given the significance of these changes for the Council's planning functions, and the proposed implementation date of 31 October 2026, Members believe that this matter requires urgent consideration by full Council before the new arrangements take effect.

The following motion is tabled to facilitate the prompt arrangements for this extraordinary meeting:

Motion: True devolution in planning

Council notes:

1. The Labour Government is introducing significant changes to the way planning applications are determined through a statutory National Scheme of Delegation, restricting the circumstances in which applications can be determined by elected Members and requiring specified categories of application to be determined by planning officers.
2. The planning system must be efficient and should support the delivery of the homes, infrastructure and economic development our communities need. However, speed of decision-making must not come at the expense of democratic accountability, transparency or the legitimate involvement of local communities.
3. Labour promised to get Britain building, but the experience of housing delivery nationally demonstrates that granting planning permission does not, by itself, guarantee that homes will subsequently be built. Tackling the housing crisis requires a focus not only on granting permissions, but on overcoming the barriers which prevent consented developments from actually being delivered.

4. The planning system does need to improve. Nationally, only 19% of major planning applications were determined within the statutory 13-week period between January and March 2026. Delays in technical work, consultee responses, legal agreements and the discharge of conditions must be tackled, alongside the finance, skills, infrastructure and market barriers which leave permitted homes unbuilt.

5. In Wirral, only 13 of 907 applications received in 2025/26 were determined by Planning Committee. Restricting the ability of elected councillors to participate in planning decisions and removing residents' existing routes to public scrutiny for this small proportion of applications will not fix the wider planning system or build a single additional home.

Council welcomes the commitment by the new Prime Minister to devolve power from Westminster and Government to people and communities.

Council believes that:

1. Our residents should have a meaningful voice in decisions which affect the places in which they live.
2. Democratically elected councillors have an important role in ensuring that local knowledge, residents' concerns and the particular circumstances of individual communities are properly understood within the planning process.
3. Planning Committee provides an important and transparent forum in which applications of legitimate public concern can be considered publicly and subjected to democratic scrutiny.
4. The planning system should build the right homes in the right places, while ensuring development is sustainable, supported by appropriate infrastructure and shaped by the communities affected by it.
5. The answer to increasing housing delivery is not simply to reduce democratic involvement in planning decisions, but to tackle the wider causes of delay and the barriers which prevent existing planning permissions from becoming completed developments.
6. A nationally prescribed scheme of delegation removes an important element of local discretion and risks weakening the ability of elected Members to ensure that planning applications raising genuine and significant local concerns receive appropriate public and democratic scrutiny.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To reaffirm the importance of democratic accountability and meaningful public participation within Wirral's planning system, and the legitimate role of elected Members in representing their communities on planning matters.
2. To request that the Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State expressing this Council's concern at changes which unnecessarily restrict the ability of elected councillors and local communities to participate meaningfully in planning decisions and calling for sufficient local flexibility to allow applications presenting matters of significant community concern to receive appropriate public scrutiny.
3. That the Group Leader's representations to the Secretary of State make clear that improving planning performance requires action across the whole development system timely statutory consultee responses, appropriate infrastructure, effective legal agreements and action to ensure that permissions already granted translate into homes actually being built.
4. To request that the Assistant Director Chief Planner includes, in notifications of applications to neighbours and statutory consultees, specific details of the changes to the National Scheme of Delegation
5. To request that the Assistant Director Chief Planner prepares an initial report on the impact of the new arrangements be presented to the appropriate Council committee within six months of implementation, enabling Members to assess their effect on planning performance, democratic scrutiny and public participation.
6. To request that, before 31 October 2026, the Assistant Director Chief Planner provides to all Members clear guidance setting out how the National Scheme will operate in Wirral, including which categories of application must be delegated to officers, the circumstances in which an application may be considered by Planning Committee, and how Members can continue to represent the planning concerns of their constituents under the new arrangements.

