

**CABINET****27 JULY 2020****CRADLE TO CAREER PROGRAMME**

**Councillor Tom Usher, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, said:**

“Cradle to Career is an ambitious programme which aims to tackle the inequality gap for children and young people by transforming how public services, education providers and residents work together to maximise their collective impact.

“This project will bring in significant financial investment to provide extra support and educational opportunities for children, young people and families in North Birkenhead, fitting in with the council’s priorities to provide a brighter future for our children and families – an issue of even greater relevance in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic.”

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the Cradle to Career programme which is a collaboration between Wirral Council, the education charities Right to Succeed and SHINE, the Steve Morgan Foundation, North Birkenhead Development Trust and the community of North Birkenhead to develop a place-based approach that will reduce the inequality gap for children and young people by transforming how public services, education providers and residents work together for collective impact. The report outlines what the programme will deliver and the role of Wirral Council’s Children’s Services and partners.

This report supports the Wirral Plan 2020-25 objectives:

- Working for a prosperous, inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations;
- Working for safe and pleasant communities where our residents feel safe, and where they want to live and raise their families;
- Working for happy, active and healthy lives where people are supported, protected and inspired to live independently; and
- Working for brighter futures for our children, young people and families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes and raising the aspirations of every child in Wirral.

This matter affects the Bidston St. James Ward.

This is not a key decision.

**RECOMMENDATION/S**

Cabinet is requested to support the Cradle to Career partnership and endorse the 3-year commitment to providing a dedicated public services team.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1.1 Outcomes for children and young people in North Birkenhead are poor. There is a significant gap in achievement for children in this area. This programme provides a real opportunity to reduce that attainment gap.
- 1.2 Needs in North Birkenhead are higher than in almost all other wards in the borough. With 53% of children living in low-income households, the community is in the highest 2% for concentration of poverty within the UK. Evidence-based, targeted intervention can be provided through the programme to address this inequality.
- 1.3 The views of residents and North Birkenhead community groups support this programme and its objectives.
- 1.4 Public service leaders acknowledge and accept that how we have worked with the residents of North Birkenhead in the past has not had sufficient impact to improve their daily-lived experience or life chances, and that we need to transform our service delivery.
- 1.5 The ethos and objectives of the Cradle to Career programme clearly align with the Wirral Plan 2020-25.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

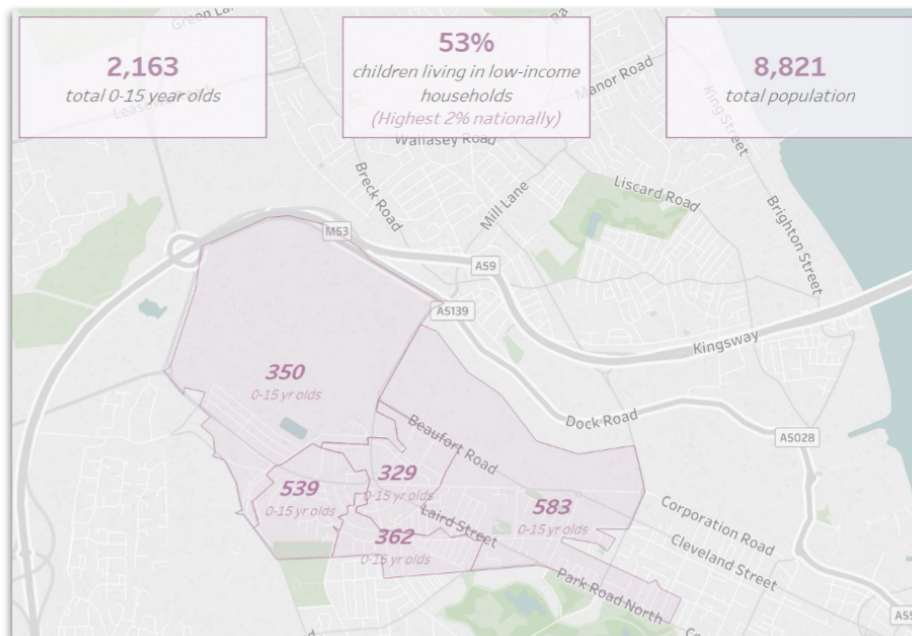
- 2.1 There are two other options to consider. First is not to engage as an active partner of the Cradle to Career programme but to continue to deliver services to residents in North Birkenhead as we have over previous years. This would risk the investment from sponsors being withdrawn and the opportunity for place-based change lost. The second option would be to provide funding to the programme rather than a dedicated public services team. It is considered within our best interest to provide staffing resource as professionals and services will gain from the experience, creating opportunity for further roll out of best practice.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Cradle to Career programme is a collaboration between Wirral Council, the education charities Right to Succeed and SHINE, the Steve Morgan Foundation, North Birkenhead Development Trust and the community of North Birkenhead to develop a place-based approach that will reduce the inequality gap for children and young people by transforming how public services, education providers and residents work together for collective impact.
- 3.2 Since September 2019, the Cradle to Career partnership has conducted a rigorous *Discovery* phase, published a report on its findings and developed a programme plan which seeks to create the conditions required for effective place-based transformation.
- 3.3 Significant funding has been secured to deliver phase 1 (3 years) of the Cradle to Career programme including £2.1m from the Steve Morgan Foundation, £350k from