Councillor's Name
Colin Baldwin

Gary Bennett
Max Booth
Helen Cameron
Tony Cox
Andrew Gardner
Jeff Green
Jenny Johnson
Ian Lewis
Simon Mountney

Cherry Povall
Lesley Rennie
Vida Wilson

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Extraordinary Council – 28th October 2026

Motion on Notice

TRUE DEVOLUTION IN PLANNING

Proposed by Councillor Simon Mountney

Seconded by Councillor Jeff Green

Council notes:

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2. The planning system must be efficient and should support the delivery of the homes, infrastructure and economic development our communities need. However, speed of decision-making must not come at the expense of democratic accountability, transparency or the legitimate involvement of local communities.
3. Labour promised to get Britain building, but the experience of housing delivery nationally demonstrates that granting planning permission does not, by itself, guarantee that homes will subsequently be built. Tackling the housing crisis requires a focus not only on granting permissions, but on overcoming the barriers which prevent consented developments from actually being delivered.
4. The planning system does need to improve. Nationally, only 19% of major planning applications were determined within the statutory 13-week period between January and March 2026. Delays in technical work, consultee responses, legal agreements and the discharge of conditions must be tackled, alongside the finance, skills, infrastructure and market barriers which leave permitted homes unbuilt.
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2. Democratically elected councillors have an important role in ensuring that local knowledge, residents' concerns and the particular circumstances of individual communities are properly understood within the planning process.
3. Planning Committee provides an important and transparent forum in which applications of legitimate public concern can be considered publicly and subjected to democratic scrutiny.
4. The planning system should build the right homes in the right places, while ensuring development is sustainable, supported by appropriate infrastructure and shaped by the communities affected by it.
5. The answer to increasing housing delivery is not simply to reduce democratic involvement in planning decisions, but to tackle the wider causes of delay and the barriers which prevent existing planning permissions from becoming completed developments.
6. A nationally prescribed scheme of delegation removes an important element of local discretion and risks weakening the ability of elected Members to ensure that planning applications raising genuine and significant local concerns receive appropriate public and democratic scrutiny.

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1. To reaffirm the importance of democratic accountability and meaningful public participation within Wirral's planning system, and the legitimate role of elected Members in representing their communities on planning matters.
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3. That the Group Leader's representations to the Secretary of State make clear that improving planning performance requires action across the whole development system timely statutory consultee responses, appropriate infrastructure, effective legal agreements and action to ensure that permissions already granted translate into homes actually being built.
4. To request that the Assistant Director Chief Planner includes, in notifications of applications to neighbours and statutory consultees, specific details of the changes to the National Scheme of Delegation

5. To request that the Assistant Director Chief Planner prepares an initial report on the impact of the new arrangements be presented to the appropriate Council committee within six months of implementation, enabling Members to assess their effect on planning performance, democratic scrutiny and public participation.
6. To request that, before 31 October 2026, the Assistant Director Chief Planner provides to all Members clear guidance setting out how the National Scheme will operate in Wirral, including which categories of application must be delegated to officers, the circumstances in which an application may be considered by Planning Committee, and how Members can continue to represent the planning concerns of their constituents under the new arrangements.

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Full Council – Responsibility for Functions

1. Introduction

Full Council is the primary decision-making body of the Council and, as such, is responsible for the exercise of all of the functions that are held by the local authority.

Whilst decisions in relation to these functions could be made by the Council, and indeed some functions can only be carried out by the Full Council, in order to operate more effectively as an organisation, most of the Council's functions are exercised through delegation to a committee, sub-committee or an officer, or to another local authority.

This part of the Constitution contains the remits of the Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels and also contains the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

2. Council Functions

The Council reserves to itself the following functions (in accordance with the rules and procedures contained in this Constitution):

- (a) All non-delegable functions as defined by the Local Authorities (Committee System) (England) Regulations 2012 including: -
 - (i) **The Budget** – The approval or adoption of a plan or strategy for the control of the local authority's borrowing, investments or capital expenditure or for determining the authority's minimum revenue provision, which includes the overarching annual:-
 - (1) Capital programme
 - (2) Capital investment strategy
 - (3) Medium term financial plan
 - (4) Treasury management strategy,except for any amendment, modification, variation or revocation which—
 - (aa) is required for giving effect to requirements of the Secretary of State or a Minister of the Crown in relation to a plan or strategy submitted for approval, or to any part submitted; or
 - (bb) is authorised by a determination made by the local authority—
 - in pursuance of arrangements made for the discharge of functions as set out in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of this Constitution (including virements); and
 - at the time when the local authority approves or adopts the plan or strategy, as the case may be.

- (ii) **Policy Framework (Required)** – The making or revoking or amending the following policies, plans and strategies required to form a part of the Council’s Policy Framework:
- (1) Annual Library Plan;
 - (2) Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy;
 - (3) Development Plan Documents;
 - (4) Licensing Authority Policy Statement;
 - (5) Policies made under the Gambling Act (including any resolution relating to casinos);
 - (6) Local Transport Plan;
 - (7) Plans and alterations which together comprise the Development Plan;
 - (8) Sustainable Community Strategy; and
 - (9) Youth Justice Plan;
- except for any amendment, modification, variation or revocation which—
- (aa) is required for giving effect to requirements of the Secretary of State or a Minister of the Crown in relation to a plan or strategy submitted for approval, or to any part submitted; or
 - (bb) is authorised by a determination made by the local authority—
 - in pursuance of arrangements made for the discharge of functions as set out in the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out at Part 4(3) of this Constitution; and
 - at the time when the local authority approves or adopts the plan or strategy, as the case may be.
- (iii) Making of a Members Allowance Scheme and amending the same.
 - (iv) Determination of Mayor’s and Deputy Mayor’s allowances.
 - (v) Making a request for single member electoral wards to the Local Government Boundary Commission.
 - (vi) Resolution to change a scheme for elections.
 - (vii) Making an order giving effect to the recommendations made in a Community Governance Review.
 - (viii) Conferring voting rights on co-opted members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees (if any).

- (b) **Policy Framework (Choice)** - The making or revoking or amending the following policies, plans and strategies reserved by Council to form a part of the Council's Policy Framework
 - (i) The Council Plan.
- (c) Setting the Council's Council Tax requirement
- (d) Electing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
- (e) Appointing the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council (Chair and Vice-Chair of Policy & Resources Committee)
- (f) Agreeing or amending the committee structure, the remit/terms of reference of committees, their size and membership
- (g) Confirming the appointment (or dismissal) of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer.
- (h) Confirming the appointment of the Independent Persons.
- (i) Making, amending, revoking, re-enacting or adopting bylaws and promoting or opposing the making of local legislation including bylaws or personal bills.
- (j) Appointment of the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- (k) Significant changes to the Council's Constitution, including adopting and amending standing orders, Rules of Procedure, Contract Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations, Codes and Protocols that make up the Constitution.
- (l) All other matters which by law are reserved to the Council including: -
 - (i) Ombudsman reports where there has been a finding of maladministration with injustice and the report has been rejected
 - (ii) Statutory officer reports of the Monitoring Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Head of Paid Service and External Auditor's public interest reports.
- (m) Conferring the title of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Alderman.
- (n) Approving the Annual Senior Officer Pay Policy Statement.
- (o) Changing the name of the Borough.
- (p) Appointment of representatives of the local authority not otherwise delegated to a Committee.
- (q) Nomination of councillors and other persons to outside bodies
- (r) Consideration of reports from committees or any other body constituted by the Council.

- (s) To receive the minutes of committees and sub-committees acting under delegated powers for question and comment.
- (t) Making recommendations to the Secretary of State on the Borough boundaries, ward boundaries, electoral divisions, ward or polling districts; and
- (u) any other function which must by law be reserved to full Council.

Note

For the avoidance of doubt, the Full Council retains ultimate responsibility for the actions and decisions of all its Committees and also retains the ability to exercise all its powers whether or not they have also been delegated to a Committee or Officer. Full Council shall not, however, exercise a power that has been delegated without first ensuring that such a step is in the best interests of the Council and in accordance with the rules set out in the Articles of this Constitution. The Council's ability to exercise its powers will not override or supersede any decision or action already taken and implemented by a Committee or Officer acting under delegated authority.