Shine and £200k from UBS Optimum. Wirral's public services will make a contribution *in kind* as described in sections 4. Financial Implications and 6. Resource Implications.

- 3.3 The geographical area the programme covers is described as *North Birkenhead* and has been defined by local residents. As such, the area is highlighted below in pink:



- 3.4 The Cradle to Career partnership is applying a collective impact model based on evidence from national and international reviews of place-based approaches. The key elements of a collective impact model are:

1. A common agenda
2. Shared measurement system
3. Mutually re-enforcing activities
4. Continuous communication
5. Backbone support organisation

- 3.5 Each aspect of the collective impact model has been subject to broad discussion and research activity during the *Discovery* phase. They have been used to help understand the barriers and enablers children, young people and families face at home, in school and in the community and as a means to measure the readiness of the area and its key stakeholders to deliver differently.

- 3.6 The findings of the *Discovery* phase are fully detailed in the *North Birkenhead Cradle to Career Executive Summary* (Appendix 1). The barriers and enablers identified can be summarised under the following headings:

- **Aspirations vs Expectations**

It emerged that residents had low expectations of employment and training opportunities available to them and similarly low expectations of the education system's capacity to ensure children and young people were ready for employment. Stakeholders highlighted that many services appeared to have lower expectations of

children and young people from North Birkenhead and that stigmatisation of the community negatively impacted aspirations and self-belief.

- **Holistic mental health and well-being support**

Mental health was cited by many stakeholders as the biggest unaddressed need across Wirral, and an area which will be exacerbated due to Covid-19. Increased need and overcrowded statutory pathways are leaving many families on long waiting lists during which time needs are escalating. However, beyond statutory support, there is no systematic or at-scale approach to early intervention for mild-to-moderate mental health needs, especially amongst children and adolescents or holistically for families and parents.

- **Identification of need and appropriate support**

Support for Speech, Language and Communication needs, Special Educational Needs, low literacy levels and Social, Emotional and Mental Health were cited by stakeholders as areas of concern. Overcrowded statutory support pathways were again highlighted as an issue, reflecting a national picture. However, late diagnosis, lack of effective earlier intervention and variations in teachers' and schools' capacity to identify and meet needs effectively in the classroom were highlighted as problematic.

- **Youth Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour, Engagement and Safe Places**

Residents were concerned about increases in antisocial behaviour and youth crime, including drug and alcohol abuse. As part of this, some were critical of police involvement in the area, suggesting the police did not like North Birkenhead, however some interviewees called for a better relationship to be developed. A key stressor of youth criminality identified by residents was the lack of positive engagement or role models for older teenagers, including the lack of a localised youth offer, exacerbated by peer pressure.

- **Supportive and Aspirational Relationships**

A strong and positive relationship of support with a key person emerged as an important enabler for children, young people and parents across the community consultation and the school focus groups. Parents referred to key people who had helped them practically, non-judgmentally and in a range of small ways. Many parents expressed a desire to strengthen family relationships with their children, especially simply more opportunity and resources to spend time with their children, have fun and relax.

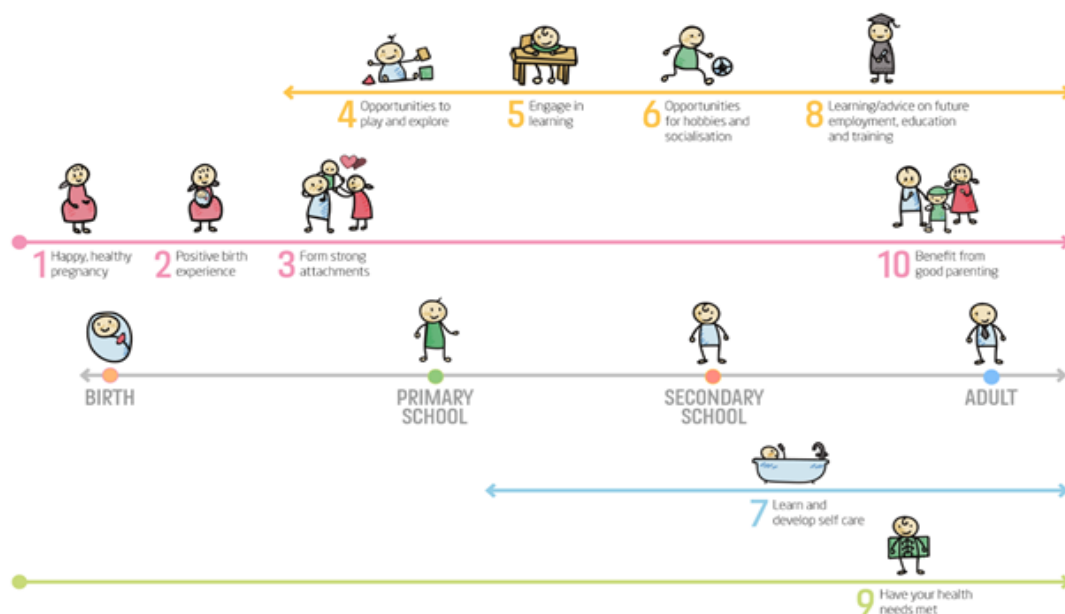
- **Community**

There was a divided view on the community of North Birkenhead, with local leaders more likely to highlight negative elements of the community identity impacting on young people's aspirations, and community residents and pupils more likely to be positive about their immediate communities and the supportive, cross-generational relationships built with neighbours.

- 3.7 The readiness for a collective impact model was also tested during the *Discovery* phase. Findings indicate that those conditions have not previously been in place, but that there is sufficient appetite and motivation within the community and local stakeholders to now make this step. The Discovery report outlines what the community wants in each aspect of the collective impact model as follows:

- **Common Agenda:**  
Every child in North Birkenhead thrives, throughout childhood and into adulthood.
- **Shared measurement framework:**  
Systematic use of robust measures to understand, treat and monitor progress in (i) child development, (ii) well-being and (iii) connectivity to opportunity.
- **Mutually reinforcing activities:**  
Schools and early years centres systematically identify and overcome barriers to learning and well-being. Improve the engagement and support of the most vulnerable families. Enable the community to take ownership and address key issues affecting them. Completely redesign local services, integrating public services into the community.
- **Continuous communication:**  
Website and social media to enable easy understanding and access of the local offer outreach activities and local office open to drop-ins.
- **Backbone support organisation:**  
Programme Management team embedded in the place to support delivery and quality assurance. Strong steering group and governance structure making key decisions, bringing together the community and key agencies.

3.8 To deliver the vision, that every child in North Birkenhead thrives, throughout childhood and into adulthood, the delivery model will utilise a 10-part childhood offer, developed by Wirral Council's Children's Services.



3.9 There are 4 key objectives for the programme which will support the model to become a reality. These have been agreed with the local community as:

- **Families:** Improve the engagement and support of the most vulnerable families, enabling these families to flourish.
- **Education:** Build capacity in schools to help them become world class at identifying and meeting developmental and well-being needs, enabling them to improve outcomes for their most vulnerable learners.
- **Community:** Enable the community to take ownership of the development of North Birkenhead, addressing key issues affecting them and building on the strengths already in the community.
- **Services:** Transform how public sector services, community sector services and residents work together to get the best possible outcomes for residents of North Birkenhead.

3.10 An external evaluator, likely to be the Heseltine Institute at University of Liverpool, will be appointed by the Steering Board to provide a learning evaluation throughout the project using a robust children's outcomes framework and project plan with appropriate and challenging milestones.

3.11 The programme will have appropriate governance arrangements in place with 3 multi-agency steering groups focusing on families, communities and education, as well as a Steering Board with senior leaders reporting to delivery partners, funders and supporters, and national stakeholders.

## **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This programme will attract a minimum £2.6m investment in support and educational opportunity for children, young people and families in North Birkenhead. The partnership attracting this funding relies on the commitment from Wirral Council to provide a contribution *in kind* through staffing resource rather than finance. There are no anticipated financial implications as the staffing resource will be reallocated from existing service areas.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 Wirral Council's contribution to the Cradle to Career programme will be in the form of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team consisting of 17.2 FTE. The roles within the team have been specifically selected to deliver the 10-part childhood offer. Full details of the team are contained within *Cradle to Career Public Services Team* (Appendix 2).

6.2 Staffing for the multi-disciplinary team will be identified from existing resource via an expression of interest and selection process which will involve residents of North Birkenhead. Arrangements are in place within Children's Services to reallocate existing workloads to ensure that capacity is maintained across the service to meet need and fulfil statutory obligations. It is accepted that Children's Services are already working with the children, young people and families in the area and that this

programme will not create additional pressure on resource but will instead require reallocation of existing workload.

- 6.3 Staff attached to the Cradle to Career programme will utilise their existing IT systems, procedures and line management through a matrix arrangement. All staff will continue to be employees of Wirral Council and receive the support, supervision and development this entails.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The appropriate Trustee Boards for each charity involved have given their approval and support to the programme therefore there is no anticipated risk of a partner withdrawing support.
- 7.2 Significant community involvement has been achieved at each stage of programme development. It is therefore not anticipated that lack of engagement from the North Birkenhead community is a risk to the project.
- 7.3 Dedicated Project Management is being provided by Right to Succeed to ensure that there is sufficient management grip and capacity to drive this ambitious programme.
- 7.4 Linkage with the Council's key departments, such as Regeneration and Place, has been secured via the programme Steering Board. Key strategies, such as the *Community Wealth Building Strategy* will be aligned as the programme develops, with learning being shared at regular intervals.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 During the *Discovery* phase the following engagement activity was completed:
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews with 45 local leaders from education, public sector, and the community, voluntary and faith sector;
  - Structured interviews and group discussions with 80 North Birkenhead residents;
  - 5 focus groups with 50 primary and secondary school aged children and young people;
  - A facilitated community engagement session with 35 persons identified as community leaders
- 8.2 In addition to the above, there has been ongoing engagement with Head Teacher cluster groups and regular meetings of the partnership steering group.
- 8.3 All learning and feedback from engagement activity has been used to determine the findings of the North Birkenhead Cradle to Career Executive Summary (Appendix 1) and informs the programme plan.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 In accordance with Wirral Council's legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone, an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this programme of activity.



## 10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 It is anticipated that the programme of activity and education for the residents of North Birkenhead will promote positive environmental behaviours. This is in-line with the ethos of the Council, the charities involved, and the education curriculum.
- 10.2 The community education on environmental and climate implications will lead to an anticipated reduction in greenhouse gasses.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 North Birkenhead Cradle to Career Executive Summary  
Appendix 2 Cradle to Career Public Services Team

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Collective Impact @ [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)  
Shine Educational Charity @ <https://shinetrust.org.uk/>  
Right to Succeed Educational Charity @ <https://righttosucceed.org.uk/>  
Steve Morgan Foundation @ <https://stevemorganfoundation.org.uk/>

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Not applicable	Not applicable